



## Daily Report

Thursday, 1 December 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 December 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:38 P.M., 01 December 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

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Boohoo

**Catherine West:**

[\[94829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with Boohoo on (a) workers rights and (b) working conditions in their UK warehouse.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Neither my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State or I have met with Boohoo to discuss the matters raised in recent press coverage. I have, however, met with the Director of Labour Market Enforcement who I know is looking at the issues raised and is in contact with the company. I have asked her to keep me updated on this work.

#### ■ Business: Investment

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[97643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help incentivise businesses to invest into local communities to help tackle poverty.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government works to secure business investment in sectors across the economy which brings jobs and prosperity to communities across the UK. For example, the £1.4bn Global Britain Investment Fund (GBIF) provides grants to encourage internationally mobile companies to invest in the automotive, life sciences and offshore wind sectors, where the UK has natural strengths and geographic spread.

#### ■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[97625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with external stakeholders about the potential merits of establishing a fashion industry regulator.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Ministers regularly meet with representatives from the fashion sector, including most recently from the Leicester textile industry, to discuss the key issues affecting the sector, including the introduction of a Fashion Watchdog / Garment Trade Adjudicator.

The Government continues to engage with enforcement bodies and industry partners to strengthen our understanding of the garment trade. The Government will continue to review this issue and consider options to drive up standards across the sector.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Astra Asset Management UK**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [94711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have met with Astra Asset Management UK in the past two years.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

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

The latest published data covers April to June 2022, further data will be published in due course.

Details of meetings held by civil servants are not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: EU Law**

**Sir John Hayes:** [93447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November to Question 75765 on Civil Service: EU Law, what steps his Department have taken to identify EU-sourced regulations now removable post-Brexit by using as an indicator the expression out of scope.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

BEIS has defined retained EU law that is out of scope of the sunset in clause 1 and 3 of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill. Any retained EU law that is primary legislation or amendments to primary legislation made by EU-derived subordinate legislation, will not be in scope of the sunset.

■ **Dispute Resolution: Consumers**

**Janet Daby:** [94858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government published its response to the 2021 'Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy' consultation in Spring 2022. This exercise set out the many benefits of consumer Alternative Dispute Resolution and collected evidence on how it might be improved.

The Government has committed to bring forward the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill in the third Parliamentary session. Building on the evidence



collected in the consultation, the Bill will contain measures to improve the consistency and quality of Alternative Dispute Resolution services in consumer markets by strengthening the accreditation and monitoring framework.

### ■ **Energy Bills Rebate: Rented Housing**

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[94849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September to Question 48487 on Energy Bills Rebate: Rented Housing, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure landlords do not charge tenants more than they paid energy suppliers.

**Graham Stuart:**

Under Ofgem's Maximum Resale Price rules (attached), landlords with a domestic contract with an energy supplier are required not to charge tenants more than they have paid suppliers for the energy.

### ■ **Equal Pay**

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[94887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the minimum wage on the gender pay gap since 2019.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government has repeatedly increased the National Living Wage, with black and minority ethnic individuals, women, and disabled people among those more likely to benefit from these increases. The LPC evidence suggests that this has reduced the gender and ethnicity pay gaps since its introduction in 2016.

In April 2023, the Government will increase the National Living Wage (NLW) for workers aged 23 years and over by 9.7% to £10.42, remaining on track to achieve its manifesto commitment for the NLW to equal two-thirds of median earnings by 2024. We will publish an updated Impact Assessment next year when laying the relevant legislation.

### ■ **Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups**

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[94886\]](#)

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 trends in the level of the ethnicity pay gap since 2017.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

This Government remains committed to tackling all areas of disparities in this country, including in employment. It is crucial that everyone is treated fairly in the workplace, so that they can thrive and reach their full potential and we want to ensure that everyone has access to the same employment opportunities.

In March 2022 we published the Inclusive Britain action plan which includes over 70 actions to improve outcomes across education, health, employment and criminal justice for ethnic minority groups.

## ■ Parental Leave

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[97470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2022 to Question 83544 on Parental Leave, and with reference to the oral contribution of the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the debate on Employment Law: Devolution to Scotland on 6 September 2022, Official Report, column 51WH, on what basis the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State stated that take-up of Shared Parental Leave is exceeding 8 per cent of the 285,000 eligible fathers.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The 2013 Impact Assessment for Shared Parental Leave (SPL) estimated that take-up would be between 2-8 per cent. Current take-up rates of SPL are based on HMRC data, this data estimates that rates fall within the middle of this range and have been gradually increasing.

## ■ Post Offices

**Patricia Gibson:**

[\[97542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help post offices maintain their role within local communities.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government has provided over £2.5 billion in funding to support the Post Office network over the past 10 years and is further providing £335 million for the Post Office over the next three years.

Furthermore, the Government protects the Post Office network by setting minimum access criteria to ensure that 99% of the UK population lives within three miles of a Post Office.

## ■ Postage Stamps: Counterfeit Manufacturing

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[94923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help stop the sale of counterfeit postage stamps online.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

As a private business, the operation of Royal Mail's products and services, including measures to tackle counterfeit stamps, is a matter for the company's management. The Government is not involved in Royal Mail's operational decisions.

Advice for consumers on identifying and reporting stamp fraud is available on Royal Mail's website: [www.royalmail.com/report-stamp-fraud](http://www.royalmail.com/report-stamp-fraud).

Royal Mail introduced barcoded stamps earlier this year to enable added security features to help tackle stamp fraud. Information is available at [www.royalmail.com/sending/barcoded-stamps](http://www.royalmail.com/sending/barcoded-stamps).

Consumers can access free advice on reporting scams through the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 or [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/get-help-with-online-scams/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/get-help-with-online-scams/). In Scotland, consumers should report to Advice Direct Scotland ( [www.consumeradvice.scot](http://www.consumeradvice.scot) ) and Police Scotland.

**Alexander Stafford:** [94924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of postage stamps that are used are reported by Royal Mail as counterfeit each year.

**Alexander Stafford:** [94927]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the estimated financial cost of postage stamp fraud is to (a) Royal Mail and (b) the consumer.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

As a private business, the Government is not involved in Royal Mail's operational or commercial decisions and does not hold this information.

## ■ Postage Stamps: Counterfeit Manufacturing and Fraud

**Alexander Stafford:** [94925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Royal Mail on its strategy for stopping counterfeit stamps and stamp fraud.

**Alexander Stafford:** [94926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with Royal Mail on the reporting of stamp fraud to the police.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

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

As a private business, the Government is not involved in Royal Mail's strategic or commercial decisions including the company's strategy for preventing stamp fraud and reporting fraudulent activity to the police.

## ■ Research: Finance

**Ben Lake:** [97747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much and what proportion of the £484 million announced by the Government in funding for the R&D sector announced by the Government on 21 November 2022 will be allocated to Wales.

**George Freeman:**

The Government's priority is to support the UK's world class R&D sector. The Government has put in place this additional funding to shore up talent and invest in R&D infrastructure across the whole of the UK, while also aiming to secure the UK fusion sectors' commercial leadership and capabilities.

R&D investment in the Devolved Administrations (DAs) and regions of the UK is key to levelling up and we have liaised with the relevant bodies to ensure proper coverage of the DAs. The Government are committed to levelling-up and we have liaised with the relevant bodies to ensure proper coverage of the DAs. The specific approach for funding distribution between DAs and final allocations for the DAs will be announced in the near future.

**■ Research: Investment****Chi Onwurah:**[\[97527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 93537 on Research: Investment, at what geographic level the further detailed data on regional spend will be aggregated; when he plans to publish this data; and what steps he is taking to assess the progress of policies to level up science investment.

**George Freeman:**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is an independent body. I will encourage them to publish in due course as much regional detail on where R&D expenditure is taking place as they can, at least for the nine English regions as well as for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**■ Science: Investment****Chi Onwurah:**[\[97529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the (a) Office for National Statistics and (b) Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on gathering data to measure levelling up of science investment.

**George Freeman:**

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy officials are working closely with the Office for National Statistics, the Government Office for Science and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to improve the granularity of R&D data, in particular to publish data for the first time in early 2023 on the location of performed R&D funded by the government, in support of the Levelling Up White Paper R&D mission.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ 10 Downing Street: Official Hospitality****Sam Tarry:****[95960]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much was spent on hospitality at Downing Street from 6 September 2022 to 25 October 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Departments publish details of ministers' gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings on a quarterly basis. Cabinet Office returns include official hospitality provided by the Prime Minister, official No10 receptions and official hospitality at Chequers. More information can be found on GOV.UK.

**■ Cabinet Office: Astra Asset Management UK****Mr Kevan Jones:****[94712]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have met with Astra Asset Management UK in the last two years.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Government is committed to publishing details of ministers' and senior officials' meetings with external organisations on gov.uk, and does so on a quarterly basis.

There is no record of any meetings taking place with Astra Asset Management UK in the past two years.

**■ Cammell Laird: Industrial Disputes****Gareth Thomas:****[98651]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make available all documents related interactions between Jack Straw and stakeholders representing those involved in the Cammell Laird industrial dispute of 1984.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given to [PQ 59415](#) on 20 October by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, my Right Honourable friend, the member for Croydon South.

**■ Chequers: Official Hospitality****Sam Tarry:****[95961]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much was spent on official hospitality at Chequers from 6 September 2022 to 25 October 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Chequers is not a government building; it is run and managed by an independent trust.

As has been the practice under successive Premiers, the incumbent Prime Minister uses Chequers consistent with the wishes of the donor, the late Sir Arthur Lee, who gave it to the nation for the use of the serving Prime Minister, for both official and private use. This is set out in the Chequers Estate Act 1917.

Details of official hospitality at Chequers are published on a quarterly basis and are available via [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). Personal or party political hospitality is not paid for by the public purse.

## ■ Civil Servants: Conditions of Employment

**Sam Tarry:**

**[95963]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion civil service staff are employed (a) on zero hours contracts, (b) on fixed-term contracts, and (c) via employment agencies broken down by Government Department.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The number of civil servants employed on zero hour contracts is not held centrally by the Cabinet Office. Zero hours contracts are not the normal practice within the Civil Service. Departments may use them in very limited circumstances to help meet exceptional or fluctuating demands on the business.

The number of civil servants by department on a fixed-term contract of up to 12 months, including those on casual contracts, is published quarterly by Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of their quarterly public sector employment statistics and is available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/publicsectoremploymentreferencetable>.

An extract of the relevant data published by ONS is presented at Table 1 below. Information on civil servants on contracts of more than 12 and less than 24 months are not held centrally as these employees are counted as permanent in the statistics, in line with official ONS public sector headcount methodology.

Civil servants are employed by departments and their agencies and not by employment agencies. However, information on the numbers of employment agency staff working at departments are published by individual departments each month for transparency purposes on their gov.uk departmental webpages as part of their Monthly Workforce Management Information.

**Table 1: Civil servants on temporary/casual contracts [1] as at June 2022**

DEPARTMENT	HEADCOUNT	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
Attorney General's departments	200	190
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	70	70

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DEPARTMENT	HEADCOUNT	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
Cabinet Office	10	10
Other Cabinet Office agencies	40	40
Charity Commission	20	20
Competition and Markets Authority	20	20
Defence	20	20
Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	50	50
Education	210	200
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	210	200
Estyn	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	10	..
Food Standards Agency	30	30
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	60	60
Health and Social Care	1,820	1,680
HM Land Registry	10	10
HM Revenue and Customs	560	550
HM Treasury	30	30
Chancellor's other departments	0	0
Home Office	1,220	880
International Trade	0	0
Justice	1,240	1,190
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	50	40
The National Archives	20	20

DEPARTMENT	HEADCOUNT	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
National Crime Agency	0	0
Northern Ireland Office	0	0
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills	20	20
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets	150	150
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	20	20
Office of Rail and Road	..	..
Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland	0	0
Office of the Secretary of State for Wales	..	..
Ofwat	10	10
Transport	580	550
UK Statistics Authority	120	110
UK Supreme Court	10	10
Work and Pensions	3,520	3,450
Scottish Government	1,940	1,450
Welsh Government	30	30
TOTAL	12,280	11,080

1. Temporary or casual employees are those with a fixed term contract of 12 months or less, or employed on a casual basis
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest ten, and numbers less than five are represented by "...". Data not available are represented by "-".
3. Department totals include Executive Agencies, Ministerial and Non-Ministerial Departments

Source: Public Sector Employment Statistics, Office for National Statistics



## ■ Civil Servants: Living Wage

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[95962\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of civil service staff working are paid a rate equivalent to the real living wage, broken down by Government Department.

**Jeremy Quin:**

In the majority of Government departments, at least 98% of staff earn a rate equivalent or greater than the 2021/22 Voluntary Living Wage (£11.05 if based in London, or £9.90 if based outside of London), as at 31 March 2022. In all departments the proportion is over 90%.

Table 1: Percentage of civil servants earning at or above the Voluntary Living Wage in March 2022 by Department

DEPARTMENTS (INCLUDING AGENCIES)	% AT OR ABOVE THE VLW
Attorney General's Departments	98.8%
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	99.6%
Cabinet Office	99.7%
Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	100.0%
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	99.9%
Education	≥99.9% <sup>1</sup>
Transport	92.5%
Health and Social Care	99.5%
International Trade	≥99.9% <sup>1</sup>
Work and Pensions	100.0%
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	99.5%
HM Revenue and Customs	100.0%
HM Treasury	99.5%
Home Office	98.6%
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	99.4%
Defence	96.3%
Justice	98.5%

DEPARTMENTS (INCLUDING AGENCIES)	% AT OR ABOVE THE VLW
Other <sup>2</sup>	99.1%
Scottish Government	100.0%
Welsh Government	100.0%

<sup>1</sup> Exact figure suppressed due to low numbers

<sup>2</sup> Other includes staff in Government organisations not listed separately (CC, CMA, COD, ESTYN, FSA, HMLR, NCA, NIO, OFGEM, OFQUAL, OFSTED, OFWAT, ORR, SO, TNA, UKEF, UKSA, UKSC, WO)

Figures are based on the centrally held numbers and salaries of civil servants collected in the Annual Civil Service Employment Survey as at March 2022, and may differ from those provided by individual departments. Civil servants located outside the UK or with an unreported location (6,995) or without a reported hourly rate (an additional 150) have been excluded. Percentages are calculated on a headcount basis and rounded to the nearest percentage point, due to the rounding a very small number of employees in departments listed as 100% may earn below the Voluntary Living Wage.

## ■ Civil Service: Apprentices

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[97697\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to increase apprenticeship opportunities within the Civil Service.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the House on the 27 October:

“As announced in the civil service apprenticeships strategy, we are committed to 5% of total civil service headcount being apprentices by 2025. Some 47,490 apprentices have been recruited since April 2016, with 78% of those being outside London. We will provide entry and progression routes within a range of careers and professions for new and existing staff.”

## ■ Climate Change: Infrastructure

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[97801\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy report, Readiness for storms ahead? Critical national infrastructure in an age of climate change, published on 27 October, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of appointing a Minister of State for critical national infrastructure.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster confirmed during Cabinet Office Orals and Topicals on 27 October that both the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and myself are Ministers for resilience. The resilience portfolio includes working with the lead government departments for the Critical National Infrastructure sectors.

We will respond to the JCNSS report in full in due course.

**Electoral Register: Disability****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[94808\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what percentage of disabled people are on the electoral register.

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 23 November is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response to 94808 [UKSA\_Response\_to\_PQ94808.pdf]

**Gavin Williamson****Sarah Owen:**[\[95945\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Rt hon. Member for South Staffordshire holds a pass that allows access to (a) 9 Downing Street, (b) 10 Downing Street, (c) 11 Downing Street, (d) 12 Downing Street and (e) 70 Whitehall as of 24 November 2022.

**Sarah Owen:**[\[95946\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Rt hon. Member for South Staffordshire held a pass that allowed access to (a) 9 Downing Street, (b) 10 Downing Street, (c) 11 Downing Street, (d) 12 Downing Street and (e) 70 Whitehall in the period between 25 October 2022 and 24 November 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Following the practice followed by successive administrations, the Government does not comment on security matters.

**Official Residences****Emily Thornberry:**[\[97475\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 59556, which Government Ministers currently use for residential purposes the properties at (a) 1 Carlton Gardens, (b) the three flats in Admiralty House, (c) the Dorneywood estate and (d) the Chevening estate.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I would refer the Rt Hon Member to Question [59556](#).

The Prime Minister allocates official residences to ministers, either on the grounds of security or to allow them to better perform their official duties. Further details will be set out in due course.

**■ Parliamentary Private Secretaries****Daisy Cooper:****[94866]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish an updated List of Parliamentary Private Secretaries to replace the most recent version dated June 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

An updated List of Parliamentary Private Secretaries was published on 29 November, and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-parliamentary-private-secretaries-pps-november-2022>.

**■ Public Sector: Procurement****Angela Rayner:****[97551]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department is taking steps to monitor profits made by public procurement suppliers that accrue to offshore trusts.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The driving principle behind public procurement policy is to award contracts on the basis of value for money, which means the optimum combination of cost and quality over the lifetime of the project.

The Government expects businesses to take all necessary steps to enable themselves to comply with their tax obligations, to ensure a fair and level playing field.

HM Revenue & Customs require certain large multinational enterprises to report details of their economic activities in each country where they operate and the taxes paid in each country. There are penalties for those that file late or fail to do so.

The Procurement Bill introduces new mandatory grounds for the exclusion of bidders which are found guilty of tax evasion or involvement in abusive tax avoidance schemes, whether in the UK or overseas.

**■ Special Advisers: Ethics****Caroline Lucas:****[97572]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Prime Minister will make it his policy to increase the powers and independence of the Independent Ethics Adviser by (a) giving the Adviser the right to initiate inquiries, (b) making the appointment a fixed term and (c) implementing the other recommendations to strengthen the (i) appointments process, (ii) powers and (iii) remit of the Independent Adviser set out in the report Upholding

Standards in Public Life by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, published on 1 November 2021; and if the Prime Minister will make a statement.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[97584]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the recruitment process for the Independent Ethics Adviser began.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my honourable friend, the member for Brentwood and Ongar, Alex Burghart MP, in response to the Urgent Question on 30 November.

In May, the Government published a policy statement alongside revised Terms of Reference, which set out reforms to the role of Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests. This included an enhanced process for the initiation of investigations under the Ministerial Code. The appointment has been for a five-year fixed term since April 2021.

The appointment process for the Independent Adviser is ongoing, and the House will be updated on this when an appointment has been made.

The Prime Minister set out his clear intention to appoint an Independent Adviser when he assumed office.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement of 15 July 2022, Official Report, HCWS208. As explained in that statement, work on further reforms recommend by the Committee on Standards in Public Life continues and will be informed by the new Prime Minister. That statement can be found here <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-07-15/hcws208>

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

### ■ Christianity: Nigeria

**Jim Shannon:**

[80704]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the Church Commissioners have had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on taking steps to help tackle (a) violence against and (b) the abduction of Christians in Nigeria in the last 18 months.

**Jim Shannon:**

[80705]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the Church Commissioners have had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on taking steps to help tackle violence against Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Jim Shannon:**

**[80706]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the Church Commissioners have had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on making an assessment of freedom of religion and belief in China.

**Andrew Selous:**

Bishops and officials of the Church of England regularly engage with Ministers and officials at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on a range of thematic and geographic concerns regarding freedom of religion or belief, which include the human rights situation in China, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. Bishops in the House of Lords regularly raise concerns about the same through questions to Government. Details of these can be seen at:

Nigeria: [Nigeria – The Church of England in Parliament \(churchinparliament.org\)](https://churchinparliament.org/nigeria)

Democratic Republic of Congo: [The Church of England in Parliament \(churchinparliament.org\)](https://churchinparliament.org/congo)

China: [China – The Church of England in Parliament \(churchinparliament.org\)](https://churchinparliament.org/china) Most recently on 17th November the Bishop of St Albans led a debate in the House of Lords on allegations of human rights abuses in China.

## ■ Church of England: Discrimination

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

**[75757]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what representations has he received on sex discrimination and misogyny in the Church of England.

**Andrew Selous:**

I have received no direct representations in my capacity as Second Church Estates Commissioner. The National Church Institutions (NCIs) have a Belonging and Inclusion Strategy, which aims to make sure that the NCI workforce represent the diversity of the nation that the Church of England serves, at all levels including the most senior, so that everyone in the NCIs feels that they belong, are valued for who they are and what they contribute, and are supported to develop and flourish.

## ■ Church of England: Equality Act 2010

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

**[75755]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what representations he has received recently about the Church of England's exemptions under the Equality Act 2010.

**Andrew Selous:**

I have received no direct representations in my capacity as Second Church Estates Commissioner.

## ■ Church of England: Females

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

**[75758]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, how many parishes in the Church of England in England reject the ministry of women.

**Andrew Selous:**

The House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests makes provision for parishes to pass resolutions where their theological conviction leads them to seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men. The most recent information held centrally by the National Church Institutions is contained on page 32 of the Mission Statistics 2020, the full details of which can be found here: [Ministry Statistics 2020 report FINAL.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

There were 590 parishes in which a resolution under the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests had been passed at the end of 2020. These parishes account for 4.8% of all parishes. The breakdown is shown in Figure 24 of the Mission Statistics 2020.

## ■ Church of England: Land Use

**Jim Shannon:**

**[82302]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the church has taken recent steps to provide affordable and sustainable housing on its land.

**Andrew Selous:**

The Church Commissioners are currently promoting land for approximately 30,000 new homes across England. Approximately 30% of these new homes will be classed as affordable. The Commissioners aim is to deliver high-quality new homes and employment opportunities within sustainable communities which support and enhance their local surroundings.

The Commissioners have recently appointed an Affordable Housing Asset Manager to increase the delivery of affordable housing across the portfolio, and have recently collaborated with a Housing Association to deliver ten affordable homes and three bungalows in a rural community known as Shepherdswell, near Dover in Kent.

**Jim Shannon:**

**[83623]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church is taking to use environmentally-friendly farming methods in its agricultural land.

**Andrew Selous:**

The Church Commissioners encourage existing farm tenants to adopt environmentally friendly farming practices across all their agricultural land. Throughout the year the Commissioners' asset managers and agents have conducted meetings with their existing agricultural tenants to discuss various

environmental opportunities, including hedgerow improvements, benefits of cover crops and other regenerative farming practices.

When re-letting farmland on the open market the Church Commissioners emphasise their net-zero ambitions and seek out tenants who adopt nature-friendly farming methods, via a vigorous tender process, farm letting particulars and updated farm business tenancies. The new tenancies include soil improvement clauses and requirements for landlord and tenant to work collaboratively on conducting carbon audits and environmental improvements such as hedgerow planting.

## ■ Church of England: Tree Planting

**Jim Shannon:**

**[86478]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the Church is taking steps to plant more trees on its land in rural areas.

**Andrew Selous:**

During 2021 the Church Commissioners planted approximately 2 million trees across their land holdings. In 2021 the Commissioners also purchased land in Wales with the intention of establishing a new woodland of c.85,000 new trees (subject to the grant of planting permissions). Across the land portfolio the Commissioners have conducted numerous woodland reviews assessing opportunities for new planting schemes, creating wildlife corridors. Via the implementation of environmental land management schemes farm tenants are planting more hedgerows and the Commissioners are encouraging the inclusion of in-hedge trees.

## ■ Churches: Biodiversity and Carbon Emissions

**Jim Shannon:**

**[80710]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps parish churches are taking to help (a) progress towards net zero and (b) increase biodiversity.

**Andrew Selous:**

Parish churches are signing up to the Eco Church scheme, which asks them to consider how they manage their building and their carbon footprint, and how they manage their churchyard or other land around the church for the benefit of people and nature. It also asks them to integrate environmental issues into their worship and teaching, to join in with wider environmental issues in their community and beyond, and to challenge congregation members to take steps to reduce carbon and take care of the planet in their own lives. As of October, over 4,000 CofE churches have signed up to the Eco Church scheme, 1,350 have reached bronze, just over 400 silver and 25 gold. Case studies can be seen here: [Net Zero Carbon and Environmental case studies | The Church of England](#). Projects include replacing heating systems with heat pumps or direct electric heating, a community garden in urban Liverpool, and a wild flower garden in the space next to the graveyard in a



Sheffield city church. Churches are also being encouraged to review how and when they put the heating on, good maintenance and wherever possible fixing draughts, to reduce overall energy use.

## ■ Churches: Energy

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[80703\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what recent steps the church commissioners have taken to help support parishes that are replacing (a) gas and (b) oil central heating equipment.

**Andrew Selous:**

The Church of England's Environment Programme has produced guidance for churches that are reviewing their heating, and webinars for advice, which can be seen at: [Heating | The Church of England](#) & [Webinars on getting to net zero carbon | The Church of England](#)

The Church Commissioners intend to distribute £1.2 billion between 2023 and 2025, up 30% from £930 million in the current three-year period, to support the Church's mission and ministry, including through parishes across England. The core of the extra funding will be channelled into the revitalisation of parish and local ministry and go some way to continue enabling local parishes to serve their communities and the whole nation. The distributions will help fund dioceses' plans by reaching more young and disadvantaged people, addressing issues of racial justice, and radically cutting the Church's carbon footprint. By providing help for net zero programmes, and access to experts in renewable heating advice, parishes will be helped with their plans to replace gas and oil heating systems.

## DEFENCE

## ■ Armed Forces: Health Services

**John Healey:**

[\[97440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Combat Medical Technicians served in the Armed Forces in each service branch in each year since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The table below outlines the number of trade trained Combat Medical Technicians in the Army for each year since 2010. Please note that there is no trade of "Combat Medical Technician" in the other services.

DATE	STRENGTH*
01 April 2022	1,881
01 April 2021	1,908
01 April 2020	1,904

DATE	STRENGTH*
01 April 2019	1,915
01 April 2018	1,894
01 April 2017	1,813
01 April 2016	1,851
01 April 2015	1,904
01 April 2014	1,937
01 April 2013	1,879
01 April 2012	1,747
01 April 2011	1,709
01 April 2010	1,709

\*Figures are for the Trade Trained Regular Army only and exclude Other Ranks in Senior Soldier Continuity Posts.

**John Healey:**

[\[97441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the Army Medical Service there have been in each year since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The table below outlines the number of trade trained Army Medical Services personnel as of 1 April each year, 2010-2022.

DATE	TOTAL	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
01 April 2022	<b>4,648</b>	1,364	3,284
01 April 2021	<b>4,665</b>	1,379	3,286
01 April 2020	<b>4,600</b>	1,355	3,245
01 April 2019	<b>4,552</b>	1,323	3,229
01 April 2018	<b>4,564</b>	1,374	3,190
01 April 2017	<b>4,499</b>	1,387	3,112
01 April 2016	<b>4,473</b>	1,357	3,116
01 April 2015	<b>4,632</b>	1,410	3,222
01 April 2014	<b>4,819</b>	1,446	3,373

DATE	TOTAL	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
01 April 2013	<b>4,876</b>	1,517	3,359
01 April 2012	<b>4,693</b>	1,522	3,171
01 April 2011	<b>4,728</b>	1,582	3,146
01 April 2010	<b>4,795</b>	1,599	3,196

Figures are for the Trade Trained Regular Army only and exclude Other Ranks in Senior Soldier Continuity Posts

### ■ Armed Forces: Housing

**John Healey:**

[\[97438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Armed Forces personnel in each region live in Single Living Accommodation.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The attached table below shows a count of Service Personnel who occupied Permanent Single Living Accommodation on 29 Nov 2022. The table has been broken down by region as recorded on Joint Personnel Administration System.

#### Attachments:

1. Permanent Single Living Accommodation [20221129- PQN\_22-23\_2022\_14175 (97438)- Healey- Table of data.xlsx]

### ■ Challenger Tanks

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[97545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it remains his Department's policy to upgrade 148 of the 227 Challenger 2 MBTs to Challenger 3 tanks; what his Department plans to do with any tanks that are not upgraded; and if he will make a statement.

**Alex Chalk:**

It remains the Department's policy to upgrade 148 of the Army's existing Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks to the Challenger 3 standard. Initial Operating Capability is expected to be achieved in 2027, with Full Operating Capability expected in 2030. A decision on what will happen to the remaining platforms is currently under review

### ■ Explosives: Civilians

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[97669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government will take to use its diplomatic influence to promote the strengthening of protections for civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

**James Heappey:**

On 18 November 2022, the UK joined 83 nations in adopting the Political Declaration on 'Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA).

The UK will work with allies, partners, and civil society to promote the aims of the Political Declaration. We will continue to use our knowledge and expertise to share good practice, strengthen cooperation with and support the work of international and civil society organisations, and encourage states to have appropriate procedures in place.

**■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[94714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to examine the use of NDAs put in place by his Department during the tender for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

There are no plans to examine the use of non-disclosure agreements in the Fleet Solid Support ship competition.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[94777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 93472 on Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts, how many of the shipbuilding jobs announced under the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract are (a) part- and (b) full-time.

**Alex Chalk:**

It is for the company contracted by the MOD to decide on its resourcing requirements in order to fulfil its contractual obligations. However it is anticipated that the overwhelming majority of jobs will be full time.

**■ Harland and Wolff: Finance**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[94708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has paid to Harland and Wolff (a) Appledore and (b) Belfast in each year since 2019.

**Alex Chalk:**

No UK public monies have been paid to Harland & Wolff since 2019.

**■ Harland and Wolff: Fleet Solid Support Ships**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[94713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department made of the turnover of Harland & Wolff in any of their criteria prior to the award of the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

Throughout the Fleet Solid Support ship procurement process all bidders are subject to economic and financial standing tests consistent with the relevant UK public procurement legislation and rules.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[94717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with regard to the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract, whether the majority of the blocks and modules from which the ships will be assembled will be built at Harland & Wolff's facilities in Belfast and Appledore.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given on 30 November 2022 to Question 93480.

**Attachments:**

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships: Construction [93480 - Fleet Solid Support Ships.docx]

**■ Kenya: Armed Forces****Kenny MacAskil:**[\[97649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will deposit in the House of Commons library a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding on Visiting Forces that was signed in Nairobi on 9 February 2006 between the UK and the Government of Kenya.

**James Heappey:**

We will not be depositing a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Visiting Forces from February 2006 into the House of Commons Library. It is not MOD policy to place MOUs in the House of Commons Library because these agreements often deal with classified military or technical matters.

**■ Military Aid: NHS****John Healey:**[\[97439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has received a Military Aid to Civilian Authority request from the Department of Health and Social Care for Forces personnel to assist the NHS over the winter in the event of industrial action.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence has not received a MACA request for support to the NHS over the winter in the event of industrial action. Any request would be considered against MACA principles.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Redundancy****Florence Eshalomi:**[\[97773\]](#)

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

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has no current plans to introduce a department-wide voluntary exit programme for civil servants. However, this does not preclude individual business areas within MOD from applying to the Cabinet Office to run voluntary exit programmes to deliver workforce efficiencies.

■ **Navantia****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[94705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract, whether Navantia UK is wholly owned by the Spanish Government.

**Alex Chalk:**

Navantia UK is a UK-registered wholly-owned subsidiary of Navantia S.A., S.M.E.

■ **Navantia: Fleet Solid Support Ships****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[97478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 93469 on Fleet Solid Support Ships: Intellectual Property, whether any intellectual property held by Navantia will be transferred to the UK under the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

Intellectual property (IP) in the design of the Fleet Solid Support ships rests with BMT. Any IP may be shared among the members of Team Resolute, and the terms on which this will take place will be a matter for the companies involved.

The Ministry of Defence does not generally seek to acquire ownership of IP created by contractors undertaking work for the Department but rather to acquire free-user rights that permit the Department to use, modify and manage equipment as it sees fit through life without infringing IP rights or incurring fees.

■ **Robert Swara Seurei****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[97651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November to Question 90887 on Robert Swara Seurei, what live munitions the British Army used in the Lolldaiga training area of Kenya before 2010; and what quantity of those munitions were used.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided to him on 16 May 2022 in answer to Question 968. Since before 2010, the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) has not conducted live firing exercises on Lolldaiga Training Area (LTA). BATUK only use the LTA to conduct blank firing and dry exercises. There are however explosives used, for example to simulate battle noise.

**Attachments:**

1. Kenya Army [UIN 968.docx]

**Royal Navy: Pitcairn Islands****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[97462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when a Royal Navy ship last visited Pitcairn Island (a) to patrol UK waters and (b) in any other capacity.

**James Heappey:**

HMS Spey visited Pitcairn in February 2022 delivering COVID vaccines and dental care as part of its duties as one of the two Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessels deployed in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, Spey conducted patrols in the waters around the islands in the Pitcairn chain to deter and defend against illegal fishing and to carry out environmental monitoring.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****BBC Radio: Local Broadcasting****Nadia Whittome:**[\[902507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the BBC on its future support for BBC Local Radio.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is disappointed that the BBC is planning to reduce parts of its local radio output. I met with the BBC and expressed our shared concerns in this House. I made clear that it must continue to provide distinctive and genuinely local radio services, with content that represents communities from all corners of the UK.

Ultimately, the BBC is editorially and operationally independent, and it is for them to decide how to deliver its services. However, I expect them to consider the views of this House when they make the decision over whether to proceed.

**Broadband: Competition****Drew Hendry:**[\[97553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to protect competition in the delivery of full-fibre broadband networks.

**Julia Lopez:**

In 2018, the Government published the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR), which set out our strategy to deliver nationwide gigabit-capable broadband. Central to this strategy is our desire to see a regulatory system which incentivises competition and investment in UK fixed telecoms. In this document, DCMS called for regulation that is limited to where it is necessary, and provides the longer-term stability and predictability that investors need.

We followed this with our 2019 Statement of Strategic Priorities for Ofcom. This document implemented the regulatory strategy we established in the FTIR, focussing on incentivising competition in the broadband market.

Ultimately, Ofcom is responsible for safeguarding competition in the broadband market. In 2021, Ofcom published its Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review (WFTMR) which set out Ofcom's decisions for regulation of the fixed telecoms market until 2026. The WFTMR makes explicit mention of the Government's desire to support market entry and expansion by alternative network operators and is fulfilling this by, for example, providing competitors with effective access to Openreach's ducts and poles.

Thanks to these measures to incentivise competition, there are now over 80 companies investing over £35bn to connect premises all over the UK, and gigabit coverage has increased to 72%, rising from just 6% in 2019.

## ■ **Broadband: Regulation**

**Drew Hendry:**

**[97554]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the current barriers to market access experienced by full-fibre broadband providers.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government's Barrier Busting Task Force (BBTF) was set up within DCMS towards the end of 2017. Its key objective is to identify and address the barriers preventing the fast, efficient and cost-effective deployment of gigabit-capable broadband and improved mobile coverage, including next generation 5G technology.

The team liaises with stakeholders from across the industry, including landowner representatives, to identify any barriers which could adversely impact rollout. It has recently identified and worked in the following areas:

### **Electronic Communications Code**

In January 2021, the BBTF team consulted on changes to the Electronic Communications Code, which resulted in the Government bringing forward measures in the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill, which completed its parliamentary passage last week.

Measures in the Bill which will specifically assist telecoms operators providing broadband services include an increased ability to upgrade and share the existing duct and pole network and a procedure to deal with non-responsive landowners. This is in addition to the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Act 2021, which is due to come into force at the end of the year and will make it easier for broadband operators to install in multiple dwelling units where the landlord is repeatedly unresponsive to requests for access.

### **New Build Connectivity**



One of the barriers we identified to the roll out of gigabit broadband coverage was the lack of deployment of broadband networks to new homes. In September we laid the Building etc. (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2022 which come into force on 26 December 2022. These make it mandatory for developers to install gigabit-ready infrastructure and, where it can be done within a £2,000 cost cap, a gigabit-capable connection in each dwelling.

### **Streetworks**

The BBTF has worked with the Department for Transport (DfT) to make street works for the rollout of broadband more simple and cost-effective. This has involved amending guidance, such as the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways to allow more innovative technologies to be used. DfT has also introduced Street Manager, a digital service to streamline processes across highways authorities, who authorise and coordinate streetworks in England and Wales. In addition, the team encourages collaboration between broadband companies and highways authorities, publishing the [Street Works Toolkit](#) in 2018. The Toolkit sets out best practice for highways authorities and telecoms companies to work together as efficiently as possible.

### **Local Authorities**

The BBTF has published guidance through the [Digital Connectivity Portal](#). The Portal provides practical information for local authorities, for instance on debunking myths around 5G, on the application of legislation such as the Electronic Communications Code and planning regulations, and on creating an effective digital strategy to facilitate telecoms deployment. The Task Force also regularly facilitates meetings and workshops between local authorities and the telecoms industry, aimed at increasing understanding of the importance of digital connectivity to local communities, as well as the practicalities around its deployment.

### **Investment**

In the 2017 Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review, DCMS stated its intention for regulation of the sector, which would provide long term stability and certainty, creating a market where operators were willing to invest. This was followed by the 2019 Statement of Strategic Priorities for Ofcom, which implemented the strategy set out in 2019. This has helped deliver significant investment in gigabit-capable networks and an increase in the number of operators rolling out gigabit services.

## ■ **Broadband: Rural Areas**

**Jerome Mayhew:**

**[902511]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to expand broadband coverage in rural areas.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is investing £5 billion through Project Gigabit to deliver lightning-fast, reliable broadband to hard-to-reach areas across the UK. By the end of March

2022, we had delivered gigabit-capable broadband to over 740,000 premises, ahead of our target of 720,000 premises. Combined with commercial gigabit delivery, we are on track to hit our target of 85 per cent UK gigabit coverage in 2025.

We have launched procurements with a value of over £700 million to bring gigabit connections to hundreds of thousands more 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 homes and businesses 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.

### ■ Football: Facilities

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[97610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the press notice issued by her Department entitled Government plans to name grassroots football facilities in honour of Lionesses class of Euros 2022, published on 31 July 2022, what recent progress her Department has made on naming grassroots football facilities in this way.

**Stuart Andrew:**

DCMS is working closely with the Football Foundation and the Lionesses on plans to name the facilities in honour of the EURO 2022 winning team, and we intend to announce the first tranche of facilities in early 2023. This will raise the profile of facilities across the UK and help increase sports participation, in particular for women and girls and other under-represented groups, and act as a fitting tribute to the winning performances of the England Women's team.

### ■ Football: Females

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[97611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to allocate specific funding from the public purse to female grassroots football teams.

**Stuart Andrew:**

We are determined to support more women and girls to get active and football is the most popular team sport in terms of participation for women and girls.

The Lionesses' fantastic performance at the 2022 Women's Euros has inspired the nation and it is essential that we take the opportunity to build on the success and legacy of the tournament. This includes Sport England's investment in 2020 of £1 million into legacy groups to help develop and create recreational women's football opportunities in each of the nine host cities up and down England. It also includes the Sport England Adult Recreational Football Project, which is led by seven recreational

football officers across the country who will develop this area of the game over the next two years.

We will continue to invest in grassroots sport through Sport England funding. In April 2022, Sport England awarded a total of £199,562 in 169 organisations to start new grassroots women's and girls' teams in high Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) areas. Sport England has also committed over £26 million until 2027 to support the FA's aim to harness the power of grassroots football to unite communities and improve the health of the nation.

We are also focused on supporting the future development of women's and girl's football, and inspiring the next generation. The recently announced Women's Football Review will look at how to deliver bold and sustainable growth of the women's game at elite and grassroots level. The Football Foundation is also working with facility owners to name pitches and facilities in towns and cities that have a strong link to each tournament winning squad member, in order to raise the profile of facilities in the UK, and to commemorate the Lionesses.

## ■ **Football: World Cup**

**Gerald Jones:**

**[902504]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with representatives of FIFA on the process for awarding world cup tournaments.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Sport operates independently of the government, therefore direct representations to FIFA on their processes for awarding future events would be a matter for Home Nation football governing bodies to raise.

The Government has frank conversations at an international level with counterparts around the world on issues such as human rights, and we will continue to have those conversations.

## ■ **Internet: Children**

**Vicky Ford:**

**[902510]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to protect children online.

**Paul Scully:**

The strongest protections in the Online Safety Bill are for children, and platforms will have to take proactive steps to prevent children being exposed to illegal content and behaviour, including child sexual exploitation and abuse and content assisting suicide.

Services likely to be accessed by children will also be required to protect children from other harmful material, including pornography and cyberbullying. If sites fail in their duties, they will be subject to tough enforcement action.

**■ Lotteries: Prizes****Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[97652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee report on What next for the National Lottery?, published on 22 November 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of that report's recommendation that individual society lotteries should be able to set their own prizes, up to a limit of £500,000.

**Paul Scully:**

The maximum prize for a society lottery draw was increased in July 2020 from £400,000 to £500,000 as part of a wider package of changes to society lottery limits. We are carefully considering the Committee's recommendation that the maximum allowable sizable prize per draw should be £25,000 or 10% of the draw's proceeds and will respond in due course.

**■ Opera: Finance****Ms Harriet Harman:**[\[97388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Art Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding between 2023 to 2026 on the opera industry.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**[\[97389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department plans to conduct a review into opera provision in England.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Decisions about which organisations to fund, and by how much, are taken by Arts Council England at arm's length from the Government. Arts Council England made its decisions in line with its published guidance and its ten-year strategy, 'Let's Create'. Assessments were carried out by Arts Council England, and decisions were made by its Area and National Councils, which include both local representatives and people who work in the sector. Any questions about specific funding decisions should be directed to Arts Council England.

Arts Council England's investment in opera, orchestras and other classical organisations represents around 80% of all investment in music in its 2023–26 Investment Programme. Through this programme, opera will continue to be well funded, with it remaining at around 40% of Arts Council England's overall investment in music. Organisations such as the English Touring Opera and the Birmingham Opera Company will receive increased funding, and there are many new joiners such as Opera UpClose and Pegasus Opera Company, who are based in South London. It is worth noting that these statistics are likely to underestimate the level of opera activity being funded as some organisations in the 2023–26 Investment Programme will fall into combined arts or non-discipline-specific categories.

The Government will continue to work with Arts Council England to understand the impacts of its investment in arts and culture, including on opera.

## ■ Rugby: Northern Ireland

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[94898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she is taking steps with (a) governing bodies and (b) other stakeholders to help promote rugby in Northern Ireland.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government is committed to promoting sport at all levels across all the Home Nations. With that being said, sport is a devolved policy area. The Department for Communities and Sport Northern Ireland are responsible for sports policy, including rugby, in Northern Ireland, along with the national governing body the Irish Rugby Football Union.

We work closely with our colleagues in the Home Nations, including through the Sport Cabinet which brings together the Sports Ministers of the four UK home countries to help improve coordinations and the sharing of best practice among each of the devolved administrations and the UK Government.

## ■ Social Media: Abuse

**Rosie Duffield:**

[\[902506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to help tackle abusive behaviour on social media.

**Paul Scully:**

The Online Safety Bill will stamp out illegal abusive behaviour on social media, while giving users greater control over their online experience.

The new duties in the Bill will increase transparency over companies' terms of service, allowing users to make more informed choices about the services they use. Companies must also provide users with tools to protect themselves from abuse.

The Bill is currently at Report Stage and is due to return to the Commons on 5 December.

## ■ Sports

**Stephen Hammond:**

[\[902505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to promote UK sport.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government is committed to building on the UK's world-leading sporting reputation.

This year has seen us successfully host a number of major sporting events, including this year's Birmingham Commonwealth Games, UEFA Women's Euros and the Rugby League World Cup.

We aim to retain our world-leading hosting reputation in the years ahead, with a number of major sporting events due to be hosted in the UK between now and 2030.

**Matt Vickers:**

**[94911]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to promote British sport.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government is committed to building on the UK's world-leading sporting reputation, and we are supporting our athletes and international sport activity through over £77 million investment per year in UK Sport for the Paris Olympic and Paralympic cycle.

We also ensure the UK is a global focus for sport through our hosting of major sporting events. This year has seen us successfully host a number of major sporting events, including the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, UEFA Women's Euros and the Rugby League World Cup.

Looking ahead, we continue to build on our pipeline of events hosted in the UK between now and 2030. These include the UCI World Cycling Championships in Glasgow in 2023, the return of the UEFA Champions League Final to Wembley in 2024, the women's Rugby World Cup in England in 2025, the European Athletics Championships 2026 in Birmingham, as well as both the 2026 Women's T20 Cricket World Cup (England and Wales) and the 2030 Men's T20 Cricket World Cup (UK and Ireland). We are also supporting a UK & Ireland bid for the UEFA European Championships 2028.

**Matt Vickers:**

**[94912]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to encourage grassroots participation in sport.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Supporting grassroots sport is a key government priority. We recognise that taking part in sport brings communities together and contributes to making people both happier and healthier.

The majority of funding to grassroots sports projects is delivered through our Arms Length Body, Sport England. Last year, Sport England received almost £350 million from the Exchequer and National Lottery.

The government also invests £18 million a year into community sport facilities via the Football Foundation, alongside the English Football Association and the Premier League. We have committed an additional £230 million UK-wide between 2021 and 2025 to increase participation, particularly for under-represented groups including women and girls and disabled players.

Since 2019, Sport England has invested over £1.6 million in Stockton South and provided funding to the Football Foundation to invest nearly £190,000 in 20 projects across the constituency.

## ■ **Swimming Pools: Costs**

**Catherine West:**

[\[94827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of public swimming pools on the cost of running swimming pools in the context of the cost of living crisis.

**Catherine West:**

[\[94828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the announcement by Greenwich Leisure on 22 November 2022 that they will be reducing opening hours at swimming pools due to heating costs.

**Stuart Andrew:**

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to indoor and outdoor pools and that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. The responsibility of providing this access lies at Local Authority level, and the government continues to encourage Local Authorities to support swimming facilities.

We appreciate the impact rising energy prices will have on organisations of all sizes, including on leisure operators. In September the government announced the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, under which businesses and other non-domestic energy users (including swimming pools) will be offered support. The EBRS is currently under review to ensure support is targeted to the most vulnerable sectors.

Officials in my department are in regular contact with representatives from the sector to assess the impact of rising energy costs, and how operators such as Greenwich Leisure and local authorities are responding to them.

Sport England has invested £12,775,274 in swimming and diving projects since April 2019, which includes £9,360,002 to Swim England. This is in addition to the £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund, which supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country after the pandemic.

## ■ **Technology**

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[94914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to promote growth in the British tech sector.

**Paul Scully:**

We are committed to make the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a technology business and to ensure the benefits are felt in all corners of the country. Our Digital Strategy, published in June 2022, sets out our vision and the actions required to deliver on it.



The Digital Strategy outlined the government's desire to support our digital tech sector by ensuring that the next generation of innovative tech companies can access the capital they need to flourish in the UK and abroad. To accelerate the growth of start-ups and scale-ups, we have launched the Digital Growth Grant Competition, worth up to £12.09 million, which will support companies with access to finance, tailored advice, talent and markets across the regions and nations of the UK. We have also worked to expand the generosity of the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme, the Company Share Option Plan and to ensure R&D tax credits will extend to data and computing costs for the first time.

We are also working to provide British tech companies with the infrastructure they need to grow. The government is investing in digital infrastructure to extend 4G mobile coverage and deliver gigabit-capable broadband across the UK through our £5 billion Project Gigabit delivering at least 85% gigabit-capable broadband coverage by 2025 and nationwide coverage by 2030.

Ensuring that British tech companies have access to a highly skilled workforce is critical to the growth of the sector. We are funding AI and Data Science Conversion Courses to support underrepresented groups from non-STEM backgrounds to undertake a masters in AI and Data Science, quickly upskilling to secure employment in the UK's cutting-edge sectors. Earlier this year we announced up to a further 2,000 scholarships for the programme. We have also announced £117 million in funding to create 1,000 more PhDs through Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs).

To support further action on digital upskilling, we launched the Digital Skills Council in June. The Council brings together industry leaders and training experts and I will review what more government and industry can do collaboratively to improve workforce digital skills in the UK.

We are also driving growth in key areas of UK specialism. As part of the £2.6 billion National Cyber Strategy the government is driving growth and innovation in the UK cyber security sector. This includes the Cyber Runway programme to grow, develop and scale cyber security businesses, and our network of regional cyber clusters which are driving growth across all regions of the UK by supporting businesses in areas such as Northern Ireland, Yorkshire and the North West.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Care Leavers

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[97714]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is she taking to help ensure that each local authority is providing sufficient, good quality housing and care support for care leavers and other care experienced young people.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is providing £99 million to local authorities over this spending review to help care leavers stay with their foster families after they turn 18 in a Staying Put



arrangement, so they can continue to benefit from a stable and secure family setting as they transition to independence. We are also providing £36 million to extend the Staying Close pilot so that more care leavers leaving children's homes will be supported with move-on accommodation and support from a trusted adult. An additional £3.2 million is being given to local authorities this year to provide extra support to care leavers at highest risk of rough sleeping.

In addition, the department is providing £36.4 million this spending review for Personal Advisors to support care leavers up to age 25, helping them navigate services such as housing, health or benefits and providing practical or emotional support to help them prepare for living independently.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[97715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to reduce the proportion of care experienced young people who are not in education, employment or training.

**Robert Halfon:**

Reducing the proportion of care experienced young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a priority for the department. The latest data for year ending March 2022 showed that 38% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were NEET, down from 41% in 2021. The department will publish a detailed implementation strategy in response to the recommendations of The Independent Review of Children's Social Care in early 2023.

Through the Care Leaver Covenant we launched in 2018, over 350 businesses and higher education institutions are offering employment opportunities and tailored support to care leavers. NHS England, NHS Professionals and the John Lewis Partnership are among the latest organisations to sign the Covenant and between them will be offering over 1000 employment opportunities over the next three years.

In October 2021 the department launched a £3 million pilot in 30 local authorities to extend Pupil Premium Plus funding to looked-after children and care leavers in post-16 education. This initially ran until March 2022 and has been extended with an additional £5 million of funding now supporting a total of 58 local authorities in 2022/23.

There is also support for care leavers starting an apprenticeship, who are entitled to a £1,000 bursary and local authorities must provide a £2,000 bursary for care leavers who go to university.

The department established the Civil Service care leaver internship scheme in 2014, which has led to over 800 care leavers taking up paid jobs across government.

## ■ Education: Asylum

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[94792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to ensure that all asylum seekers can access courses in (a) further and (b) higher education.

**Robert Halfon:**

Access to post-16 education for asylum seekers is governed by funding rules in further education (FE) and higher education (HE).

In FE, asylum seekers aged 19 and over who have lived in the UK for six months or longer while awaiting the outcome of their application, and no decision on their claim has been made, are eligible to receive funding through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). For asylum seekers aged 16-19, the department will fund those who have applied for asylum as well, as those who have been granted asylum status by the Home Office.

In HE, eligibility requirements for student support usually means that a student resident in England should have 'settled' status or a recognised connection with the UK, and have been a resident of the UK, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course. However, an exception to the three-year ordinary residence requirement is made for students with refugee status and humanitarian protection. This means that immediate access to HE student support is available once a person has been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection by the Home Office.

**■ Education: Exports****Matt Western:**[\[94841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to update the stated ambitions of the International Education Strategy 2019.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department continues to work towards the two ambitions in the International Education Strategy to increase the value of our education exports to £35 billion per year, and to continue to host at least 600,000 international students in the UK per year, both by 2030.

In 2019, the total UK revenue from education-related exports and transnational education activity was estimated to be £25.2 billion. The 600,000 international students' ambition was met for the first time in 2020/2021, and around 10 years early with 605,130 international students studying in the UK. We are now focusing on bringing in £35 billion from our education exports by 2030.

Education exports make an important contribution to the UK economy as well as helping us build global relationships and international students enrich the university experience for all students, including those from the UK themselves. Attracting the brightest students from around the world is good for our universities and delivers growth at home, as well as supporting the creation of more places for UK students.

## ■ Foster Care: Allowances

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[97609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had recent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential feasibility of raising the Minimum Fostering Allowance in line with inflation.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The national minimum allowance (NMA) is uprated annually, with the next update to come into effect in April 2023. As part of the process of uprating, the department will discuss with HM Treasury as required.

The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, issued by the department under the Care Standards Act 2000 (CSA), set out the expectations that are placed on foster parents and their agencies. The department is clear that no one should be 'out of pocket' because of their fostering role and we expect all foster parents to receive at least the NMA plus any agreed expenses to cover the full cost of caring for each child placed with them (Standard 28).

## ■ Higher Education: Europe

**Matt Western:**

[\[94838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the potential financial effect on UK universities of the requirement that they self-fund Round 2 bids to the European Universities Initiative.

**Matt Western:**

[\[94839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she will provide (a) financial and (b) material support to higher education institutions which have submitted a Round 2 bid for the European Universities Initiative.

**Matt Western:**

[\[94840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to replace the funding to support the three UK universities' ongoing participation in the European Universities Initiative.

**Robert Halfon:**

UK universities, as autonomous institutions, can seek to participate in the European Universities Initiative on a self-funded basis, as associated partners. No recent assessment has been made of the potential financial effect of the requirement that they self-fund.

The department is committed to strong research collaboration with our European partners, and to strengthening those links with Europe as well as building new relationships. The UK is a world-leading destination for study and research and we remain an important partner of choice for European universities.

The recently announced package of nearly £500 million in additional targeted support builds on the 'Horizon Europe guarantee' scheme and will provide investment to UK

researchers, universities and research organisations, boosting research and innovation across the breadth of the country.

■ **Nurseries: Finance**

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[97664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Autumn Statement 2022 and the announcement of an additional £2.3 billion of funding for education in 2023 and 2024, whether that funding will be available to maintained nursery schools.

**Claire Coutinho:**

In the 2022 Autumn Statement, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor did not commit to new measures for early years, including maintained nursery schools (MNS).

The department has increased funding to local authorities to increase the hourly rates they pay to childcare providers, including MNS, and we are providing additional support for all early years providers with their energy costs over the winter. Further, specifically for MNS, the department has already announced that an additional £10 million will be invested into MNS supplementary funding from 2023/24. This is in addition to the increase to supplementary funding in 2022/23, where the department increased the hourly funding rate by 3.5%, which is equivalent to the increase in the 3 and 4-year-old hourly funding rates. The department has confirmed the continuation of MNS supplementary funding throughout the spending review period, providing the sector with long-term certainty.

■ **Pupil Premium: Children in Care**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[97716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that children in the care system receive the full benefit of the pupil premium funding to which they are entitled, in the context of the educational attainment gap for experienced by young people in care.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[97717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is she taking to help raise the attainment of children and young people who have experienced care.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is committed to ensuring that care experienced children and young people are supported to succeed in education and achieve positive outcomes. Every local authority in England must appoint a Virtual School Head, who has a statutory duty to promote the educational attainment of all children in their care. Looked-after children have priority in school admission and attract Pupil Premium Plus funding of £2,410 per child, up to age 16. This is managed by the Virtual School Head, who works with the child's education setting to deliver objectives in the child's individual Personal Education Plan. Since September 2018 Virtual School Heads also have a duty to promote the educational achievement of pupils who are no longer looked after.

Our statutory guidance sets out Virtual School Heads' duties, whilst Ofsted's inspection framework for local authorities instructs inspectors to look at the effectiveness and impact of the virtual school on outcomes for children in care, including the use of Pupil Premium Plus.

In October 2021 we launched a £3 million pilot in 30 local authorities to extend Pupil Premium Plus funding to looked-after children and care leavers in post-16 education. This initially ran until March 2022 and has been extended with an additional £5 million of funding now supporting a total of 58 local authorities in 2022/23.

## ■ Refugees: Ukraine

**Rachael Maskell:**

[94795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to provide additional support to the childcare sector to help Ukrainian parents to work.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department continues to work across government to ensure we are supporting all Ukrainians in the UK to give them the same access to public services in education and childcare as a UK citizen.

Families, including those from Ukraine, can get help towards childcare depending on their circumstances:

- All parents of 3 and 4-year-olds can access 15 free hours of childcare per week across 38 weeks of the year
- Eligible working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds can access an additional 15 hours of childcare, known as the '30 Hours' entitlement
- Disadvantaged 2-year-olds may be eligible to access 15 free hours of childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is available for working parents, including those from Ukraine, of children aged 0 to 11, or up to 16 for some children with disabilities. This has the same eligibility criteria as the '30 Hours' free childcare entitlement. This scheme can save parents up to £2,000 per year, or up to £4,000 for children with disabilities, and can be used alongside 30 Hours free childcare. The eligibility criteria for Tax-Free Childcare can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare?msclkid=5e8b1bedc0aa11ec97e71029c9622d44>.

The department has made education and childcare funding available for children who have entered via the Homes for Ukraine visa route. This funding is payable to local authorities in England for the provision of education and childcare for children ages 2 to 18. The funding can be used to provide a place for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds accessing the 2-year-old, universal or 30 hours entitlements. The full grant conditions attached to the funding are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-for-ukraine-education-and-childcare-funding/homes-for-ukraine-education-and-childcare-grant-conditions-of-funding>.

Some parents from Ukraine may want to work in the early years sector, and there is a system to recognise their qualifications in this field. Anyone with an early years qualification awarded in Ukraine, or elsewhere, can apply through a dedicated service run by UK ECCTIS in collaboration with the department to have that qualification 'mapped' against the Level 2 Early Years Practitioner or Level 3 Early Years Educator criteria. Where a qualification meets some, but not all of our criteria, there is the option to either complete a supervised adaptation period, or undertake additional units, to become qualified.

## ■ Schools: Finance

**Ian Byrne:** [\[97665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Autumn Statement 2022 and the announcement of an additional £2.3 billion of funding for education in 2023 and 2024, when she plans for that funding to become available to schools.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[97666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Autumn Statement 2022 and the announcement of an additional £2.3 billion of funding for education in 2023 and 2024, how that funding will be distributed; and whether schools in areas of higher deprivation will receive proportionately larger sums of funding.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[97667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, to ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Autumn Statement 2022 and the announcement of an additional £2.3 billion of funding for education in 2023 and 2024, whether that funding will be (a) ringfenced for specific uses or (b) available for schools to spend on staff salaries.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[97668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Autumn Statement 2022 and the announcement of an additional £2.3 billion of funding for education in 2023 and 2024, whether that funding will be (a) ringfenced for specific uses or (b) available for schools to distribute in line with their priorities.

**Nick Gibb:**

Overall core schools funding, including funding for both mainstream and high needs schools, will increase by £2.3 billion in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. After adjusting budgets down to take account of the removal of the compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy, this brings the core schools budget to a total of £58.8 billion in 2024/25. This is £2 billion greater than published in the 2021 Spending Review.

The Department will set out plans for the allocation of the additional funding announced at the 2022 Autumn Statement shortly. Additional funding will be available to both Local Authority maintained schools and academies, and to Local Authorities, from April 2023.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[97792]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate she has made of trends in the level of real terms school funding in the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

The increase in funding announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement will restore funding to at least 2010 levels, in real terms per pupil by 2024/25.

#### ■ **Schools: Nurses**

**Sarah Olney:**

[97783]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) primary and (b) secondary schools had a school nurse in each region in each of the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

Information on the state funded school workforce in England, including the number of support staff employed by schools each November, is published in the annual 'School Workforce in England' national statistics release at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

#### ■ **Special Educational Needs: Staff**

**Geraint Davies:**

[97401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of the number of specialist staff that will be required to implement the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan; and whether her Department has this number of specialist staff as of 28 November 2022.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department knows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) frequently require access to additional support from a broad specialist workforce across education, health and care. As my hon. Friend, the Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy, explained on 25 November 2022, the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper sets out proposals to commission analysis to ensure that the health needs of children and young people with SEND are supported through effective workforce planning.

The department is already taking steps to increase the capacity of the specialist workforce. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced on 29 November 2022 that we are investing £21 million into training 400 more educational psychologists, who play a critical role in the educational support available to children with SEND.



## ■ Students

**Dr Neil Hudson:**

**[94919]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Statement 2022 on university students.

**Robert Halfon:**

The government recognises the additional cost of living pressures that have arisen this year and impacted students. To better understand the impact of the rising cost of living for university students, the department commissioned the ONS to survey a sample of HE students between October 24 and November 7. The report based on this survey was published on 23 November and is available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/costoflivingandhighereducationstudentsengland/24octoberto7november2022>.

There is £261 million of student premium funding available this academic year to support disadvantaged HE students in need of additional help. The department is working with the Office for Students to ensure universities support students in hardship, using both hardship funds and drawing on the student premium. In addition, all households will save on their energy bills through the Energy Price Guarantee and the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme discount. Students who buy their energy from a domestic supplier are eligible for the energy bills discount. Students whose bills are included in their rent, including energy charges, will typically have agreed their accommodation costs upfront when signing their contract for the current academic year.

A HM Treasury-led review will be launched to consider how to support households and businesses with energy bills after April 2023.

## ■ T-levels

**Zarah Sultana:**

**[97662]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to ensure that students on T-level work placements are (a) paid for their labour in line with the national living wage and (b) have opportunities to develop relevant skills and experience on such placements.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department is committed to ensuring students have access to high quality T Level industry placements. Industry placements provide young people with the knowledge and experience needed to open the door into skilled employment, further study, or a higher apprenticeship.

T Level industry placements are about providing students with high-quality, meaningful training, rather than providing job roles. As the placement is forming part of a course of further education, there is no legal requirement or expectation to pay students on industry placements. However, employers can optionally choose to pay students, or fund students' travel and subsistence, if they would like to.



The department has provided an extensive programme of employer and provider support to help with the delivery of high-quality placements where students can develop relevant skills and experiences for their T Level and beyond. The support offers providers and employers tailored advice, guidance, and hands-on support to deliver high-quality placements at scale. We have invested over £240 million over the past 4 years to help providers build their capacity and relationships with employers and have developed a comprehensive package of advice and guidance to support providers to deliver placements, as well as networking opportunities to share best practice.

To provide a strong pipeline of employers across all sectors and areas of the country, the department is engaging directly with employers of all sizes throughout the UK, via the department's employer engagement teams, to promote the benefits of T Levels and of hosting industry placements. We have a T Level Ambassador Network that is continuing to recruit T Level advocates across key industries to inspire engagement in the T Level programme, and in January this year we launched our 'Join the Skills Revolution' campaign, which promotes government's training and employment schemes, including T Levels, to employers.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agriculture: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[97613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to review the (a) financial and (b) other support available for upland farmers in Areas of Outstanding National Beauty.

**Mark Spencer:**

We have a range of offers available to upland farmers within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). At the moment, farmers can access Countryside Stewardship which offers multi-year payments to maintain and enhance on farm environments. Currently, 75% of priority habitat that is above the moorland line is within such an environmental agreement.

We also have a range of grant offers to upland farms so that they can invest in their productivity. More offers will open shortly, such as those for slurry infrastructure. For farmers in Protected Landscapes in England (including AONBs), the Farming in Protected Landscape programme offers funding to support farm businesses to deliver projects across the four themes of the programme; climate, nature, people and place.

We have worked regularly with a group of stakeholders, including farmers and practitioners, to develop a specific Moorland Standard within the Sustainable Farming Incentive Scheme. This standard has the sole focus and eligibility on land mapped above the moorland line in the uplands of England. It forms an integral part of the offer for those farming in the uplands alongside the other elements of the scheme

they may also be eligible for. This is the first offer that we will build more onto over time.

### ■ **Animal Products: Import Controls**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[90784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of trends in public opinion on banning the importation of animal products, including fur, where the production methods used are already illegal in the UK; if she will make it her policy to legislate for such a ban; and if she will make a statement.

**Mark Spencer:**

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare. Our commitment to improve animal welfare standards is set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare.

In May 2021, Defra published a formal call for evidence on the fur trade in Great Britain. We received around 30,000 responses from businesses, representative bodies, and individuals, demonstrating the strong public interest in this area. We are carefully reviewing the evidence gathered both from our Call for Evidence and wider engagement with the fur trade and stakeholders, and a summary of responses will be published soon.

### ■ **Avian Influenza: Disease Control**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[97468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to help tackle recent outbreaks of avian flu.

**Mark Spencer:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, on 17 November 2022, [PQ UIN 84854](#).

### ■ **Deposit Return Schemes**

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[94835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps will be taken in the design of England's DRS to avoid material switching from smaller formats to larger containers.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In our 2021 consultation, we set out a proposal that the Deposit Management Organisation would be able to decide whether to have a fixed or variable deposit. A variable deposit could help prevent significant shifts in consumer behaviour. Further details on next steps for DRS will be set out in the upcoming Government's response to the 2021 consultation. We are working towards publication shortly.

## ■ Deposit Return Schemes: Cost Benefit Analysis

**Wera Hobhouse:** [94834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will publish an updated cost-benefit analysis of the introduction of DRS against current recycling rates.

**Wera Hobhouse:** [94836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will publish the full evidence behind in the decision to exclude glass from the Deposit Return Scheme, including the assessment it would have had on glass recycling and impact on consumer behaviour.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Government published a consultation stage impact assessment alongside the publication of our 2021 consultation in March 2021, and can be found here - [https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/consultation-on-introducing-a-drs/supporting\\_documents/Impact%20Assessment.pdf](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/consultation-on-introducing-a-drs/supporting_documents/Impact%20Assessment.pdf). Further details on next steps for DRS will be set out in the upcoming Government's response to the 2021 consultation. We are working towards publication shortly. We are continuing to update our cost benefit analysis and will publish a Final Impact Assessment in advance of the DRS regulations being laid in Parliament.

## ■ Electronic Cigarettes

**Patrick Grady:** [97574]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing regulations to tackle waste caused by disposable vape products.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Disposable vapes are covered by the Government's regulations on producer responsibility for waste electrical and electronic equipment. Defra has not undertaken an assessment of the potential merits of introducing additional regulations at this time.

Our current priority is to work with regulators and the vaping sector to ensure producers, internet sellers and retailers of vaping products understand their obligations under environmental legislation and comply.

## ■ Electronic Cigarettes: Waste

**Mr David Jones:** [95803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential environmental impact of discarded disposable e-cigarettes.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Department has not undertaken an assessment of the environmental impact of disposable vapes in the UK.

Our current priority is to work with regulators and the vaping sector to ensure producers, internet sellers and retailers of vaping products understand their obligations under environmental legislation and comply.

■ **Environment Agency: Pay and Vacancies****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[95885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of (a) staff shortages and (b) real terms pay in the Environmental Agency.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency's (EA's) staff are vital to its work to protect the environment, people and wildlife from harm.

The EA aims to achieve the best possible settlement for all its employees within the constraints of the Government pay guidance and in negotiation with Trade Unions.

The EA is at the beginning of a planned recruitment campaign into roles identified and funded through the most recent spending review, which comprise the majority of its vacancies, in order to deliver on the goals of its corporate report: EA2025.

The EA is covered by the annually published Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance, which sets out headline ranges for average pay awards. It is recognised that these headline ranges are not currently in line with inflation.

■ **Flood Control****Alex Sobel:**[\[97748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many severe flood warnings were issued by the Environment Agency in each year since 2010.

**Alex Sobel:**[\[97749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many flood warnings were issued by the Environment Agency in each year since 2010.

**Alex Sobel:**[\[97750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many flood alerts were issued by the Environment Agency in each year since 2010.

**Rebecca Pow:****ENGLAND ONLY**

Year	Flood Alerts	Flood Warnings	Severe Flood
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**ENGLAND ONLY**

			Warnings
2010	1593	303	2
2011	1088	163	0
2012	3701	1832	15
2013	2646	921	73
2014	3514	1465	74
2015	2507	960	101
2016	3137	800	3
2017	3140	542	25
2018	2317	466	0
2019	3437	1297	8
2020	3536	1892	22
2021	2624	864	7
2022 (Jan-Nov)	1764	501	14

■ **Forests: Northern Ireland****Jim Shannon:**[\[83627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland on the conservation of forests.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Forestry is a devolved area, however Defra and the Devolved Administrations engage regularly at technical and official levels on issues related to the conservation of forests, for example through the UK Forestry Governance Group and the Net Zero UK Working Group, with representatives from all four nations meeting to share data and increase collaboration.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Air Pollution****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[94832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has made an assessment on the efficacy of installing in-road apparatus to

reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions and concentrations of particulate matter from motor vehicles on UK roads.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is aware of this emerging technology but notes that it is still in development. Currently there is limited peer reviewed evidence available on real world application and the impact of the technology on concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. Defra and DfT will continue to assess the operational relevance of promising science and technology such as this on an ongoing basis.

■ **National Parks: Finance**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[94727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to media reports of financial strain on National Park Authorities, if he will publish the (a) land, (b) buildings, (c) visitor centres and (d) children's outdoor education centres at risk of being sold off or closed in order to cover Authorities' short term budgetary shortfalls.

**Trudy Harrison:**

National Park Authorities are responsible for balancing their budgets and we are aware that they are considering options to manage current inflationary pressures. No final decisions have yet been taken and therefore DEFRA does not hold the specific information requested.

■ **Packaging: Recycling**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[95846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will enable recycling all glass food and drink packaging at the kerbside via the new system of Extended Producer Responsibility and consistent household collections as outlined in the Government's response to the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging consultation of March 2022.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Act 2021 stipulates that local authorities in England must make arrangements for a core set of materials to be collected for recycling from households. This core set includes glass. Our 2019 consistent collection government response confirmed that local authorities in England would have to collect at least glass bottles and containers. Last year we published a second consultation on recycling consistency, seeking views on the materials in scope of collection in each of the recyclable waste streams that will be included in regulations. We will publish our response in due course. The payments local authorities will receive for household packaging under EPR will support the delivery of the UK government's proposals for consistent household recycling collections. Glass food and drinks packaging will be in scope of EPR in England, which will place targets on producers in relation to glass recycling and require them to pay for the cost of managing glass packaging generated by households.

## ■ Water: Sewage

**Alex Sobel:**

[97758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many personnel were employed full-time to the Storms Overflow Taskforce in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

**Rebecca Pow:**

There were no personnel employed full-time to the Storm Overflow Taskforce, as members were made up of representatives employed across the water sector. All available information relating to the Storm Overflows Taskforce and its membership is available online: [Storm Overflows Taskforce - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/storm-overflows-taskforce) .

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## ■ Asia-Pacific Region: Russia

**Catherine West:**

[97713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of Russia's foreign policy commitments in the Asia Pacific region and their impact on (a) British influence and (b) stability in the region.

**Leo Docherty:**

As part of Russia's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov recently attended the East Asia Summit in Cambodia and the G20 in Indonesia. Russia's actions in Ukraine challenge the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and break international rules. Together with our partners we remain steadfast in condemning Russia's behaviour. We welcome the number of countries across the Indo-Pacific that voted in the UN to condemn and isolate Russia and will continue to make the argument that Russia is an unreliable and untrustworthy partner.

## ■ Asylum: Foreign Nationals

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[87782]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many applications have been received from foreign nationals for asylum in each of the British Overseas Territories in the last 12 months.

**David Rutley:**

Immigration is devolved to the inhabited British Overseas Territories. As such, any information on the numbers of applications received from foreign nationals for asylum will be held by Overseas Territory Governments. The UK Government is providing support to build local capacity in the Overseas Territories which are receiving claims for asylum, notably the Cayman Islands.

## ■ Bahrain: Elections

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[92361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the letter sent to the Prime Minister on 11 November 2022 by 12 members of both Houses of Parliament on elections in Bahrain, if he will take steps to call upon Bahrain to (a) release opposition leaders, political prisoners and death row inmates and (b) repeal political isolation laws; and if he will make it his policy not to recognise the outcome of Bahrain's elections.

**David Rutley:**

The Government has taken note of the letter in question. Parliamentary elections took place in Bahrain on 12 and 19 November, which were peaceful and were monitored by local NGOs and civil society groups. The UK draws on a number of sources of information when determining its approach in Bahrain and elsewhere. Ministers and officials have regular discussions with senior Bahraini counterparts on human rights, including on specific cases, most recently during the Foreign Secretary's meetings with HRH the Crown Prince and the Foreign Minister of Bahrain in November in Manama.

## ■ Development Aid: Females

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[97654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance has been disbursed to local women's rights organisations in each of the five previous years for which there is data.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

FCDO recognises that grassroots women's rights organisations (WROs) are critical to achieving lasting transformation across all our gender equality objectives and we are committed to stepping up our work in this area.

The below table outlines UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend on the 'women's rights organisations, and movements, and government institutions' sector, as defined by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. It includes spend on WROs and on technical assistance to national governments and international institutions to progress work on women's rights.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bilateral	£43.5million	£22.2million	£21.8million	£17.9million	£14.8million
Imputed multilateral share	£6.2million	£11.3million	£10.8million	£6.3million	TBA

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2021>



## ■ Development Aid: United Nations Population Fund

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[97653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance spending has been disbursed to programmes delivered by the United Nations Population Fund in each of the last five years for which data is available.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Table 1 shows the volume of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending that has been disbursed to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in each of the last five years.

Part of the UK's ODA spending to UNFPA is unearmarked funding which is pooled with other donors' funding and disbursed as part of the UNFPA's core budget.

The other part of UK ODA flows through UNFPA as bilateral ODA, where UNFPA is acting as the delivery partner for UK bilateral aid programmes i.e. those where the funding is earmarked for a specific purpose or fund.

£ THOUSANDS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Core contributions (unearmarked) to UNFPA budget	120,485	150,301	191,026	70,471	57,516
Contributions to UNFPA earmarked for particular purpose	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	8,000
Total	140,485	170,301	211,026	90,471	65,516

Source: Statistics on International Development

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Civil Servants

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[92229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the findings were of Civil Service People Surveys undertaken between July 2019 to September 2021 for staff working in the private offices of Ministers in his Department.

**David Rutley:**

The People Survey is an annual survey that all Civil Servants have the opportunity to participate in. It provides us with valuable insights into the experiences and thoughts of our staff, and therefore has strict controls to protect the anonymity of respondents.

As part of these controls, we do not release data for sub-teams that have a small number of staff - this prevents individual staff members from being identified by their responses. FCDO's overall scores for the survey has been published and can be found here: Civil Service people surveys - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-service-people-surveys#full-publication-update-history>

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Pacific

**Catherine West:** [\[97711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff hired in the UK by his Department are deployed in region at the Pacific Development Unit.

**David Rutley:**

The publication of the Integrated Review in March 2021 affirmed the UK's increased focus and long-term commitment to the Indo-Pacific. The UK has since increased its diplomatic presence in the region. This includes the opening of a Pacific and Development Unit at our High Commission in Canberra, which will co-ordinate our efforts to help meet Pacific needs and support the resilience and operations of our six High Commissions in the region.

Recruitment is currently underway for new roles for this unit, and the first UK-based officer will arrive in early 2023.

## ■ Health: Research

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[97755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Government has allocated to global health R&D in each of the last five years.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Development Office's central Research and Evidence Directorate over the last five financial years is as follows:

2018/19 - £132.33 million

2019/20 - £155.41 million

2020/21 - £371.86 million

2021/22 - £75.33 million

2022/23 - Final and audited spend for 2022/23 will be published in our annual report at the end of the financial year.

## ■ India: Visas

**Christina Rees:**

[\[95890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart about UK citizens needing to complete a paper-based visa application, before visiting India; and what steps he has taken to have the e-Tourist visa reinstated.

**David Rutley:**

The FCDO has regularly lobbied the Government of India (GoI) to improve visa services for British Citizens and will continue to update Travel Advice on GOV.UK with the latest information. Most recently, the Foreign Secretary raised the lack of e-visas for British Citizens with the Indian External Affairs Minister during his visit to India on 29 October. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon also raised it with the Indian High Commissioner on 25 October. We will continue to press India to re-introduce e-visas for British Citizens.

## ■ Iran: Capital Punishment

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[89917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Iranian counterpart on the potential imposition of the death penalty on protesters in that country.

**David Rutley:**

The sentencing to death of protestors in Iran is abhorrent. I (Minister Rutley) condemned this tragic development in the House on 16 November. The UK opposes the death penalty in all circumstances, in all countries, as a matter of principle. The UK is committed to challenging the Iranian regime's violent response to recent protests. On 14 November, the UK sanctioned 24 individuals for violations of human rights in the repression of protests. This was on top of the sanctions of 10 October against the so-called 'morality police' and seven security officials. The UK is also working with international partners to hold Iran to account for its violent response to the protests. This includes through the full range of multilateral fora, including the Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Security Council, G7 and the UN General Assembly Third Committee.

## ■ Iran: Israel

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[92166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of who the perpetrators were of the drone attack against a tanker off the coast of Oman on 16 November 2022.

**David Rutley:**

The UK condemns the recent drone attack on MV PACIFIC ZIRCON. We remain committed to assuring the safety of shipping in the Middle East region, including through the Gulf of Oman. The UK is a member of the International Maritime Security

Construct, along with several Gulf partners, which addresses the threat in the region by providing reassurance to commercial shipping and deterring further threats. We note recent reporting that Iran may be behind the attack. We will work with partners to ensure that those responsible are held to account.

## ■ Iran: Sanctions

**Julian Sturdy:** [\[89801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to take further steps to (a) condemn and (b) sanction Iranian regime officials.

**David Rutley:**

The UK is committed to challenging the Iranian regime's violent response to recent protests. On 14 November, the UK sanctioned 24 individuals for violations of human rights in the repression of protests. This was on top of the sanctions of 10 October against the so-called 'morality police' and seven security officials. The UK is also working with international partners to hold Iran to account for its violent response to the protests. This includes through the full range of multilateral fora, including the Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Security Council, G7 and the UN General Assembly Third Committee.

## ■ Iran: Women's Rights

**Afzal Khan:** [\[95930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government is taking steps to help support women protestors in Iran.

**David Rutley:**

Mahsa Amini's death was a shocking reminder of the repression faced by women in Iran. On 14 November, the UK sanctioned 24 leading political and security officials in Iran for their role in the brutal crackdown on protests. These sanctions send a clear message that the UK will hold Iran to account for its repression of women and girls. At a Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 24 November, the UK and our partners secured the establishment of an investigative mechanism into the regime's response to protests - an important step towards accountability. The UK will continue to work with our partners to ensure this delivers for the people of Iran, not least the women and girls bravely protesting for their freedom.

## ■ Middle East: Electricity Generation

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[92170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the Blue and Green Prosperity Memorandum of Understanding signed between Israel, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates.

**David Rutley:**

The UK welcomes the landmark agreement between Israel, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates - three great friends of the UK - to facilitate solar/water cooperation. Climate change requires fresh thinking, creativity and cross-border cooperation. This agreement aims to support both Israel's energy needs and Jordan's water needs. The UK continues to encourage close regional cooperation to tackle regional challenges, including through our support for the Abraham Accords.

**■ Myanmar: Politics and Government****Catherine West:**[\[97712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in ASEAN countries on (a) the situation in Myanmar and (b) strategies to reduce the import of aviation fuel to that country.

**David Rutley:**

The UK regularly raises the situation in Myanmar with ASEAN counterparts, including at Ministerial and Secretary of State level.

The UK is very concerned by the military's use of indiscriminate airstrikes against civilians. The UK has been clear that we oppose the provision of jet fuel, arms and military equipment to Myanmar. On 8 February 2022 we strengthened our public Overseas Business Risk (OBR) guidance to provide specific guidance to businesses on exporting aviation related goods, including jet fuel, to Myanmar. This includes calling on all businesses to conduct thorough supply chain due diligence.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Agency Nurses****Grahame Morris:**[\[97563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the use of agency nurses in the NHS.

**Will Quince:**

In 2015, we introduced measures to reduce spending on agency staff, including price caps, procurement frameworks and expenditure ceilings. This has contributed to the National Health Service reducing expenditure from £3.6 billion in 2015/16 to £2.4 billion in 2020/21. In September 2022, NHS England re-established such measures, including a system agency expenditure limit and we have worked with NHS trusts to develop staff banks.

## ■ Ambulance Services: Standards

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[94804]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether her Department is taking steps to (a) identify and (b) implement best practice from other countries on improving ambulance response times.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 28 November 2022]:* The ambulance service maintains an overview of international clinical literature and evidence and takes account of developments and improvements as appropriate.

NHS England is providing targeted support to some hospitals facing delays in the transfer of patients from ambulances in addition to a Winter Improvement Collaborative programme to identify the causes of handover delays and implement best practice. This will be supported by an additional £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to improve urgent and emergency care performance. The National Health Service will set out detailed recovery plans in the new year, including plans to improve Category 2 ambulance response times to pre-pandemic levels.

## ■ Breasts: Plastic Surgery

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[88005]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women (a) have a PIP breast implant, (b) have been informed that that implant poses a health risks, (c) have been offered a PIP breast implant removal and (d) have had a PIP implant removal by the NHS.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 18 November 2022]:* While specific information on the number of women in the United Kingdom currently with PIP breast implants is not held centrally, it is estimated that approximately 47,000 British women received these implants.

In 2010, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) published 'Silicone gel filled breast implants - advice on clinical management of women with implants' which provided actions for implanting surgeons to identify women with PIP silicone gel filled implants received after 1 January 2001. In 2012, the MHRA published further advice in 'Silicone gel filled breast implants - updated information on filler'. Women with PIP implants were advised to speak to their doctor to discuss appropriate action. The National Health Service will remove these implants on agreement with their clinician where it is clinically necessary. Guidance for patients is published at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pip-implants/>

Data on the number of women contacted by their healthcare professional regarding their implant is not held centrally. The Breast and Cosmetic Implant Registry (BCIR) was created in 2016 and shows that 593 patients had undergone surgery to remove a

PIP implant. However, it does not record whether this surgery was funded by the NHS.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Immunosuppression**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[97698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a covid protection strategy for immunocompromised patients.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are existing interventions for those at higher risk from COVID-19 infection due to their immune system. This includes prioritisation for vaccinations and booster doses and access to therapeutic and antiviral treatments. Guidance has also been issued for this patient cohort, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-gu>

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[97402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2022 to Question 88800 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, for what reason the marketing authorisation holder did not submit the six month safety follow-up data in subjects aged between five and 11 years old from study C4591007 by July 2022 as required by condition nine; and whether an extension was granted following a request by the marketing authorisation holder.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Prior to the planned submission date, Pfizer-BioNTech advised the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) that there had been delays in obtaining the data for the report and requested an extension. The MHRA assessed any potential risk to public health and considered the significant post-marketing safety data already available from the use of the Comirnaty vaccine in children, which did not indicate any new safety concerns in this age group. An extension was agreed and the MHRA continues to monitor the safety of Comirnaty in children and adults through its surveillance strategy and will act promptly to protect public health, should any new safety concerns arise.

## ■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Redundancy**

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[97772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants in his Department.

**Will Quince:**

There are no active voluntary exit schemes in the Department. Voluntary exit schemes are a commonly used workforce management process available to Departments based on specific workforce needs.

■ **Dyslexia: Waiting Lists****Steve McCabe:**[\[92077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there is a backlog of people waiting for a dyslexia diagnosis.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 28 November 2022]:* The information requested is not held centrally. There is no specific NHS service offering dyslexia testing or assessments and NHS England has no current plans to introduce this within the NHS Long Term Plan. The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence has no specific guideline on the maximum waiting time for a dyslexia diagnosis.

■ **Gender Recognition: Health****Apsana Begum:**[\[94890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the impact of the decision not to include transgender people in the ban conversion therapy practices on the health and wellbeing of transgender people.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department is working with the Government Equalities Office, which continues to engage with stakeholders on conversion therapy practices to assess the impact of the ban on the health and wellbeing of individuals.

■ **Hospitals: Construction****Wes Streeting:**[\[86660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new surgical hubs the New Hospital Programme is expected to deliver.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2022]:* The New Hospital Programme is a new long-term approach to building hospitals that will transform how we deliver infrastructure for the National Health Service (NHS). The new hospitals, as well as being built more efficiently, will enable greater productivity in treatment and care across a wide range of areas, ensuring our facilities remain on the cutting edge of innovation and technology to deliver world-class care.

The New Hospital Programme is a separate initiative from the Elective Recovery programme. The Department through the Elective Recovery programme is increasing the number of surgical hubs across the country as part of our plan to help patients



access vital procedures quicker. We have already delivered 91 surgical hubs, which are providing vital capacity to deliver high volume low complexity procedures. We are working with the NHS to identify areas which will benefit most from new surgical hubs and where we can expand existing surgical hubs, backed by £1.5 billion. Location decisions for the surgical hubs are clinically led, to tackle local healthcare inequalities while promoting the best outcomes for patients, and delivering value for taxpayers.

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[88955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the guidance entitled Health Infrastructure Plan: selection process for the next eight new hospitals, updated on 9 September 2021, what his planned timetable is for announcing which eight NHS trusts have been selected.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 22 November 2022]:* We received 128 expressions of interest from trusts and these submissions are currently being reviewed. We aim to announce the final decision before the end of the year.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[84923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the findings of the NHS England investigation into the administration of QIVe flu vaccine to patients aged 65 years or older.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2022]:* NHS England has identified a very small number of patients 65 years old and over who have not received the recommended flu vaccine for this age group. NHS England has written to providers to reiterate the recommended vaccines to use for each cohort. Local National Health Service teams are working with those providers where this has occurred to determine if it is appropriate to invite those affected to receive a further dose.

While the information requested is not currently held centrally, NHS regional teams are working with providers to collate further details.

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[84924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients aged 65 or over who had been inappropriately given the QIVe flu vaccine have been offered the opportunity to receive a vaccine which is appropriate for their age group since 5 October 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2022]:* NHS England has identified a very small number of patients 65 years old and over who have not received the recommended flu vaccine for this age group. NHS England has written to providers to reiterate the recommended vaccines to use for each cohort. Local National Health Service teams

are working with those providers where this has occurred to determine if it is appropriate to invite those affected to receive a further dose.

While the information requested is not currently held centrally, NHS regional teams are working with providers to collate further details.

## ■ Lumbar Puncture

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[92326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to support the NHS in preparing for the next generation of treatment that may require lumbar puncture.

**Will Quince:**

National Health Service organisations are expected to adapt care pathways and treatment plans in the light of advances in technology and clinical techniques, which may include lumbar punctures where appropriate.

## ■ Maternity Services

**Wes Streeting:** [\[65886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate she has made of the number of maternity units open in England in each of the last five years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 25 October 2022]:* While data is not held for 2018, there have been 157 obstetric units in 122 National Health Service trusts providing maternity care in England in each year since 2017.

In addition to obstetric units, some trusts may have freestanding midwifery units or alongside midwifery units. This would be based on the configuration of Trusts and the type of maternity services needed at a local level. The Department does not hold data on the number of freestanding midwifery units and alongside midwifery units open in England in each of the last five years.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Dave Doogan:** [\[71273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when she will respond to the correspondence of 17 January 2022 from the hon. Member for Angus on Guillain-Barré Syndrome, case reference DD5474.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2022]:* We have not received the hon. Member's correspondence.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Private Sector

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[95891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the standard of care provided by private providers for NHS inpatient mental health treatment.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2022]:* The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) 'The state of health care and adult social care in England 2021/22' stated that 77% of mental health core services were rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' at the most recent inspection. Of this, 80% of National Health Service providers received a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rating, compared to 73% of independent healthcare organisations.

All providers must register with the CQC and follow fundamental standards of safety and quality below which care should never fall. In addition, NHS England has frameworks in place to ensure improvements in quality by all providers and allow oversight and assurance to identify, escalate and take action on issues where necessary.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Veterans

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[\[96674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to record how many veterans are seen by NHS commissioned services for mental health support.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England records the numbers of veterans accessing the directly commissioned bespoke veterans' mental health service Op COURAGE, which is comprised of three services: the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS); Complex Treatment Service (CTS); and the High Intensity Service (HIS). As at 30 September 2022, 21,687 veterans have been referred to TILS, with 2,728 referrals to CTS and 1,576 referrals to HIS.

Veteran status is also collected by mental health providers for veterans accessing Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. Between April and June 2022, there were 4,919 referrals relating to veterans.

## ■ NHS Digital: Cybersecurity

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[84942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any future publications of the NHS Digital Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics will be affected by the cyber incident.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[84943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of when the cyber incident that is affecting the publication of the NHS Digital Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics will be resolved; and what his planned timetable is for the publication of the full dataset.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2022]:* We expect that national data publications in the coming months will be affected by the cyber incident. NHS Digital and NHS England are continuing to monitor this situation and minimise any impacts on subsequent months' publications.

It is expected that national publications will be affected by this incident for the rest of 2022. Providers of mental health services can resubmit data to the Mental Health Services Dataset for any month between April 2022 and February 2023 until May 2023. Any resubmitted data will contribute to the 'end of year final' mental health services data, which will be published shortly after and will include complete data for every month in 2022/23, including national data.

## ■ NHS: Databases

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[90852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of rejecting Palantir Technologies' bid for a contract to run the NHS Federated Data Platform.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* The Federated Data Platform will be procured via open competition, in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Once launched, the procurement process will be open to all suppliers and will abide by the core principles of the 2015 Regulations, including transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment and proportionality. These principles apply to all suppliers bidding for the Federated Data Platform, including the incumbent supplier. NHS England cannot reject a bid unless it is non-compliant with the procurement process.

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[94882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made towards implementing the Federated Data Platform by April 2023.

**Will Quince:**

NHS England is currently undertaking the final stages of approvals to proceed with the procurement of the Federated Data Platform and the contract notice will be issued in due course. A contract award is anticipated in summer 2023.

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[94884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his department is taking to help ensure that the Federated Data Platform supports Integrated Care Systems to implement secure data environment policies.

**Will Quince:**

The Federated Data Platform will be a Secure Data Environment. NHS England is ensuring the supplier of the platform, when selected, can deliver a product which complies with the published Secure Data Environment guidelines. In addition to the requirements within the procurement process, NHS England has communicated with local systems on the importance of the alignment of the Federated Data Platform with Secure Data Environment policy.

**■ NHS: Drugs****Daisy Cooper:**[\[92347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the (a) National Homecare Medicines Committee and (b) NHS England have taken steps to enforce homecare medicines services standards in the last two years.

**Will Quince:**

The National Homecare Medicines Committee's (NHMC) regional lead members and NHS England's Commercial Medicines Unit use the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's 'Professional Standards for Homecare Services in England' which is embedded into all framework agreement service specifications for providers of this service. This supports teams involved in homecare services to deliver a safe, effective and high quality service for patients.

Homecare providers are assessed on a monthly basis against key performance indicators (KPIs) and more formally through regular meetings with the NHMC and NHS England. Providers which do not meet these KPIs are held to account and action is taken to ensure that levels of service are delivered according to the relevant professional standards. The NHMC and NHS England are aware of concerns within the homecare medicines market. Action has been taken to ensure providers return to acceptable KPIs and quality and patient safety is monitored.

**■ NHS: Employers' Contributions****Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[94679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS employers in England are recycling employer contributions as additional salary where employees have opted out of the NHS Pension Scheme in accordance with the guidance issued by NHS Employers on 24th March 2022.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 28 November 2022]:* The information requested is not collected centrally. However, we are working with NHS England to ensure that National Health Service employers can offer local solutions to address pension tax issues for clinicians, including the option of employer pension contribution recycling.

## ■ NHS: Finance

**Peter Gibson:** [\[92343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding formulas for (a) all NHS regions and (b) the North East; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of including factors such as deprivation and disadvantage in those formulas.

**Will Quince:**

NHS England is responsible for funding allocations to integrated care boards. The Department and NHS England determine the objectives of the funding formulae, which currently support equal opportunity of access for equal need and contribute to the reduction in avoidable health inequalities. The method of achieving these objectives is independent of the Government and NHS England takes advice on the underlying formula from the independent Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation. The formula, which produces a target allocation or 'fair share' for each area, is based on an assessment of factors such as demography, morbidity, deprivation and the unavoidable cost of providing services in different areas.

## ■ NHS: Pensions

**Zarah Sultana:** [\[97660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of making the recent extension of the relaxation of NHS pensions rules permanent.

**Will Quince:**

We have announced the intention to implement new permanent retirement flexibilities which benefit all staff groups. A consultation on detailed proposals will be published in due course, which is expected to include a new partial retirement option and allowing retired staff to accrue further pension when returning to service.

The consultation will also propose the permanent removal of the 16-hour rule which limited the work retired staff could do in the first month upon returning to service. This has been suspended since March 2020 due to the response to the pandemic. The Department has also continued the suspension of pension abatement for nurses and other staff who claimed their pension early using special class retirement rights to 31 March 2025.

## ■ Paramedical Staff

**John Healey:** [\[97442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many paramedics worked in the NHS in each region in each year since 2010.

**Will Quince:**

A table showing the number of full-time equivalent paramedics employed by National Health Service hospital trusts and commissioning bodies in each NHS region in England in August of each year from 2010 to 2022 is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ97442 (1).docx]

**■ Respiratory Syncytial Virus: Children****Daisy Cooper:**[\[97700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in the context of increases in the number of respiratory syncytial virus infections being reported in children under the age of five, whether the forthcoming meeting of the JCVI will be expedited to discuss the recommendations of NHS England's Palivizumab National Expert Group.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation is constituting a respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) subcommittee to consider immunisations, review new products in late stages of development or products newly licensed and the potential use in the national immunisation programme. The advice of NHS England's Palivizumab National Expert Group will be considered at the first meeting of the subcommittee, which is scheduled for early 2023.

**■ Strokes: Ambulance Services****Rachael Maskell:**[\[94805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits for (a) survivability and (b) preventing future disability of designating strokes as Category 1 for the purpose of ambulance response times.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 28 November 2022]:* No specific assessment has been made. The ambulance response time standards were established based on the findings of the Ambulance Response Programme, which analysed more than 14 million 999 calls.

NHS England is providing targeted support to some hospitals facing the greatest delays in the transfer of patients from ambulances and a Winter Improvement Collaborative programme to identify the causes of handover delays and implement best practice. This will be supported by an additional £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to improve urgent and emergency care performance. The National Health Service will set out detailed recovery plans in the new year, including plans to improve Category 2 ambulance response times to pre-pandemic levels.

## ■ Thalidomide

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[95798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he plans to continue the Thalidomide Health Grant after 31 March 2023; and how much has been awarded to date.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 29 November 2022]:* In March 2021, the Government committed to continue the Thalidomide Health Grant beyond 31 March 2023, when the current Grant concludes. This includes an initial payment of approximately £39 million for the first four years after the current Grant ends. The following table shows awards through the Thalidomide Health Grant in each year since 2013/14.

GRANT YEAR	FINANCIAL YEAR	VALUE
Year 1	2013/14	£7,300,000
Year 2	2014/15	£7,456,220
Year 3	2015/16	£7,560,607
Year 4	2016/17	£7,673,400
Year 5	2017/18	£6,711,163
Year 6	2018/19	£8,366,832
Year 7	2019/20	£8,481,247
Year 8	2020/21	£8,298,163
Year 9	2021/22	£8,658,131
Year 10	2022/23	£9,080,334
Total		£79,586,097

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Animals in Science Regulation Unit

**Ben Lake:**

[\[97679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the fees payable for licences under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to generate additional income for employing inspectors within the Animals in Science Regulation Unit.



**Chris Philp:**

The Animals in Science Regulation Unit regularly assesses its requirement for fee income for the delivery of protections to animals in compliance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA).

■ **Asylum****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[97696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers' (a) asylum processing and (b) accommodation costs were reported as part of the Official Development Assistance budget in each of the last three years for which data is available.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The United Kingdom has a statutory obligation to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation and other support whilst their application for asylum is being considered. Our accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential, therefore the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

Provisional and final UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend data for 2022 will be published as normal in the Spring and Autumn of 2023 respectively. The latest data available is the final data for 2021 UK ODA spend, which was published November 23rd. The stats for international development are published here: [Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

■ **Asylum: Afghanistan****Christopher Pincher:**[\[93528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November to question 77411 on Refugees: Afghanistan, what steps she is taking to process asylum seekers she housed in temporary hotel accommodation (a) at the Holiday Inn Tamworth and (b) elsewhere to ensure that (i) those with valid claims for asylum are given leave to remain and accommodated in long term accommodation and (ii) those whose claims are invalid are speedily removed.

**Robert Jenrick:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2022]:* All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy. As such, claims by Afghan nationals will be considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality.

■ **Asylum: Identity Cards****Zarah Sultana:**[\[97661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of asylum seekers who have been unable to provide identity

records due to historic issues with identity registration in their country of origin, including Iraq; and what steps her Department is taking to clarify an asylum seeker's position in those circumstances.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not publish case volume information relating to asylum claims involving an absence of identity documents. Where that absence is attributable to historic issues with identity registration in the claimants' country of origin.

■ **Asylum: Temporary Accommodation**

**Paula Barker:**

[94907]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers were staying in accommodation in (a) the North West and (b) the South East of England, excluding London, as of 23 November 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at Asylum and resettlement datasets [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets) Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 25 August 2022. The next quarterly figures are due to be released later this month.

■ **Fire and Rescue Services: Finance**

**Dan Carden:**

[97703]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to provide additional funding to fire and rescue services.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government understands that inflation is placing a financial pressure on Local Government, including all Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Local government funding allocations and the council tax referendum principles for 2023/24 will be announced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) at the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later this year.

In advance of this, we are working with the Local Government Association, National Fire Chiefs Council, DLUHC and HM Treasury to obtain the right settlement for Fire and Rescue Authorities taking into account, among others, evidence of inflationary pressures. The provisional settlement will set out funding allocations and the precept referendum limits for Local Government as a whole.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Inflation

**Dan Carden:**

[\[97702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of increases in inflation on (a) Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and (b) other fire and rescue services.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government understands that inflation is placing a financial pressure on Local Government, including all Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Local government funding allocations and the council tax referendum principles for 2023/24 will be announced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) at the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement next month.

In advance of this, we are working with the Local Government Association, National Fire Chiefs Council, DLUHC and HM Treasury to obtain the right settlement for Fire and Rescue Authorities taking into account, among others, evidence of inflationary pressures. The provisional settlement will set out funding allocations and the precept referendum limits for Local Government as a whole.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[94745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 61080 on Homes for Ukraine Scheme, for what reason that information is not published.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The ambition is to process Ukraine Scheme applications within 48 hours, but there is no formal or published agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) to publish data on.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[94797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Homes for Ukraine scheme; and if she will use the findings of that assessment to inform her future policies on the hosting of refugees.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office continually reviews the effectiveness of its operations, and those it supports, to bring learning into the development of future policy.

The Home Office works closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), which leads on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. We will ensure that the findings from the scheme inform our future refugee resettlement and Community Sponsorship policies.

**■ Immigration: Applications**

**Stephen Farry:** [94920]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the number of fee waivers for applications for leave to remain on human rights grounds increased between Q1 and Q2 of 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The published Immigration and Protection data for Q2 2022 shows that the number of fee waiver applications received in Q2 was approximately 10% fewer than in Q1.

Q1: 13,006

Q2: 11,724

The data can be found at the following link. Go to tab FW\_01.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q2-2022>

We do not hold data with which to draw conclusions about the reasons for the variations in the numbers of fee waiver applications received.

**■ Immigration: ICT**

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [97406]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 93420, which casework areas will need to be transited to Atlas in order to provide further information about the number of people given Leave to Remain with No Recourse to Public Funds.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Although almost all application types are on Atlas, some more complex operational areas like Family & Human Rights, Settlement, Nationality and Asylum have legacy CID (Case Information Database) cases. These must be completed before those operational areas can move across to Atlas. In addition, there is some core IT functionality which must be delivered in Atlas and some MI reporting capability to be delivered by the Immigration Platform Technologies Programme in order to enable Atlas to become the caseworking system of record in 2023. At this point, the new MI reporting capability would include those granted Leave to Remain with No Recourse to Public Funds.

**■ Internet: Fraud**

**Julian Sturdy:** [95834]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to help increase protections against online scams.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

Tackling fraud requires a unified and co-ordinated response from government, law enforcement and the private sector to better protect the public and businesses from

fraud, reduce the impact of fraud on victims, and increase the disruption and prosecution of fraudsters. We will publish a strategy setting out how we will do this shortly.

Fraud has been brought into scope of the Online Safety Bill to make tech firms responsible for protecting their customers from fraud. DCMS is also leading work on the Online Advertising Programme, which is considering further regulation of online advertising and examining all harms related to online advertising, including fraud.

We are intending to launch a tech sector charter that will examine more ways Government and industry can collaborate and put in place further innovative solutions to protect the public from losing their hard-earned money.

## ■ National Security: Iran

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

[\[94847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for national security of reports Iran has attempted to kill or kidnap British nationals in the UK.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

We do not routinely comment on operational or intelligence matters, however the UK will always stand up to threats from foreign nations.

Any threat made by a foreign state against individuals in the UK will not be tolerated and will be thoroughly investigated. On 16<sup>th</sup> November, Ken McCallum, Director General of MI5, explained in his annual threat address that since January, there have been at least ten threats to kidnap or even kill UK-based individuals. Iran has established a pattern of this type of behaviour which is totally unacceptable, yet sadly typical of the regime and its lack of respect for basic rights.

Working with a range of partners, the UK government will continue to use all tools at its disposal to protect individuals in the UK against any threats from the Iranian state.

## ■ Passports: Disability

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[94810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of disabled people hold a valid passport.

**Robert Jenrick:**

His Majesty's Passport Office can apply exemptions to its policies where a disability would create undue difficulties in applying for a passport and will hold data on an individual record where such an exemption has been applied. However, a person being disabled otherwise has no bearing upon applying for a passport, and therefore data relating to a disability is not routinely captured or held in a reportable format.

**■ Police: Stun Guns****Sir Greg Knight:** [\[94695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what records local police forces keep of the use of tasers by police officers; what assessment she has made of the (a) incidence of (i) temporary and (ii) permanent injury among and (b) other effects on those tasered; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office publishes annual statistics on all police use of force, including Taser use. Police are required to refer all serious incidents, including serious injuries, to the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

Taser has been approved for use by police use, following stringent scientific, safety and medical tests which indicated that it is safe and effective for use in UK policing.

**■ Postage Stamps: Fraud****Alexander Stafford:** [\[94929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases of postage stamp fraud have been reported in South Yorkshire in the last five years.

**Chris Philp:**

It is not possible to separately identify postage stamp fraud from other types of fraud recorded by the police in data held by the Home Office.

This type of fraud will be included within 'Other Regulatory Fraud', which is published in table A5 of the ONS quarterly crime statistics for England and Wales which can be found in the following link -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/criminenglandandwalesappendixtables>.

**■ Refugees: Afghanistan****Alison McGovern:** [\[94744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 61079 on Refugees: Afghanistan, what estimate she has made of the number families making their own accommodation arrangements who have moved into permanent accommodation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

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 rebuild their lives in the UK.

A number of evacuated families have taken steps to source their own accommodation, whether it be through the Find Your Own Accommodation scheme or independently.

Until data assurance activity for those evacuated to the UK via Op Pitting has concluded, and the number of people who have sourced accommodation without support from the Home Office is, subsequently, made clear, we will not hold this data in a reportable format.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[94799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have arrived in the UK from Afghanistan in each of the last four months.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Between 25 August 2022 and 24 November 2022, 1,383 people arrived in the UK from Afghanistan.

We have granted Indefinite Leave to Remain to 12,296 individuals across the ARAP and ACRS, since they opened in April 2021 and January 2022, respectively.

The latest data on arrivals was published on 24 November 2022 and can be viewed at gov.uk.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[97627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 September 2022 to Question 53566 on Refugees: Afghanistan, how he defines suitable accommodation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Bridging hotels are procured through crown commercial and contracting partners.

They must be fully compliant with all government and local legislation requirements - and proof of compliance must be produced before a contract can be agreed.

The hotels must be safe, secure and individuals must be provided with meals and support. Wherever possible, accommodation should be within, or near to, major conurbations so that appropriate support and services can be more readily provided.

## ■ Refugees: Resettlement

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[94798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential challenges of the Community Sponsorship scheme for refugees.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Community Sponsorship enables civil society to directly support refugees resettled to the UK as they start their new lives in safety.

We engage closely with sponsorship groups and resettled refugees after a refugee arrives, including through post arrival visits conducted alongside Reset, which supports the growth and promotion of the Community Sponsorship Scheme. These visits provide the opportunity for groups and resettled refugees to raise any concerns they may have, which are then addressed collaboratively.

The Community Sponsorship Scheme is also being evaluated through a programme of quantitative data collection and qualitative research with refugees and key delivery partners, including local authorities and community sponsors. As part of this process we ask community sponsors to provide data on refugees they support in their first year in the UK to understand their early integration outcomes. The data covers key areas of integration such as education, employment, health and English language skills. Findings from evaluation will continue to inform the development of resettlement and integration policy.

## ■ Refugees: Ukraine

**Rachael Maskell:** [94793]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is available to Ukrainian refugees who have been giving notice on their accommodation for (a) Homes for Ukraine Scheme and (b) the Family Scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The updated guidance for the Homes for Ukraine guests, hosts and councils setting out all the support options available to them post six months of sponsorship can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk/your-living-arrangements-4-to-6-months-after-moving-to-the-uk>.

Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme are given access to work, benefits and public services as laid down in Appendix Ukraine Scheme to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at: [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-rules-immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme-guidance).

**Rachael Maskell:** [94796]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people arrived in the UK from Ukraine in each of the last four weeks.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Information on the number of people who have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine Schemes can be found in our published data on the GOV.UK webpage: [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-family-scheme-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-homes-for-ukraine-and-ukraine-extension-scheme-visa-data)

Weekly numbers of arrivals can be found here [Statistics on Ukrainians in the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistics-on-ukrainians-in-the-uk). Data for the last four weeks will be available in the next quarterly release.

**Dan Jarvis:** [97612]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on taking steps to support Ukrainians in the UK who are studying virtually at Ukrainian institutions and are ineligible for (a) student finance and (b) Universal Credit.



**Robert Jenrick:**

DfE hold responsibility on Student Finance, DWP hold responsibility on Universal Credit.

Information on support for Ukrainian students continuing courses online from the UK can be found [here](#).

[Support for students from Ukraine in UK higher education \(parliament.uk\)](#).

**■ UK Border Force: Patrol Craft****Mr Kevan Jones:****[97479]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November to Question 92145 on UK Border Force: Patrol Craft, which greener propulsion capabilities she plans for the Border Force Replacement vessels to incorporate.

**Mr Kevan Jones:****[97480]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November to Question 92145 on UK Border Force: Patrol Craft, whether this further analysis is being undertaken by the National Shipbuilding Office.

**Mr Kevan Jones:****[97481]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November to Question 92145 on UK Border Force: Patrol Craft, when she plans to hold the industry day.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office is responsible for the Border Force procurement, including the analysis underpinning the fleet mix. It continues to work closely with the National Shipbuilding Office.

In line with our international obligations the replacement Border Force vessels will be compliant with IMO (International Maritime Organisation) MARPOL Annex VI "Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships" Tier III emission standards. We will consider hybrid power, modified internal combustion engine (ICE) developments and alternative fuel systems. Options will be considered within market engagement and the development of further business cases.

The timing of the industry day remains to be confirmed and will follow the formal launch of market engagement.

**■ Visas****Stephen Kinnock:****[97631]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people detained by Border Force upon entry to the UK were subsequently released on grounds that they held a valid (a) student and (b) other UK visa in the latest period for which data is available.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Border Force does not hold the data in an easily accessible format on those detained and subsequently released on grounds they held a valid visa, student or other.

■ **Visas: Russia****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[97617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on assisting Russian citizens already in the UK who require a change in their visa status to reflect their present circumstances but cannot return to Russia to complete their application due to the conflict in Ukraine.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Russian nationals who are in the UK with permission to stay in a non-visit capacity can, before their permission ends, apply from within the UK to extend or vary their permission. Russian nationals who are visiting are expected to leave the UK before the end of their visa.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ **Drugs: India****Navendu Mishra:**[\[97778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, is she will make an assessment of the potential impact of a UK-India free trade agreement on (a) the production of low-cost generics medicines in India and (b) the availability of those drugs to (i) the National Health Service and (ii) developing countries.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK's approach to Free Trade Agreements is to provide a balanced regime incentivising investment in the research and development necessary to develop new medicines to tackle existing and future health challenges, whilst also ensuring that medicines remain affordable for those who need them.

The government has been clear that it will never agree any provisions that would increase the cost of medicines for our National Health Service. Britain's trade negotiations with India will not impact on the UK's access to affordable medicines.

The UK are seeking provisions which achieve an effective balance between rewarding research and innovation, and protecting wider public interests such as ensuring access to medicines.

**JUSTICE****■ Criminal Behaviour Orders****Sarah Jones:**[\[96637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Criminal Behaviour Orders were issued at all courts in each year since 2014.

**Edward Argar:**

The number of Criminal Behaviour Orders issued at all courts in England and Wales on an all offence, all disposal basis has been provided in Table 1; these show where Criminal Behaviour Orders were recorded in one of the four most severe disposals.

**Attachments:**

1. Table [2022-12-01 PQ 96637 Table.xlsx]

**■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT****Steve Reed:**[\[95847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when HM Courts & Tribunals Service plans to undertake an organisation risk assessment of the Common Platform.

**Mike Freer:**

An organisational risk assessment for Common Platform was developed in consultation with the PCS trade union and with input from HMCTS' Governance & Assurance Team.

We have in place arrangements to assess and manage Display Screen Equipment (DSE) risks. These were in place before Common Platform's introduction and the system does not require new arrangements to be created to deal with such risks. Where we can meaningfully assess and manage risks specific to a site, our existing corporate templates enable us to do so, enabling us to 'score' and manage that risk appropriately.

These arrangements are judged to be suitable, sufficient, and compliant with our legal obligations.

**■ Ministry of Justice: Charter Flights****Steve Reed:**[\[96608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2022 to Question 73001 on Ministry of Justice: Charter Flights, how much his Department spent on private charter flights in each year since 2018.

**Mike Freer:**

Information we hold for charter flights used by ministers since 2019 has been provided below. Private charter flights are occasionally used for prisoner repatriations, however the MoJ does not routinely monitor spend on private charter flights of this type because of very low volume of use. The below shows the data available without incurring a disproportionate cost.

YEAR	EXPENDITURE ON CHARTER FLIGHTS USED FOR MINISTERS.
2019	Nil
2020	Nil
2021	Nil
2022	£22,895

### ■ Ministry of Justice: Crimes against the Person

**Steve Reed:** [\[94764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the number of staff who have been victims of (a) sexual harassment and (b) bullying in his Department in each year since 2018.

**Steve Reed:** [\[94765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether any complaints of (a) bullying, (b) harassment or (c) discrimination by were dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years.

**Steve Reed:** [\[94766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many complaints about bullying were made by staff in his Department, in each year since 2010.

**Steve Reed:** [\[94769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of verbal abuse towards Departmental staff; and what steps his Department is taking to better protect departmental staff.

**Mike Freer:**

There is zero tolerance for bullying across the Civil Service. The MoJ also has policies in place to support staff facing any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation while at work.

The table below shows the number of grievances raised by MoJ staff (including agencies) where the grievance reason includes "Bullying" or "Harassment - sex", and the outcome is either "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld", by year.

	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	RATE PER		RATE PER		RATE PER		RATE PER	
	100		100		100		100	
	2018	STAFF	2019	STAFF	2020	STAFF	2021	STAFF
Grievances					6	0.0078	6	0.0072

		2018 RATE PER 100 STAFF	2019 RATE PER 100 STAFF	2019 RATE PER 100 STAFF	2020 RATE PER 100 STAFF	2020 RATE PER 100 STAFF	2021 RATE PER 100 STAFF	2021 RATE PER 100 STAFF
where the reason includes "Harassment - sex" and the outcome is either "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld"								
Grievances where the reason includes "Bullying" and the outcome is either "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld"	170	0.23	174	0.23	172	0.22	201	0.24

**Notes and caveats:**

- Data covers employees in Ministry of Justice Head Quarters, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Legal Aid Agency, Office of the Public Guardian and Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.
- Data suppression is applied where the number of cases is less than 5.
- Grievances can be raised for multiple reasons; cases are selected where the relevant reason is cited.
- Year is based on year the grievance was opened on the case management system.
- Grievances are included where the outcome was "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld".
- If an appeal on the original case outcome has been made, the appeal outcome is used rather than the original case outcome.

- In a small number of cases multiple outcomes are recorded, these have been included if "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld" is one of the outcomes.

Grievances may only be dismissed if it is determined that they have been submitted for vexatious or malicious reasons. Data on grievances dismissed for these reasons are not held on the Ministry of Justice management system.

The number of formal grievances raised by MoJ staff where the reason includes "Bullying" is set out in the table below, including those which were not upheld.

	<b>2017</b>		<b>2018</b>		<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>		<b>2021</b>	
	<b>RATE</b>		<b>RATE</b>		<b>RATE</b>		<b>RATE</b>		<b>RATE</b>	
	<b>PER</b>		<b>PER</b>		<b>PER</b>		<b>PER</b>		<b>PER</b>	
	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>	
	<b>2017</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>STAFF</b>
<b>Number of grievances where the reason includes "Bullying"</b>	378	0.56	418	0.57	491	0.65	551	0.71	536	0.64

**Notes and caveats:**

- Data covers employees in Ministry of Justice Head Quarters, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Legal Aid Agency, Office of the Public Guardian and Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.
- Data suppression is applied where the number of cases is less than 5.
- Year is based on when the grievance was opened on the case management system.
- MoJ moved to a new grievance reporting system during 2017. The first year for which complete data is held is 2017.
- Includes all grievances regardless of outcome, including those which were not upheld.
- MoJ and executive agency payroll staff average headcount for 2017\*, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

<b>2017*</b>	67,931
<b>2018</b>	73,015
<b>2019</b>	75,502
<b>2020</b>	77,121

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2017*	67,931
2021	83,816

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\*Please note: the 2017 average staff in post figure is based on data covering March to December 2017. A new HR database was introduced in early 2017 and figures from January and February 2017 data are not regarded as robust.

No assessment has been made of trends in the level of verbal abuse towards Departmental staff as the MoJ does not hold relevant data on central systems.

#### ■ Ministry of Justice: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[97493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2022 to Question 27565 on Ministry of Justice: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, how many of the Government Procurement Cards were held by staff working within his core Department.

**Mike Freer:**

As of 31 March 2022, there were 78 Government Procurement Card accounts held by staff working in the core department.

#### ■ Ministry of Justice: Redundancy

**Florence Eshalomi:** [\[97775\]](#)

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

**Mike Freer:**

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

#### ■ Ministry of Justice: Termination of Employment

**Steve Reed:** [\[94761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff left his Department in the period between (a) September 2019 and September 2020, (b) September 2020 and September 2021 and (c) September 2021 and September 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

The following table shows the number of payroll staff who have left the Ministry of Justice and executive agencies in the 12 months to the end of September 2020, 2021 and 2022.

LEAVING DATE	COUNT
1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020	7,181
1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021	9,161
1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022	12,453

Note the majority of leavers are in our executive agencies, notably HMPPS and HMCTS.

In HMPPS, in late 2021, the Ministry of Justice launched a retention tool kit to help Governors to tackle the main drivers of attrition in their prisons. We are using the data from this and enhanced exit interviews to better understand why employees are leaving.

Since April 2022, we have invested in several new initiatives to improve the experience of new joiners and increase retention of our employees in the prison system. These include a new peer-to-peer learning scheme, the introduction of mentors for new employees, a supervision pilot in two prisons, and new leadership training in prisons facing retention challenges.

We made a significant investment in pay for prison staff through the 2022/23 pay award. This delivered an increase in base pay of at least 4% for all staff between bands 2 to 11, alongside further targeted pay rises for our lowest paid staff of up to £3,000, which we hope will help in reducing leaving rates.

#### ■ Postage Stamps: Fraud

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[94928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been prosecuted for postage stamp fraud in each of the last five years.

**Edward Argar:**

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on the number of defendants prosecuted for various offences under the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981, for the period year ending June 2018 to year ending June 2022 in the [Outcomes by Offence data tool: June 2022](#).

However, whether the offences relate to postage stamp fraud specifically is not held centrally in the Court Proceedings database. This information may be held on court records but to examine individual court records would be of disproportionate costs.

#### ■ Prison and Probation Service: Sick Leave

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[97764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2022 to Question 87949 on Prison and Probation Service: Sick Leave, if he will make an estimate



of the cost to the public purse of working days lost as a result of work-related stress in each year since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

I refer the honourable Member to the answer I gave on Wednesday 30 November to Question [96613](#).

■ **Prison Education Review**

**Steve Reed:**

[\[94773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has taken recent steps to implement the recommendations of the report by Dame Sally Coates entitled Unlocking potential: a review of education in prison, published in May 2016.

**Damian Hinds:**

Following Dame Sally Coates' 2016 review, the funding for prison education was transferred from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice. The department introduced a new contracting model in 2019 which placed prison governors at the heart of commissioning decisions with the autonomy to shape the curriculum, and introduced the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), enabling governors to commission specialist education programmes.

We recognise the need for continued improvement in recommended areas such as rigorous assessment, use of personal learning plans, core performance metrics, and investment in digital infrastructure. Our Prisons Strategy White Paper set out plans to deliver a Prisoner Education Service focused on improving the numeracy and literacy of all prisoners who need it and incentivising prisoners to improve their qualifications and skills, to increase their prospects of work or further education upon release.

Recent work to achieve this includes: recruiting new Heads of Education, Skills and Work to review and improve the prison education offer; hiring new Support Managers to work with prisoners with neurodivergent needs; introducing more robust metrics to measure attendance and learner progress, expanding the use of personal learning plans (which now include details on additional learning needs); developing and issuing curriculum guidance for governors; and reviewing how we manage our education contracts.

We are also creating an Employability Innovation Fund to enable governors to work with more employers and training providers to deliver sector specific skills training. As part of this, we have recently changed the law so that prisoners can become apprentices – with the first cohort starting their training on 30 September 2022 with employers such as Kier Group. We are also establishing a 'Literacy Innovation Fund' to challenge potential providers to trial literacy improvement programmes.

## ■ Prison Officers

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[97564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cumulative number of years of experience held by all prison officers in each year since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

The cumulative length of service, in years, held by all prison officers is contained in the table below. Most years' figures are given as at 31 December each year, aside from 2022, where the latest published figures are as at 30 September 2022.

Table 1 – Band 3-5 Prison Officers <sup>1</sup> in England and Wales cumulative length of service <sup>2</sup>, as at 31 December each year from 2010 to 2021 and September 2022 <sup>3</sup>

DATE	NUMBER OF PRISON OFFICERS IN POST (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT)	CUMULATIVE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF ALL PRISON OFFICERS
31/12/2010	24,501	329,353
31/12/2011	23,051	326,480
31/12/2012	21,841	326,660
31/12/2013	18,731	287,921
31/12/2014	17,795	278,254
31/12/2015	18,235	272,086
31/12/2016	17,887	261,607
31/12/2017	19,925	253,665
31/12/2018	22,722	248,008
31/12/2019	22,154	246,375
31/12/2020	21,564	243,036
31/12/2021	22,156	240,501
30/09/2022	21,617	230,222

### Notes to tables:

1. Band 3-5 Officers includes Band 3-4 / Prison Officers (incl. specialists), Band 4 / Supervising Officers, and Band 5 / Custodial Managers.

2. The length of service in HMPPS is calculated from the most recent hire date. Where staff have transferred in from another Government Department or have

transferred in through HMPPS taking over a function, length of service is calculated from entry to HMPPS.

3. In October 2019, HMP Birmingham transferred to the private sector. As of 1st July 2019, HMP Birmingham has come back under public ownership. Figures for its staff are now included in the staff in post figures.

4. The dates reflect the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and cumulative years of service at that particular point of the year.

## ■ Prisoner Escapes

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[97766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November to Question 88985 on Prisoner Escapes, how many of the 55 people that escaped from custody in the past 5 years received a custodial sentence for that offence.

**Damian Hinds:**

Data is available for those who were still at large having escaped from custody as of 1 May of each year.

Escapes from custody includes where an offender flees during a court appearance, when being escorted from court to prison and in extremely rare circumstances, directly from prison.

The vast majority were recaptured by police either immediately or within a matter of hours. Offenders who break the law will be punished – including extra time in jail when appropriate – and sentencing is a matter for the independent judiciary who consider the facts of each case.

Of the 55 escape incidents, 42 are known to have led to a custodial sentence (of which, 2 were suspended sentences). For the remaining 13 the individuals are either still at large or do not yet have a sentence recorded centrally for this offence.

## ■ Prisons: Education

**Steve Reed:**

[\[94772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate has he made of the cost to the public purse of Novus delivering Prison Education Services since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

Prior to 2019-20, education in prisons in England and Wales was funded by the Education Skills Funding Authority: information for those years is not held by the Ministry of Justice. Funding to Novus for subsequent years is shown below.

2019-2063,468,423 2020-2163,747,201 2021-2261,343,009 2022-2365,283,626

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**■ Probate: Standards**

**James Wild:** [95948]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons the probate application service standard has been increased to 16 weeks.

**James Wild:** [95949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent progress his Department has made on reducing the time it takes to process probate applications.

**James Wild:** [95950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people are waiting more than 8 weeks for (a) the grant of probate and (b) letters of administration.

**Mike Freer:**

The service standard for a grant of probate has not been increased to 16 weeks but our messaging to applicants has changed to reflect the longer waiting times that a minority of cases can wait for their grant.

Despite the unprecedented challenges faced by the probate service during the Covid 19 pandemic, and the increased volume of applications that have been seen since, the average length of time taken for a grant of probate following receipt of the documents required has been maintained at between five and seven weeks – with the average responses being almost 1 week faster in quarter 2 of 2022 than the yearly average for 2020 and 2021.

HMCTS has increased resources to meet the higher demand following an increased number of estates requiring probate and is further increasing resourcing to further bring down overall timeliness on digital and paper applications.

Average waiting times for probate grants, from April 2022 to June 2022, are published on gov.uk via Family Court Statistics Quarterly (Table 25):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2022>

In June 2022, the average percentage of cases taking longer than 8 weeks to issue was 39%, with 27% of people waiting more than 8 weeks for the grant of Probate and 86% for letters of administration. Existing staff have now been trained to examine letters of administration applications to improve the timeliness.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE****■ Government Departments: Parliament**

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [97518]

To ask the Leader of the House, whether each Government department has a parliamentary champion.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The role of parliamentary champion exists in 18 ministerial departments to provide senior leadership, support and visibility for work to build parliamentary capability in the department. The Cabinet Office's parliamentary champion and Parliamentary Capability Team support the work of the parliamentary champions.

**■ Parliamentary Capability Team****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[97517\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, whether she plans to allocate additional resources to the Parliamentary Capability Team.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Parliamentary Capability Team sits within the Cabinet Office as part of the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit, and is a small group of expert civil servants bolstered by secondments from Parliament. Their training is designed in partnership with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, the Leaders and Government Whips Offices in both Houses, and departmental parliamentary and legislative teams. The critical nature of the work is recognised and the capacity of the team will be reviewed in the context of the Civil Service HR review, which is overseen by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks: Capital Investment****Tim Farron:**[\[94722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether any of the Investment Zone expressions of interest received include areas at least partially within the boundaries or setting of (a) National Parks and (b) Areas of outstanding natural beauty.

**Lee Rowley:**

I refer the Hon. Member to my answer to Question UIN [90859](#) on 28 November 2022.

**■ Buildings: Insulation****Tom Hunt:**[\[94873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average length of delay in receiving replacement cladding material for building remediation projects in England in the latest period for which data is available.

**Lee Rowley:**

We publish data which shows when building remediation projects are starting on site and when they are complete. As these buildings vary in size, complexity and cladding type this means that the corresponding time to complete the projects also varies. We therefore monitor Government funded projects against the forecast start and

completion dates submitted by building owners, taking action whenever these dates are at risk of slipping by involving expert support to help remove any blockages and maintain the pace of remediation.

## ■ Community Development

**Andrew Lewer:**

[\[94851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department intends to bring forward policies focused on hyper-local community regeneration.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out the policy programme committed to empowering and investing in communities. The Pride in Place mission intends that, by 2030, people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community will have risen in every area of the UK.

Government support already includes a £150 million UK-wide Community Ownership Fund. This gives communities the opportunity to take local institutions into their own hands, working with investors and the private sector to match funding.

On town centres, the High Streets Task Force continues to help communities regenerate their high streets to reflect evolving local needs. It supports local authorities with access to expert support in areas such as placemaking, planning and design.

## ■ Domestic Abuse

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[93678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding his Department will provide for domestic violence refuges in each of the next three years.

**Felicity Buchan:**

Local authorities are funded to meet their duties, included in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation including refuges.

We have already provided £125 million to local authorities in each of 2021/22 and 2022/23, and will be announcing the 2023/24 and 2024/25 allocations shortly.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Council Tax

**Dan Carden:**

[\[97707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment has he made of the potential merits of setting a £5 Band D precept flexibility for all standalone fire and rescue authorities.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Government will shortly set out plans for the Local Government Finance Settlement.

**■ First Time Buyers: Interest Rates****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[94683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the impact of trends in the level of interest rates on the ability of people on the average income to buy a first home.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We continue to work closely with HM Treasury to examine the mortgage market, including for first time buyers.

**■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme****Rachael Maskell:**[\[94794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) uplifting the funds available to host families under the Homes for Ukraine scheme or (b) creating a hardship fund, so families can continue to host refugees.

**Felicity Buchan:**

Details on funding for the scheme are available [here](#). We are continuing to work with local authorities and sponsors to support them with their hosting arrangements.

**■ Housing: Insulation****Tom Hunt:**[\[93654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure cladding replacements on residential buildings are (a) completed in a timely manner and (b) carried out with consideration for the living standards of residents who remain in the building while those works are underway.

**Tom Hunt:**[\[94874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of regulatory frameworks for ensuring that management companies communicate with residents of buildings (a) before and (b) whilst undertaking remedial cladding works.

**Lee Rowley:**

Building owners must make their buildings safe without delay. It is unacceptable that some are deliberately holding up remediation works by refusing to sign legal agreements that allow Government funding to be released.

Regulatory bodies, the Secretary of State, and leaseholders have legal powers to compel building owners to fix their buildings. We are working with regulators to

ensure that rogue building owners are held to account. The Department is already pursuing legal action against Grey GR, the owner of Vista Tower in Stevenage.

Building owners need to minimise the impact of remediation works on residents, and contractors undertaking work should consider carefully how to make work less disruptive and intrusive where possible, listening to residents of the buildings undergoing remediation. Secondary legislation under the Building Safety Act 2022 will include new legal requirements to share information with residents, and new rights for residents to request further information from building owners, including about remediation works.

## ■ Islamophobia

**Apsana Begum:** [94891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department has taken to mark Islamophobia Awareness Month 2022.

**Apsana Begum:** [94892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he is taking steps to adopt a definition of Islamophobia.

**Apsana Begum:** [94893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of Islamophobic hate crime; and if he will make a statement.

**Dehenna Davison:**

We recognise the huge contribution British Muslims make to public life and we are committed to celebrating and promoting this, but we are not complacent. This Government takes tackling hatred towards Muslims very seriously and will not tolerate Anti-Muslim hatred in any form. We have supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with just over £4 million between 2016 and 2022 to support Muslim victims. We will outline our further steps in due course. Hate Crime Statistics in England and Wales are published annually, and the latest data are available [here](#).

## ■ Parking: Fees and Charges

**Janet Daby:** [94859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to encourage companies with responsibility for issuing Parking Charge Notices to offer discounts for early payment.

**Janet Daby:** [94860]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on the application of early payment discounts on Parking Charge Notices after unsuccessful appeals.



**Dehenna Davison:**

It is standard practice to offer a discount for early payment of a parking charge notice in both local authority and private car parks. We expect the new Private Parking Code of Practice to require private parking operators to offer a discount where payment is made within 14 days of the receipt of notice.

**■ Private Rented Housing: Right to Buy Scheme****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[93686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to introduce a right to buy scheme for the private rented sector.

**Felicity Buchan:**

At this time Government does not have any plans to expand the Right to Buy scheme into the private rented sector.

**■ Property: Huddersfield****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[93464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department holds data on property usage in (a) Huddersfield and (b) the Kirklees local council area.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Statistics on dwellings in each local authority district in England, including on current tenure and vacancy, are published in the Department's live tables 100 and 615 which are available [here](#).

Statistics at parliamentary constituency level are not centrally collected.

**■ Right to Buy Scheme****Sam Tarry:**[\[95970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to roll out a takaful-based funding structure for mortgages for right to buy tenants.

**Sam Tarry:**[\[95972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department have taken steps to make options available for council tenants to buy their homes using mortgages which comply with Islamic law.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The legislation governing the Right to Buy scheme requires direct transfer of ownership from the seller to the buyer (the tenant). Any transfer made to a third party is not compatible with the scheme, including Islamic mortgages that operate on this basis.

## ■ Shared Ownership Schemes

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:** [\[94817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his department's policy to help more families get on the housing ladder by (a) increasing the maximum household income limits for shared ownership properties to £110,000 outside London and £130,000 in London and (b) introducing an intermediate South East limit of £120,000.

**Lucy Frazer:**

To purchase a Shared Ownership home, applicants must have a gross household income of £90,000 or less in London, and £80,000 or less across the rest of the country. Applicants must also be otherwise unable to purchase a suitable property to meet their housing needs on the open market. If my Rt. Hon. Friend has evidence to which he would like to draw our attention, I would welcome him writing to me.

## ■ Sleeping Rough

**Paula Barker:** [\[94901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Everyone In scheme launched by Crisis UK at tackling rough sleeping in the UK.

**Paula Barker:** [\[94902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to introduce a new Everyone In initiative to help prevent rough sleeping in winter 2022.

**Paula Barker:** [\[94903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many rough sleeping deaths have been recorded between 11 May 2010 and 23 November 2022.

**Paula Barker:** [\[94904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the role of trauma in causing homelessness and rough sleeping.

**Paula Barker:** [\[94905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department intends to take additional steps to help tackle any potential rise in the level of rough sleeping during winter 2022-23.

**Felicity Buchan:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2022]:* On 3 September 2022, the Government published 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good', building on the lessons learned during

the pandemic. This set out how we will spend an unprecedented £2 billion over the next three years to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

There are multiple, complex and overlapping drivers behind rough sleeping, which include trauma. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) sets out core principles for how care and support should be approached for people experiencing homelessness, including rough sleeping. Their guidance can be found [here](#).

On deaths of homeless people, I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [87907](#), on 23 November 2022.

### ■ Social Rented Housing

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[94684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans his Department has to increase the quality of social housing.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The Government has taken a variety of recent steps to increase the quality of social housing, including through the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill. More recently, the Secretary of State has written to all providers of social housing and a copy of the letter is available [here](#).

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Northern Ireland Office: Redundancy

**Florence Eshalomi:** [\[97776\]](#)

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

**Mr Steve Baker:**

The Northern Ireland Office currently has no plans to introduce a Voluntary Exit Scheme.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Scotland Office: Special Advisers

**Deidre Brock:** [\[95871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many Special Advisers are employed by his Department.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Scotland Office has four Special Advisers.

This information is publicly available and published in the Scotland Office Annual Report and Accounts: [Scotland Office Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22](#).

**Deidre Brock:**[\[95872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on special advisers in (a) 2020-21, (b) 2021-22 and (c) 2022-23.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

Information on Special Adviser numbers and costs, including pay bands, is published annually in the Annual Report on Special Advisers as per the requirements of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. Special Adviser staff costs are paid by the Cabinet Office and the Office reimburses the Cabinet Office for these costs via a budget cover transfer.

Other than salary costs, the Scotland Office has spent the following on special advisers in financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23 (to date).

FINANCIAL YEAR	TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE (£)
2020-21	28,336
2021-22	39,766
2022-23 (April to November 2022)	33,347

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Alternative Fuels

**Gill Furniss:**[\[97754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he will publish the Low Carbon Fuel Strategy.

**Jesse Norman:**

Work continues developing the Low Carbon Fuels Strategy and a range of supporting publications. The Strategy aims to provide more certainty to industry on the role of low carbon fuels across transport modes from now to 2050, boosting investment in this sustainable sector and maximising carbon savings.

The Department intends to publish the Low Carbon Fuels Strategy in Spring 2023 subject to alignment with wider government strategies.

### ■ Avanti West Coast: Standards

**Navendu Mishra:**[\[97761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of Avanti train services were subject to a p-coded cancellation in each of the last 12 months.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department does not hold all information relating to "p-coded" services, which is a broad term used in the rail industry for planned alterations to the timetable including

omissions from the plan of the day, such as engineering works, Bank Holiday or Christmas, industrial action, and special events.

Avanti's approach to managing the consequences of issues such as staff shortages is to either reduce the timetable in advance to ensure transparency, or to cancel them on the day.

I will write to the Member to set out the situation in greater detail and will place a copy of that letter in the library of the House.

## ■ Driving Instruction: Recruitment

**Hywel Williams:**

**[97450]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of the 436 additional driving instructors announced have been recruited; and how many have been recruited in (a) Wales and (b) North Wales as of 25 November 2022.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is working hard to provide as many practical driving test appointments as it can, including recruiting more than 300 driving examiners across Great Britain. The first recovery recruitment campaign was launched on 10 February 2021. Since then, 383 driving examiners have entered testing, of which 24 were in Welsh test centres.

On 20 September 2022, the DVSA launched its latest campaign to recruit another 134 driving examiner posts.

Since the commencement of the recovery recruitment campaigns, waiting times in Wales for car practical driving tests have reduced from 18.3 weeks as of 21 June 2021 to 5.8 weeks as of 31 October 2022, with a year to date average waiting time of 6.7 weeks.

## ■ Driving Licences: Health

**Caroline Nokes:**

**[95825]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average processing time is for the renewal of a medical driving licence by the DVLA.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The average time to make a licensing decision during the current financial year, where the driving licence applicant had declared a medical condition, is 97.7 working days. This figure includes new applications, notifications and renewals.

The length of time taken to deal with an application depends on the medical condition(s) involved and whether further information is required from third parties, such as NHS healthcare professionals, before a decision on whether to issue a licence can be made.

It is important to note that the majority of applicants renewing an existing licence will be able to continue driving while their application is being processed, providing they have not been told not to drive by a doctor or optician.

■ **First Transpennine Express: Stockport**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[97734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential impact of reduced numbers of First TransPennine Express services on the economy of Stockport.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department recognises the importance of a high performing railway in contributing to growth and local economies. Many communities have been impacted over the past few months by ongoing industrial relations challenges on the railway. The Department looks to the trade unions to work with train operators and Network Rail as the employers to resolve these issues for the benefit of communities such as Stockport. Ministers' role is to facilitate and support the ongoing discussions between the rail industry and Trade Unions regarding workforce reform and pay.

■ **Freight**

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[97753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on identifying a National Freight Network; and when he expects that work to be completed and published.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Work to identify a National Freight Network is at the scoping stage. In keeping with the process to develop the Future of Freight plan, the Department will work closely with the freight and logistics sector on the identification of a network, and the timetable for this.

■ **Large Goods Vehicles: Carbon Emissions**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[94681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the use of zero-carbon HGVs in the UK.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan, published in 2021, set out several commitments to increase the use, supply and manufacture of zero emission HGVs in the UK. This includes ending the sale of all new non-zero emission HGVs by 2040 at the latest, the continuation of offsetting the higher upfront cost of zero emission HGVs, and £200m of funding to expand the Department's zero emission HGV demonstrator programme.

## ■ M4: Safety

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[97751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the findings of National Highways' trial of computer analysis of CCTV images for stopped vehicle detection on smart motorways carried on the M4 near Bristol in 2020.

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[97752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what proportion of all lane running smart motorways is computer analysis of CCTV images for stopped vehicle detection operational.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

National Highways does not have computer analysis of CCTV images for stopped vehicle detection operational on any existing All Lane Running smart motorways. National Highways preferred approach is radar based stopped vehicle detection (SVD) technology, which is in place on all existing All Lane Running motorways. SVD is capable of detecting stopped vehicles in live lanes, automatically alerting drivers with 'report of obstruction' signs, and sending alerts to control rooms.

National Highways are currently reviewing the status of the 2020 technical report.

## ■ Rail Delivery Group

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[95965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Rail Delivery Group on negotiations with the (a) RMT and (b) other Transport Trade Unions; and what negotiating powers he has given that group.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Transport Secretary wants to see an end to the rail industrial disputes, which are affecting passengers, the industry and the rail workers themselves.

The Secretary of State and I Rail regularly meet with both Rail Delivery Group and Network Rail representatives and are also having introductory meetings with rail union leaders.

We are very clear that it is for employers and Trade Unions to negotiate the details of essential workforce reforms that would enable an affordable pay deal. Ministers role is to facilitate and support the ongoing discussions between the rail industry and Trade Unions regarding workforce reform and pay.

## ■ Railways: Freight

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:**

[\[97797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with rail freight stakeholders on ongoing industrial action.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[97798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to help resolve industrial disputes affecting the rail freight industry.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[97799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with union representatives of rail freight industry workers on resolving ongoing industrial action.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Secretary of State is currently holding introductory meetings with trade unions to help facilitate and support the ongoing negotiations between the trade unions and the employers. Discussions will continue as set out in the letter from the Secretary of State for Transport to the General Secretary of the RMT - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

The Government continues to work closely with rail freight operators and Network Rail to support them to continue to run services across the network and move as much freight as possible, particularly critical services, during industrial action.

#### ■ Roads: Horse Riding

**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[95947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing Government support for the Pass Wide and Slow campaign on the safety of horse riders, horses and motorists.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Highway Code was updated on 29 January 2022 to include changes to improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders, including guidance on safe passing distances and speeds. We support the aims of the Pass Wide and Slow campaign to improve road safety for horse riders through the communication of safe passing distances and speed. We would like to thank all of our campaign partners who have helped us to raise awareness of the changes and improve road safety for all road users.

The changes to The Highway Code, including safe passing of horse riders, were communicated via the THINK! campaign in two phases: an awareness raising campaign in February and March 2022 and a behaviour change campaign in July and August 2022, to help embed the changes and encourage understanding and uptake of the new guidance.

#### ■ Shipping: Russia

**Drew Hendry:** [\[97690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Joint Maritime Security Centre is taking steps to ensure that the (a) beneficial ownership of Russian vessels is tracked when ships are transferred to open or international registries and (b) ban on Russian ships accessing UK ports is maintained if the beneficial owners commercially operate



from Russia; and how many vessels with Russian beneficial owners, but who's flag has changed, have been identified as attempting to (i) circumvent the port ban and (ii) evade sanctions.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Joint Maritime Security Centre provides Department for Transport officials with regular vessel tracking reports for Russian-linked commercial ships thought to be heading towards the UK Marine Area, including where Russia is identified as the country of beneficial ownership. This monitoring is not limited to Russian-flagged vessels, but all registries, where a Russian link is identified.

Department for Transport officials maintain close contact with the maritime industry to assist the port sector in undertaking their own due diligence. Government support has included the publication of six versions of industry guidance and regular intelligence reports containing Ships of Potential Interest, which are those identified as having a potential Russian connection. The legal duty under the Russia (Sanctions)(EU Exit) Regulations 2019, as amended (the Regulations) remains with UK ports to reach an assessment as to whether they know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a ship falls within scope of the port ban.

The prohibition on UK port entry in the Regulations applies to certain ships including "a ship owned, controlled, chartered or operated by persons connected with Russia". The definition of a person "connected with Russia" includes but is not limited to individuals who are "ordinarily resident in Russia" or "located in Russia", or companies that are "incorporated or constituted under the law of Russia" or "domiciled in Russia".

At the start of the conflict, at least twenty-eight ships were knowingly frustrated by the UK sanctions, having been refused entry by ports; diverted by their owner or operator; or having changed their ownership or operational structures to ensure compliance. We have now seen a wholesale change in Russian shipping activity which has seen an extensive reduction in the number of Russian-linked ships transiting UK waters and no recent attempts by such ships to enter UK ports.

■ **Transport: Infrastructure**

**Henry Smith:**

[\[95819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the report by the Climate Change Committee entitled Resilient supply chains, published on 20 October 2022, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing the recommendation on integrating into his Department's climate change adaptation strategy a plan to increase resilience of transport infrastructure to help maintain the provision of (a) medicine, (b) clean water and (c) other goods and services.

**Jesse Norman:**

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 identified 'Risks to business from disruption to supply chains and distribution networks'. The Department for Transport

is considering action against relevant risks identified by the Climate Change Committee.

## TREASURY

### ■ Financial Services: Disadvantaged

**Steve McCabe:**

[95776]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department takes steps to help protect vulnerable customers in instances where the Financial Conduct Authority is unable to.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Government works closely together with regulators, the financial services industry and other stakeholders, to ensure that all consumers of financial services receive appropriate protection.

The Government has a range of work underway which will improve support for vulnerable consumers, including legislating to protect access to cash through the Financial Services and Markets Bill, and piloting a No-Interest Loans scheme which aims to help consumers in vulnerable circumstances who struggle to access affordable forms of credit.

In February 2021, the FCA published its finalised guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, setting out a number of best practices (<https://www.fca.org.uk/publications/finalised-guidance/guidance-firms-fair-treatment-vulnerable-customers>). This applies to all firms where the FCA Principles for Business apply, regardless of sector, and in respect of the supply of products or services to retail customers. This guidance explores, among other things, how firms can understand the needs of vulnerable customers and provide targeted services for this cohort. Examples range from staff having the skills and capability to recognise and respond to the needs of vulnerable customers to product and service design, customer services, and communication.

The Government also continually keeps the FCA's regulatory perimeter under review, and works with the regulators to consider calls to amend the perimeter.

### ■ Fossil Fuels: Finance

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[94895]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy not to use public money to fund any new fossil fuel projects in the UK.

**James Cartlidge:**

The government is fully committed to green growth and net zero by 2050, including speeding up the deployment of clean and renewable technologies such as nuclear, hydrogen, solar, carbon capture and storage and wind – where the UK is already a world leader in offshore generation. The UK's omissions have also fallen by over 44%

between 1990 and 2019. However, oil and gas are not incompatible with this, as the UK will need these fuels for decades to come to support our energy security through the transition to clean energy.

The government places additional taxes on the extraction of oil and gas, with companies engaged in the production of oil and gas in the UK and on the UK Continental Shelf subject to a combined headline tax rate on their profits of 40%. The Energy Profits Levy was introduced in May as a temporary 25% tax on top of this (the rate will rise to 35% from 1 January 2023). The Energy Profits Levy will end on 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. That is why companies investing in new or existing projects can claim a deduction against their taxable profits taking into account the cost of their investments. The UK will receive tax revenues from these investments as and when they generate a profit.

## ■ **Multinational Companies: Disclosure of Information**

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[97552\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he will make it his policy to introduce public country-by-country reporting by multinational corporations on (a) taxation and (b) where multinational corporations are trading and making profits.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government has taken significant steps, domestically and internationally, to ensure companies pay the right amount of tax on their UK activities and prevent profits attributable to UK activities being shifted overseas.

This includes introducing the Diverted Profits Tax (2015), the Corporate Interest Restriction Rules (2017), and recent confirmation that the UK will introduce the new Pillar 2 global minimum tax from 31 December 2023.

The Government continues to engage internationally to improve tax transparency at a global level, and supports the development of a public Country-by-Country reporting model that works on a global multilateral basis. Global multilateral implementation is necessary to ensure that the initiative results in a comprehensive set of information on both UK headquartered and foreign headquartered multinationals and that the requirements cannot be avoided through group restructuring and do not make the UK less attractive as a location for groups to headquarter.

## ■ **Non-transferable Debt Securities**

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[95775\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to implement the recommendations from regulation of non-transferable debt securities consultation, published in April 2021.

**Andrew Griffith:**

In March 2022, the government stated in the summary of responses to its consultation on the regulation of non-transferable debt securities (NTDS) that its preferred approach was to include non-transferable securities within the scope of the reformed Prospectus Regime.

On 19 July, the government confirmed that it will use the Future Regulatory Framework powers being taken forward in the Financial Services and Markets Bill to deliver its reforms to the Prospectus Regime. The government will lay secondary legislation to make these reforms to the Prospectus Regime as soon as possible after the Bill receives Royal Assent.

These reforms will ensure appropriate disclosure and due diligence on offers of NTDS, in order to protect investors.

**■ PPE Medpro: Taxation****Angela Rayner:**[\[97550\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue the Exchequer received from taxation paid by PPE Medpro Ltd in the 2020-21 tax year.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The information requested cannot be provided.

HMRC has a legal duty to maintain the confidentiality of taxpayer information and disclosing information to persons outside of HMRC is only allowed in a limited number of circumstances. These are set out in Section 18 of the Commissioners of Revenue and Customs Act 2005.

**■ Renewable Energy: Seas and Oceans****Brandon Lewis:**[\[95822\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of changes to taxation for renewable energy companies on investment in the offshore renewable energy sector.

**Victoria Atkins:**

From January 2023, a temporary new 45 per cent tax will be levied on extraordinary returns being realised from non-carbon electricity generators. It will raise around £14.2 billion over the scorecard, helping to fund support for households and businesses with their energy bills as well as vital public services.

The levy will only be applied to 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 share of the extraordinary profits certain electricity generators are receiving.

## ■ Sanctions: Russia

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[97691\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allocate additional resources to the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation to ensure that sanctions linked to the war in Ukraine can be fully enforced as the number of individuals and organisations on the sanctions list increases.

**Andrew Griffith:**

In Jan-22, the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) had 42.15 active staff. OFSI is expecting to at least double in size over the next financial year to around 100 staff. These roles will be at all levels of the organisation across both London and Darlington.

## ■ Theatre: Tax Allowances

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[97390\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many claims for Theatre Tax Relief were rejected in the last year; and what the reasons for those rejections were.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC does not disclose the information requested.

This information would likely influence or assist those considering, or intent on, not paying the right amount of tax at the right time and that is not in the public interest.

## ■ VAT: Repayments

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[94867\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) schools or (b) education trusts have received demands for backdated VAT, where HMRC has deemed that institution liable, due to their provision of tablet computers, laptops or other electronic devices to students, for each of the past five years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This data is not held by HMRC, as VAT assessments do not include information at a product level and HMRC does not keep data on assessments.

## ■ Veterans Mobility Fund

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[\[96669\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on reinstating the Veterans' Mobility Fund.

**John Glen:**

The Government is committed to supporting all our veterans, and to ensuring that they continue to thrive after leaving the services.

Since 2014, the Government has committed £773m of LIBOR fines to support Armed Forces and Emergency Service charities.

As part of this package, the Chancellor awarded the Royal British Legion £3m to develop a Veterans Mobility Fund, designed to meet the wellbeing needs of veterans discharged with service-attributable serious physical injury. At the same time, the Chancellor also awarded £10m to develop a Veterans Hearing Fund, providing support to veterans who suffered hearing loss during service.

In 2019, at the Royal British Legion's request, the Treasury authorised the transfer of almost £1.5m from the Veterans Mobility Fund to the Veterans Hearing Fund, following dramatic increases in the rate of applications for the Hearing Fund and a comparatively static application rate for the Mobility Fund. Both the Veterans Hearing and Veterans Mobility Funds have now closed.

Since 2020, we have announced a further £10m funding to support veterans' mental health, £475k to support the development of a digital and data strategy for the sector, £5m to enable charities to address the impact of events in Afghanistan on veterans, and a £5m Veterans' Health Innovation Fund.

More than 100 service charities, including those who support veterans, also benefitted from £6m of the £750m to support the charity sector announced by the Chancellor in April 21 in support of COVID-19.

The Chancellor engages with the Secretary of State for Defence routinely on defence matters.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Bereavement Support Payment

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

**[97407]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to uprate the value of the Bereavement Support payment which was introduced at its current level in 2017; and if he will make a statement.

**Mims Davies:**

The rate of Bereavement Support Payment is reviewed on a discretionary basis as part of the annual uprating process. Following this year's review, Bereavement Support Payment will stay at the current rate. This means that claimants on the standard rate will continue to receive a first payment of £2,500 and 18 monthly payments of £100, and those on the higher rate will receive £3,500 followed by 18 monthly payments of £350. Bereavement Support Payment is intended to provide working people with short-term financial support following the death of a spouse or civil partner, to help towards the additional costs associated with a death. It is not means-tested unlike income replacement benefits such as Universal Credit, which we are increasing in line with inflation to protect the least well-off. Families needing extra financial support are protected by this welfare safety net.

## ■ Carer's Allowance: Carmarthenshire

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[97565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the details of recipients of Carers Allowance in Carmarthenshire has been (a) requested by or (b) supplied to Carmarthenshire County Council.

**Tom Pursglove:**

As far as I am aware, no such request has been made.

## ■ Children: Maintenance

**Jess Phillips:**

[97629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to publish the (a) Independent Review into the ways the Child Maintenance Service supports survivors of domestic abuse and (b) Government response to the review.

**Mims Davies:**

In autumn 2021, the Department commissioned an independent review of ways in which the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) supports survivors of domestic abuse. The Review was completed in April 2022.

The final report and recommendations are currently being reviewed by the department.

The CMS continues to take the safety of all its customers extremely seriously and has processes in place to ensure parents experiencing domestic abuse are supported and can set up a child maintenance arrangement safely.

## ■ Cost of Living Payments

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[95980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Government's cost of living payments on (a) disabled people and (b) pensioners.

**Mims Davies:**

We published an Impact Analysis on the Social Security (Additional Payments) Bill which includes impacts of the Cost of Living Payments on disabled people and pensioners.

Full details of the Impact Analysis can be found [here](#).

## ■ Cost of Living Payments and Universal Credit

**Mary Glendon:**

[96602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the cost of living payment on Universal Credit payments made every four weeks.



**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2022]:* The Cost-of-Living Payments are tax free and have no impact on existing benefit awards or on the benefit cap.

**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Redundancy****Florence Eshalomi:**[\[97771\]](#)

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

**Mims Davies:**

The DWP currently has no live voluntary exit schemes and no plans to run any at this time. Voluntary exit schemes are a commonly used workforce management process available to departments based on their specific workforce needs.

**■ Maternity Pay: Charities****Martyn Day:**[\[96627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of improving the current Statutory Maternity Pay arrangements for people who work in the Charity Sector.

**Mims Davies:**

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) exists to provide a measure of financial security to help women take time off work in the later stages of their pregnancy and in the months following childbirth, in the interests of their own and their baby's health and wellbeing.

It is available to all women who meet the earnings and employment test, regardless of which sector they work in. On that basis, there are currently no plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of improving the current SMP arrangements for people who work in the Charity Sector.

**■ Natural Gas: Pipelines****Ian Murray:**[\[97640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment the Health and Safety Executive has made of the safety of steel service pipes in gas distribution networks.

**Mims Davies:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not assess the safety of steel service pipes in gas distribution networks. This is the duty of the Gas Distribution Network Operator.

HSE assesses the content of safety cases submitted by gas network operators. Steel service pipelines are acceptable and safety cases will address the Operators management arrangements for these. HSE must accept the safety case prior to operation and Operators then have a duty to conform with their safety case.



## ■ Pension Credit: Inverclyde

**Ronnie Cowan:**

**[95878]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase the uptake of pension credits in Inverclyde.

**Ronnie Cowan:**

**[95879]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) individuals and (b) households in Inverclyde are eligible for claiming pension credits but are not claiming that benefit.

**Laura Trott:**

Estimates for Pension Credit take-up in a financial year are only available at the Great Britain level and are available in the “Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up” publication which can be found on the statistics section of gov.uk. The latest publication relates to the financial year 2019 to 2020.

[Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2019-to-2020)

Pension Credit provides vital financial support to our most vulnerable pensioners. In Inverclyde some 2,600 pensioners already receive Pension Credit, but we want all those who are eligible to claim it. That’s why the Department launched a £1.2m nationwide communications campaign in April to raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up. The campaign included:

- Promotion of Pension Credit on social media, via internet search engines and sponsored advertising on targeted websites that pensioners, their friends and family are likely to visit;
- Information screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries across GB;
- Advertising in regional and national newspapers and on national and local broadcast radio;
- Advertising on the sides of buses, interior bus panels and digital street displays;
- Leaflets and posters in Jobcentres, as well as digital versions which could be used by stakeholders and partners across local communities;
- Engagement with Local Authorities nationwide through the Government Communication Service local network and promotional materials to enable them to support the campaign; and
- In June, we held a second Pension Credit awareness media ‘day of action’ working in close collaboration with broadcasters, newspapers and other partners such as Age UK, Independent Age and the private sector to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels.
- An updated digital toolkit with information and resources that any stakeholder can use to help promote Pension Credit.

In December further press and radio advertising and social media activity is planned. We will be focusing on highlighting to pensioners that if they apply for Pension Credit by 18 December, it will not be too late to qualify for a £324 Cost of Living Payment – subject to Pension Credit backdating rules.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Lords) and I have also written to MPs and Peers asking for their support and inviting them to a Pension Credit event on 7 December, where I intend to update them on our communications campaign.

In the new year, DWP will again write to over 11 million pensioners as part of the annual uprating of State Pension. The accompanying leaflet has been updated to include the prominent campaign messaging promoting Pension Credit.

## ■ Social Security Benefits

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[94783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the annual review of benefits will take into account the real term reduction in benefits claimants' incomes since April 2022 due to the gap between the rate at which benefits are paid and the accelerating rate of inflation.

**Guy Opperman:**

CPI has been the default inflation measure for the Secretary or State's statutory annual review of benefit rates since 2011. The relevant index for 2022 was 10.1%. This is the latest available figure confirmed by the Office for National Statistics prior to the annual review and allows sufficient time for the complex delivery process to take place.

Using the same benchmark every year ensures consistency over time, allowing Up-rating to balance out over a number of years.

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living, which is why, in addition to the £37 billion of support we have provided for cost-of-living pressures in 2022/23, we are acting now to ensure support continues throughout 2023/24.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, in the Autumn Statement the Government has announced £26 billion in cost-of-living support for 2023/24. 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.

**■ Universal Credit**

**Karin Smyth:** [\[94787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of Universal Credit claimants whose cases require a manual calculation each month.

**Guy Opperman:**

The number of claimants who require a manual calculation of Universal Credit per month is approximately 0.48%.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[94788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Universal Credit claimants who are entitled to receive but have not yet been credited with class 3 National Insurance contributions, since the introduction of the new computer system in March 2019.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[94789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of Universal Credit claimants whose class three national insurance credits have not been credited and who do not have 30 qualifying years of national insurance contributions or credits that will reach state retirement age in the next two years.

**Guy Opperman:**

All claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) are entitled to receive Class 3 National Insurance credits and these are awarded automatically on an annual basis.

Any UC claimant not receiving these credits should contact HMRC.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[94790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to update the Universal Credit computer system to automatically award National Insurance credits to claimants and to allow online predictions of State pension entitlement.

**Guy Opperman:**

The UC system will gradually start broadcasting to the National Insurance system next month. This will be done automatically via an interface with HMRC systems. Since the cessation of manual record update in 2019 we have been developing, testing and refining the process of automation.

**Richard Foord:** [\[97680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in receipt of Universal Credit (a) are economically inactive as of 28 November 2022 and (b) were subject to monthly deductions in the (i) 2019-20, (ii) 2021-22 and (iii) 2022-23 financial year.

**Guy Opperman:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The number of people on Universal Credit, broken down by conditionality group, are published every month on [Stat-Xplore](#), with the latest statistics currently available to 13 October 2022.

If needed, you can access [guidance](#) on how to extract the information required from Stat-Xplore.

## ■ Universal Credit: Debts

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[95845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Universal Credit claimants have deductions attached to their claim for non-universal credit debts; and if he will publish a breakdown of the number of those claimants for each benefit.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The number of customers who had deductions from UC posted to non-UC debts on Debt Manager in October 2022 was 776,664.

The table below shows the benefit to which the deductions were posted. Note that the total number of customers who had deduction posted, will be fewer than the number shown in the table, as some customers will have had deductions posted to more than one debt in the month of October, the period covered by the table, e.g., one debt ended, and another commenced.

BENEFIT	VOLUME
ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE	10
Affordable Credit Deductions Scheme	7,280
Administrative Penalty	480
Bereavement Allowance	10
Carers Allowance	28,430
CA Short Term Advance	0
Civil Penalty	4,800
Disability Living Allowance	1,340
Disability Working Allowance	0
Employment & Support Allowance: Contribution Based	2,390
ESAC Short Term Advance	10
Employment & Support Allowance: Income Related	17,930

BENEFIT	VOLUME
ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE	10
ESAIR Short Term Advance	90
Employment & Support Allowance: New Style	390
Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance	0
Family Credit	50
Housing Benefit	86,120
Income Support	42,330
IS Short Term Advance	30
Incapacity Benefit	1,250
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	0
Integration Loans Scheme	2,310
Invalidity Benefit	10
Jobseeker's Allowance: Contribution Based	410
JSAC Short Term Advance	110
Jobseeker's Allowance: Income Based	9,870
JSAIB Short Term Advance	540
Jobseeker's Allowance: New Style	1,280
Maternity Allowance	140
Pension Credit	190
Personal Independence Payment	1,640
Reduced Earnings Allowance	0
Retirement Pension: Contributory	10
Non-Contributory Retirement Pension Short Term Advance	0
Sickness Benefit	0
Severe Disablement Allowance	50
Social Fund Budgeting Loan	112,690

BENEFIT	VOLUME
ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE	10
Social Fund Crisis Loan	40,110
Social Fund: Budgeting Loan Overpayment	180
Social Fund: Community Care Grant Overpayment	20
Social Fund: Crisis Loan Overpayment	50
Social Fund Cold Weather Overpayment	40
Social Fund: Funeral Payment Overpayment	10
Social Fund: SS Maternity Grant Overpayment	10
Supplementary Benefit	50
Tax Credit Overpayment	515,120
Non-UC Tax Credit Overpayment	7,860
Unemployment Benefit	10
Widow's Benefit	10
Widowed Mother's Allowance	40
Widows Pension	10
Widowed Parent's Allowance	460

Please note that the numbers provided have been rounded to the nearest 10.

#### ■ Universal Credit: Overpayments

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[95843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the number of Universal Credit overpayments made in the last year in which his Department was at fault.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The findings in the latest National Statistics publication (Financial Year Ending 2022) into Universal Credit (UC) show that UC Official Error overpayments have fallen in each of the last 3 years, from 2.1% of UC expenditure in 2018/19 to 0.7% in 2021/22.

## ■ Work Capability Assessment

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[95826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 5 January 2022 to Question 93755 on Work Capability Assessment, how many and what proportion of work capability assessments were (a) carried out by telephone, (b) paper-based, (c) video-based and (d) face-to-face in each of the last 12 months.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The number and proportion of Work Capability Assessments (WCA) that have been carried out by (a) telephone, (b) paper-based, (c) video-based and (d) face-to-face in each of the last 12 months, can be found in the tables below.

### NUMBER OF WCA

PER CHANNEL	(A) TELEPHONE	(B) PAPER-BASED	(C) VIDEO	(D) FACE-TO-FACE
Nov-21	33,390	7,690	3,450	5,810
Dec-21	29,830	6,090	2,860	5,320
Jan-22	43,070	6,560	4,000	220
Feb-22	37,890	7,540	4,170	3,590
Mar-22	37,540	7,510	4,670	8,070
Apr-22	30,610	6,630	3,560	7,170
May-22	35,190	7,150	3,810	8,960
Jun-22	31,350	6,130	3,540	7,380
Jul-22	31,420	6,430	3,240	7,380
Aug-22	32,630	6,680	3,840	8,160
Sep-22	31,890	6,480	3,760	7,420
Oct-22	35,240	6,310	3,500	7,910

With channel proportion as:

### PROPORTION OF WCA PER CHANNEL

CHANNEL	(A) TELEPHONE	(B) PAPER-BASED	(C) VIDEO	(D) FACE-TO-FACE
Nov-21	66%	15%	7%	12%
Dec-21	68%	14%	6%	12%
Jan-22	80%	12%	7%	0%

PROPORTION OF WCA PER CHANNEL	(A) TELEPHONE	(B) PAPER-BASED	(C) VIDEO	(D) FACE-TO-FACE
Feb-22	71%	14%	8%	7%
Mar-22	65%	13%	8%	14%
Apr-22	64%	14%	7%	15%
May-22	64%	13%	7%	16%
Jun-22	65%	13%	7%	15%
Jul-22	65%	13%	7%	15%
Aug-22	64%	13%	7%	16%
Sep-22	64%	13%	8%	15%
Oct-22	67%	12%	7%	15%

**Please note:**

- Actual volumes are rounded to the nearest 10.
- Proportions are based on actual figures.
- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
- All of the above data is derived from contractual management information produced by the assessment providers.
- Please note that on 8 December 2021 the country were instructed to follow Plan B measures to slow the spread of Omicron; as part of these instructions health assessment providers were instructed to pause face-to-face assessments until the restrictions were lifted on 27 January 2022.
- The above data is derived from unpublished management information which is collected for internal departmental use only and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics Publication Standards.



## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Dominic Raab

**Angela Rayner:**

**[92230]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department received any complaints regarding the former Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union's conduct between July and November 2018.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 29 November 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Prime Minister has appointed Adam Tolley KC to conduct an independent investigation into formal complaints which have been made about the conduct of the Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

The Terms of Reference for the investigation have been published on gov.uk. [ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terms-of-reference-investigation-into-formal-complaints/terms-of-reference-for-the-investigation-into-formal-complaints-about-the-conduct-of-the-deputy-prime-minister-html> ]

**Following the establishment of the independent investigation, and the Cabinet Office receiving a further formal complaint relating to Mr Raab's conduct at the Department for Exiting the European Union, the Prime Minister has additionally asked the investigator to establish the specific facts surrounding this complaint, in line with the Terms of Reference for the existing investigation.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ Project Gigabit Autumn Update

**Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure (Julia Lopez):** [\[HCWS405\]](#)

Today we have published Building Digital UK's (BDUK) latest Project Gigabit delivery update. We continue to make excellent progress with Project Gigabit, the government's £5 billion mission to deliver lightning-fast, reliable broadband across the UK.

In this Project Gigabit Autumn Update, we report on the awarding of a £108 million contract in Cumbria that will bring gigabit-capable connectivity to up to 60,000 homes and businesses across the region. This is the first regional contract awarded under Project Gigabit, and follows local contracts awarded in Teesdale and North Northumberland in the past two months.

We also report on the boost we are giving to the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, increasing the value of vouchers to £4,500 for all beneficiaries, up from £1,500 and £3,500 for homes and businesses respectively. To date, over 111,000 vouchers have been through the scheme and its previous iterations, with more than 77,000 vouchers used to connect premises to gigabit-capable broadband.

The report also provides an update on the progress of the Project Gigabit procurement pipeline. BDUK has now undertaken market engagement exercises across the whole of England, and has launched procurements with a total value over £780 million, to connect up to 545,000 premises. The publication also reports on the completion of a Public Review by Highland and Islands Enterprise, working with BDUK and the Scottish Government, ahead of a first potential local procurement in Scotland.

I will place a copy of the Project Gigabit Delivery Plan Autumn Update in the Libraries of both Houses.

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Fuller Inquiry Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy) (Maria Caulfield):** [\[HCWS404\]](#)

Following my statement on 16 December 2021, I am pleased to inform the House that a compensation scheme to facilitate compensation payments to the family members of David Fuller's victims has been established today.

The scheme, which will be administered by NHS Resolution on behalf of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, will ensure that compensation is paid to relatives as soon as practicable. The scheme will operate on a tiered approach. All qualifying family members will receive a fixed amount of compensation. Increased payments will then be made for

psychiatric trauma and/or financial loss, subject to evidence. Entry into the scheme is entirely voluntary and the scheme will be advertised nationally to help ensure all eligible family members are aware of it.

The scheme represents a highly co-operative effort between NHS Resolution, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and the families' representatives and I would like to thank all those involved for their work in developing this compensation scheme for families.

I would also like to take the opportunity to update the House on the timescales of the inquiry. The inquiry is progressing well and due to the significant amount of evidence being received, the report on matters relating to Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust is now planned for the first half of 2023.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Local Government Update

**Minister for Local Government and Building Safety (Lee Rowley):** [\[HCWS406\]](#)

On 22 March 2022, the then Minister for Local Government, my Rt Hon. Friend, the Member for Saffron Walden, updated the House that the Secretary of State had decided to intervene in Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council ("the Authority") and had appointed two Commissioners. Those Commissioners submitted their first report to the Secretary of State on 20 June 2022 as part of the objective of ensuring that the residents of Sandwell have, as the Rt Hon. Member for Saffron Walden's statement indicated, what they need from their local council, including confidence in its governance and service delivery.

The first report provides an update on the work underway to make the Authority functional again. The Commissioners confirm that *"there are a lot of very tangible changes that need to be made in the council in the immediate term"* and that they *"are still at the early stages of this intervention"* with a recognition that *"there are many challenges ahead"*. To do that, the report primarily focuses on two elements – firstly, the single improvement plan being implemented to address the issues raised in the reviews undertaken by Grant Thornton, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Local Government Association. Secondly, it provides a broader overview of the Commissioners' focus and early activities being undertaken as part of the long journey back from the unacceptable position into which the Authority had fallen.

The report confirms that the Authority have now adopted a single improvement plan which encompasses actions in relation to all of the recommendations in the aforementioned reviews. The Commissioners have also provided the Secretary of State and me with a copy of that improvement plan. It has aggregated the many recommendations of those reviews, including a number which are serious and statutory. The Commissioners have also developed twelve *"proxies for success"* which the Commissioners intend to use to evaluate progress during this intervention period. Evaluation of those proxies will commence in future reports from the Commissioners. In

the meantime, the Commissioners did point to a number of early indicators of welcome progress including the arrival of new officers, the willingness of Sandwell's Cabinet and Councillors to start to respond to the recommendations from the reviews and some very early signs of culture change. It is clear, however, that there is much more work to do, and any early indicators of progress must be sustained for a long period to give confidence of a real change in culture, behaviour, processes and governance.

The Commissioners' next report to the Secretary of State is expected in December 2022. A copy of the Commissioners' first report will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Transport Update

**Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Mark Harper):**

**[[HCWS407](#)]**

Settlement for the next five-year funding period for railway infrastructure in England and Wales

Maintaining and renewing our country's rail infrastructure is critical to delivering the railway that passengers and freight countries expect, and for supporting economic growth. Every five years the Government is required to set out what we wish to achieve from the operations, maintenance and renewal of the railway. This is done through a document known as a High-Level Output Specification, and the funding available is set out through a Statement of Funds Available.

I am today (December 1) publishing the objectives and funds available for operational railway infrastructure in England and Wales for the next Control Period - Control Period 7. This covers the period April 2024 to March 2029.

The Government fully recognises the critical role rail services played for business, key workers and our society during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the vital role they play in connecting communities and supporting economic growth.

The High-Level Output Specification makes it clear that the Government will press ahead with rail reform, addressing the challenges facing the sector, such as fragmentation and outdated working practices, with a strong continued focus on operations, maintenance and renewal. This strong continued focus is important in supporting a safe, efficient and reliable railway for passengers and freight customers.

Achieving these objectives will be facilitated by significant Government investment as set out in the Statement of Funds Available, with Network Rail spending around £44 billion over the period April 2024 to March 2029. The Government now expects Network Rail to develop detailed plans to deliver on these objectives, working closely with its customers. These will then be subject to strong and effective scrutiny by the Office of Rail and Road, as independent regulator, to develop robust, credible, value for money plans for the next Control Period.