



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 5 December 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:02 P.M., 05 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: BBC

Emily Thornberry:

[\[96589\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2022 to Question 92147, how much of the £376,775.18 incurred in legal costs up to 21 November 2022 related to her office's submissions to the High Court on the question of costs, resulting in the judgment handed down by Mr Justice Chamberlain on 18 November 2022, His Majesty's Attorney General for England and Wales v British Broadcasting Corporation (Costs) [2022] EWHC 2925 (KB).

Michael Tomlinson:

Approximately £6,000 was incurred in relation to the Government's submissions to the High Court on the question of costs. Having successfully obtained an injunction in this case, it was and is the Government's duty to seek value for money for the taxpayer by seeking its costs.

■ Attorney General: Incentives

Emily Thornberry:

[\[97593\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what was the total value of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working for his Department as performance-related bonuses in (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20, (d) 2020-21 and (e) 2021-22.

Michael Tomlinson:

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government. The Edenred contract came into effect in 2017 which allows departments access non-cash vouchers for staff. The Attorney General's office does not offer non-cash vouchers for performance-related bonuses.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Alternative Fuel Payments

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[99801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, CP 751, if he will take steps to introduce an additional Alternative Fuel Payment to reflect the revised Energy Price Guarantee after April 2023.

Graham Stuart:

At the Autumn Statement, the Government doubled the Alternative Fuel Payment from £100 to £200 to give additional support for households that use alternative fuels

in recognition of the cost-of-living pressures caused by these rising fuel costs. This is a one-off payment and there is currently no plan to make further payments. The Government does, however, continue to keep the AFP under review, including monitoring future price changes in alternative fuels.

Liz Twist: [\[99946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what level of energy requirements his Department expects to set for non-domestic consumers to qualify for the planned top-up payments provided for as part of the Alternative Fuel Payments scheme.

Graham Stuart:

As part of the Non-Domestic Alternative Fuel Payments, a top-up payment will be available for large users of heating oil (kerosene) in Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take account of their higher usage. Further detail on eligibility will be provided shortly.

■ **Alternative Fuel Payments: Biofuels**

Liz Twist: [\[99945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether non-domestic consumers of biomass energy will be eligible for payments through the Alternative Fuel Payments scheme.

Graham Stuart:

The Government will provide a fixed payment of £150 to all UK non-domestic consumers off the gas grid who use alternative fuels, such as biomass.

■ **Business: Cost of Living**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[99768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with businesses in Washington and Sunderland West constituency on the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on those businesses.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government recognises the impact rising prices are having on businesses, including those in Washington and Sunderland West, and is engaging with businesses across the UK to understand these challenges and explore ways to mitigate them.

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The Government has reversed the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs £4,200 on average, cut fuel duty for 12 months and brought in the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which is shielding businesses across the country from soaring energy prices, saving some around half of their wholesale energy costs.

We have also announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years, reducing the burden of business rates for SMEs.

■ **Business: Equality**

Bill Esterson:

[\[99811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with the Minister for Women and Equalities on taking steps to improve accessibility to entrepreneurship and business ownership for people with protected characteristics in Sefton Central constituency.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government is fully committed to supporting businesses and creating the best conditions for enterprise so that everyone, whatever their background, has the means and know-how to start and grow a business.

We are supporting early-stage entrepreneurs from all backgrounds through the Start-Up Loans Company which provides funding and intensive support to new entrepreneurs. Since 2012, 40% of Start Up Loans have gone to women, worth over £341m and 20% of loans worth 183m have gone to Black, Asian, and Ethnic-minority business (as at October 2022). One hundred and sixty SMEs in Sefton Central have received loans to the value of £1,688,512 as of October 2022.

■ **Emergency Services: Power Failures**

Angela Rayner:

[\[98803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 84890 on Emergency Services: Power Failures, whether emergency services of regional significance are automatically included on the list of Approved Designated Services; and how many emergency services of regional significance were included on the list of Approved Designated Services on 29 November 2022.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: Emergency services of regional significance are automatically included on the list of Approved Designated Services as set out in section 5.2 of the Electricity Supply Emergency Code. Emergency services that want to apply for the Protected Sites List must also meet the additional criteria set out in section 5.3 of the Electricity Supply Emergency Code.

There are fourteen Approved Designated Services listed in section 5.2 of the Electricity Supply Emergency Code, one of which is titled Emergency Services of regional significance.

■ Energy

Alex Cunningham: [\[99831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help ensure that (a) Whitetail Clean Energy and (b) other energy projects can be deployed at full commercial scale.

Graham Stuart:

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

Officials are speaking to representatives from shortlisted projects, including Whitetail Clean Energy, to ensure they remain on track to support the delivery of 20-30Mt per annum of CO₂ capture and storage by 2030, [subject to the results of due diligence and negotiations].

The Government is also accelerating many other key energy projects, as outlined in the British Energy Security Strategy.

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Dave Doogan: [\[97791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to provide extra financial resource to Local Authorities to help them to administer the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding model announced on 21 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Government will support Local Authorities as much as possible in delivering the funding, and work closely with them to ensure that appropriate new burdens funding is provided alongside the grants to support people in their areas.

Stephen Doughty: [\[98830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2022 to Question 65799 on Energy Bills Rebate, what progress his Department has made on finalising the details of the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund for people without a domestic electricity contract.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: The Government is finalising the eligibility, delivery arrangements and timescales for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding and will be announcing details shortly.

■ Energy Bills Rebate: District Heating

Ian Mearns:

[\[99802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November to Question 84872 on Energy Bills Rebate: District Heating, by which date he plans to announce the method of delivery for the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding payments.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is working in partnership with local authorities to finalise the details of the Alternative Funding. The Government is aiming to launch the scheme in January and will make a further announcement on delivery mechanism details soon.

■ Energy Bills Rebate: Meters

Judith Cummins:

[\[94779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of people who are unable to receive energy bill discount vouchers due to their energy meters being supplied by a wholesaler.

Graham Stuart:

The Government does not have an estimate of how many people cannot receive Energy Bill Discount Vouchers specifically due to their meters being supplied by a wholesaler. The Government estimates that approximately 900,000 households will not receive the Energy Bills Support Scheme payment. Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will provide a £400 discount off energy bills for these households. The Government will publish further detail about eligibility for Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding shortly.

■ Energy Bills Rebate: Ogmore

Chris Elmore:

[\[98794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many claims have been made for the first £400 instalment voucher of the Energy Bill Support Scheme by households with non-smart prepayment meters in Ogmore constituency as of 29 November 2022.

Graham Stuart:

Customers with traditional prepayment meters should have received their first and second Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) discount vouchers. These have been sent by SMS text, email or post. There is no need to apply for the discount under the Energy Bills Support Scheme in Great Britain.

Data for October indicates all vouchers have been dispatched by suppliers and over 60% of those eligible have claimed these. The Department will publish constituency data in due course.

■ Energy Charter Treaty

Caroline Lucas:

[\[96595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the withdrawal of (a) Germany, (b) France, (c) Spain, (d) the Netherlands, (e) Poland, (f) Slovenia and (g) Lithuania from the Energy Charter Treaty.

Graham Stuart:

The UK has been closely monitoring the situation surrounding the Energy Charter Treaty's modernisation process, including the positions taken by other Contracting Parties. The Government will continue to do so as part of its engagement with the Treaty's modernisation process.

■ Energy Intensive Industries: Tax Allowances

Jessica Morden:

[\[95812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department will respond to its consultation on reviewing the energy intensive industries exemption scheme to provide relief to energy intensive industries for a proportion of the indirect costs of funding renewable energy policies.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses, to ensure the economy remains strong and competitive. In addition to existing Energy Intensive Industry (EII) schemes, the Energy Bill Relief Scheme is now supporting industry with the cost of energy. This will be in place until 31 March 2023. The Government is considering providing support beyond the existing relief schemes and will publish its response to the EII Exemption Scheme consultation in due course.

■ Energy: Disability

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[96675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to work with the energy industry to develop social tariffs to reduce energy bills for households with high energy usage resulting from disability.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is supporting households through a series of measures; including, the Energy Price Guarantee, saving typical households £900 this winter and the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme payments.

A Treasury-led review will be launched to consider how to support households and with energy bills after April 2023. It is the Government's intention that support will be better focused on the most vulnerable households and those least able to pay.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has completed his annual statutory review of pensions and benefits. Rates will, subject to Parliamentary approval, increase by 10.1% from April 2023.

■ Energy: Meters

Chris Elmore:

[\[98795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in Ogmore constituency have non-smart prepayment meters installed as of 29 November 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Department does not collect this information.

Dan Carden:

[\[98819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to prevent energy suppliers switching people onto prepayment meters when they fall into debt.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: The energy regulator Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter on those in arrears, except as a last resort.

Suppliers must provide notice of at least seven days before installing a prepayment meter or changing a smart meter to prepayment mode.

Ofgem rules further require energy suppliers to assess whether installing a prepayment meter, including the remote switching of a smart meter, is safe and practical for the customer. This assessment should include identifying any vulnerability.

■ Energy: Pre-payment

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[99711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to prevent the customers of energy suppliers being moved to prepayment arrangements without being consulted.

Graham Stuart:

The energy regulator Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter on customers who are in debt, except as a last resort.

Suppliers must provide notice of seven days before installing a prepayment meter or changing a smart meter to prepay mode.

Ofgem further rules require energy suppliers to assess whether installing a prepayment meter, including the remote switching of a smart meter, is safe and reasonably practicable for the customer. This assessment should include identifying any vulnerability.

■ Energy: Prices**Catherine West:**[\[94826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Contact for families with disabled children's survey entitled Out of Energy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of that survey's findings on families with seriously ill and disabled children who have cut back or stopped using essential disability equipment, in the context of rising energy costs.

Graham Stuart:

As set out in my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement, the Government will work with consumer groups and industry to consider the best approach to consumer protection in energy markets from April 2024, including assistance for families with disabled children. The Government will consider all relevant evidence, including this survey, in developing its approach.

On top of the Energy Price Guarantee for all households, the Government has announced an additional £1,200 of support for the eight million most vulnerable households to help with the cost of living. In 2023-24, an additional Cost of Living Payment of £900 will be provided to households on means-tested benefits and £150 to individuals on disability benefits.

Peter Dowd:[\[99876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to provide an energy assistance payment for families of disabled children and young people who have a high energy usage.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is delivering the Energy Bills Support Scheme, a £400 non-repayable grant to support families with their energy bills. Additionally, The Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) will save a typical household in Great Britain £900 this Winter. Families with disabled children are also entitled to a one-off £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment. The Government is currently reviewing the EPG. This consultation will explore the best ways to ensure that vulnerable high energy users, such as those with medical requirements, are not put at risk.

■ Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme: Sefton Central**Bill Esterson:**[\[99814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes were retrofitted as a result of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme in Sefton Central constituency as of 21 November 2022.

Graham Stuart:

As of 21 November 2022, 54 homes were reported in official figures as retrofitted as a result of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme in Sefton Central Constituency.

■ Housing: Heat Pumps

Fleur Anderson: [\[100011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Putney constituency have had heat pumps installed as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme Installations Database shows that as of 31 October 2022, twenty-nine heat pump installations were registered in the Putney constituency.

The database does not include all heat pump installations, for example, those installed without Government funding support, such as in new buildings. These are not typically recorded in the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Installations Database.

■ Housing: Insulation

Fleur Anderson: [\[100010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Putney constituency with cavity walls have been insulated as of 31 October 2022.

Fleur Anderson: [\[100012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Putney constituency with lofts had had loft insulation installed as of 31 October 2022.

Fleur Anderson: [\[100013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Putney constituency have had under floor insulation installed as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Government does not hold estimates for how many homes per constituency have these features overall. However, BEIS estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) Government schemes, around 800 cavity wall insulation measures, 100 loft insulation measures and less than 5 under floor insulation measures^[1] were installed in Putney constituency. This data collectively spans the period from January 2013 to September 2022 and does not include installations in October 2022.

^[1] *Exact number suppressed to prevent disclosure*

Christopher Pincher: [\[94743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the sustainable warmth scheme competition held in 2021; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of

repeating the competition for local authorities to win funds to help insulate energy inefficient homes in 2023.

Graham Stuart:

Sustainable Warmth projects from 2021 are currently in delivery and Local Authorities (LAs) have until 31 March 2023 to complete these projects. The Government monitors delivery through monthly reporting scheme delivery data. Once the scheme concludes, the Government will carry out an evaluation of its impact.

The Sustainable Warmth competition was given a finite period for delivery and will not be repeated in the same form for 2023. Several policies are available enabling LAs to access funding for energy efficiency beyond March 2023 including £1.5bn through the Home Upgrade Grant and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The Energy Company Obligation scheme also allows LAs to refer households to energy suppliers for energy efficiency upgrades.

■ **Housing: Solar Power**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[100014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Putney constituency have had solar power panels installed as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

At the end of October 2022, there were 368 domestic installations of solar panels recorded in Putney.

■ **Housing: Wallasey**

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[99729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Wallasey constituency with cavity walls have been insulated as of 31 October 2022.

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[99731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Wallasey constituency with lofts have had loft insulation installed as of 31 October 2022.

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[99732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Wallasey constituency have had under floor insulation installed as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

BEIS estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) Government schemes, around 1,500 cavity wall insulation measures, 1,700 loft insulation measures and 1,300 under floor insulation measures were

installed in Wallasey constituency. Data for ECO covers January 2013 to September 2022. Data for the GHG schemes cover October 2020 to September 2022.

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[99730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Wallasey constituency have had heat pumps installed as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme Installations Database shows that as of 31 October 2022, forty-four heat pump installations were registered in the Wallasey constituency.

The database does not include all heat pump installations, for example, those installed without Government funding support, such as in new buildings. These are not typically recorded in the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Installations Database.

■ **Housing: Washington and Sunderland West**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[99767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, How many homes in Washington and Sunderland West constituency had external wall insulation installed as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

BEIS estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) Government schemes, there have been less than 5 external wall insulation measures^[1] installed in Washington and Sunderland West constituency. Data for ECO covers January 2013 to September 2022. Data for the GHG schemes cover October 2020 to September 2022.

^[1] *Exact number suppressed to prevent disclosure*

■ **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme: Sefton Central**

Bill Esterson: [\[98721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Government has contributed to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in Sefton Central constituency as of 29 November 2022.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold a breakdown of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding by constituency. Lists of all projects funded through the scheme can be found on the scheme's gov.uk page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme>.

■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Sefton Central**Bill Esterson:** [\[99813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the Government has spent on the Social Housing Decarbonization Fund in Sefton Central constituency as of 24 November 2022.

Graham Stuart:

SHDF Wave 1 awarded around £179m of grant funding, delivering from 2022 into 2023, of which £11m was awarded to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority consortium, including housing associations which have homes in Sefton, retrofitting around 1,250 homes.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Dominic Raab****Steve Reed:** [\[99865\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department holds any records of a formal complaint being made about the conduct of the Rt. Hon. Member for Esher and Walton.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Hon Member to PQ92230. 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://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119738/2022.11.23 Terms of Reference - Investigation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119738/2022.11.23_Terms_of_Reference_-_Investigation.pdf)

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.

■ Emergencies**John Healey:** [\[98660\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the National Resilience Strategy will be published.

Jeremy Quin:

We intend to publish early in 2023.

■ Emergencies: Mobile Phones

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[95956\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his planned timetable is for the launch of the emergency alert system.

Jeremy Quin:

The government remains committed to launching the emergency alerts capability this winter and is in the final stages of validating it is ready for this to happen. The initial focus will be on extreme weather scenarios and, subject to a review of the trial period, we will look to expand its use in the spring of 2023.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Cathedrals: Community Development

Jim Shannon:

[\[86476\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, in what way cathedrals are supporting community cohesion in communities they serve.

Andrew Selous:

First and foremost cathedrals are places of worship, but like parish churches they are also community buildings and often a focus for civic gatherings of faith, political and business leaders in our cities, which facilitate discussions for the common good. They are regularly used for pilgrimages, festivals, concerts, exhibitions and lectures, which are open to all in the community.

The 2021 report by the Association of English Cathedrals ([Economic Social Impacts of England's Cathedrals](#)) put the combined economic value of cathedrals at approximately £235 million in local spending per year

Some examples of community cohesion projects include:

- Bradford Cathedral's Faiths Trail, which offers opportunities to link visitors to worship spaces in the city, including the cathedral, a mosque, a Hindu temple and a gurdwara.
- In Birmingham Cathedral a new Common Wealth table installation in the grounds has been booked for cross-faith community conversations.
- Winchester Cathedral's Christmas market attracts over 400,000 visitors annually, generating local employment and offering local craftspeople an opportunity to showcase their work.
- St Edmundsbury Cathedral hosted a summer flower festival this year to celebrate 1,000 years of the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds, and has hosted an animatronic dinosaur, science and art activities during the school holidays, and film screenings and lectures.

- Liverpool Cathedral held a charity abseil down its tower to support local initiatives with 800 people taking part. It has an annual sleepout to raise money for the Whitechapel Centre homeless project, hosts a community market and provides hospitality to the local community.
- Gloucester Cathedral has recently employed a full-time member of staff as a Community Engagement Manager, reflecting the amount of outreach work the Cathedral does. It has run a regular breakfast club for the homeless twice a week since 2007. More recently, the cathedral has started a gardening group and a walking rugby group. The Cathedral also regularly exhibits the work of a formerly homeless photographer, to raise awareness of the level of homelessness in the city.
- Leicester Cathedral has run a series of local community arts events in partnership with local schools.
- Norwich Cathedral hosted 'Dippy the Dinosaur' this year, on loan from the Natural History Museum, and also regularly hosts art and music events for the county.

More details on the economic and social impact of England's cathedrals are available in the Association of English Cathedrals Report: [Economic Social Impacts of England's Cathedrals](#)

■ Church of England: Families and Marriage

Jim Shannon:

[86479]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church is taking to help support (a) family relationships, (b) parenting and (c) marriage.

Andrew Selous:

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Families and Households is considering all aspects of this subject and will publish its report in early 2023. The Church of England's support for families, parenting and marriage comes in many forms. Parishes offer:

- early years groups and children's clubs to support child development and provide parental support.
- counselling and social support for those in need, such as work with foodbanks, credit unions and Citizens Advice to reduce the pressures of financial difficulty on relationships.
- marriage guidance for couples wishing to marry, prior to the ceremony.
- work with organisations such as Relate to offer relationship advice and support or counselling.
- tackling loneliness in the young and old, by visiting people in care homes and hospitals, and by providing spaces for groups, clubs and societies to meet.

Nationally the Church of England provides resources to clergy and couples considering marriage through the 'Your Church Wedding' website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding> This gives advice for couples at all stages of marriage preparation.

Marrying in the local church remains one of the most cost-effective ways of having a relationship recognised in law and costs around £550 (approved by Parliament). This fee can be reduced for pastoral reasons at the discretion of the local Incumbent.

The National Churches Trust report 'House for Good' has updated its estimates of the contribution of churches to their local community. The report estimates the national value of the Church's work on counselling and mental health support at over £4.5million, work with youth groups and young people at an additional £1.8million, support with food and foodbanks at £36million and drug and alcohol support at £0.5million. The full update is available here: [House of Good 2021](#)

■ Churches: Repairs and Maintenance

Jim Shannon:

[86477]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church is taking to plan for long-term maintenance of its churches and cathedrals.

Andrew Selous:

The Cathedral and Church Buildings team of the National Church Institutions (NCIs) are working closely with the cathedrals and major churches of the Church of England to evaluate the overall maintenance work required. The Church Commissioners are providing £11million in funding for 2023-25 to support a new "Buildings for Mission" programme to provide support, through dioceses, to local parishes with the challenges they face in maintaining their church buildings

The Church is grateful to the Government for its support for cathedrals and major churches during the pandemic when the Culture Recovery Fund made over £60.6m available to 582 parishes and cathedrals. The Church advocates for the continuation of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, worth up to £42m a year, until a suitable alternative can be found. The NCIs are working closely with Government, heritage partners and philanthropic funders, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund in response to its recent strategic review.

The Church awaits the response of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to the recommendations made by the Government's independent review led by Bernard Taylor into the sustainability of Church buildings, which was published in 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/english-churches-and-cathedrals-sustainability-review>

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****John Healey:**[\[97484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October to Question 62689 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications were (a) received and (b) processed by his Department in (i) October and (ii) November 2022.

James Heappey:

In October 2022, 2,020 applications were received, of which approximately 1,040 were duplicates, while an approximate 3,908 applications were processed. Of the processed applications, 2,043 decisions were issued to principal applicants which simultaneously processed 1,865 duplicate applications.

Furthermore, as of 29 November, approximately 1,571 applications have been received, of which 807 were duplicates, with approximately 6,263 applications processed. Of the processed applications, 2,057 decisions were issued to principal applicants which simultaneously processed 4,206 duplicate applications.

John Healey:[\[97485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September to Question 41934 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many principals with confirmed eligibility under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme have not been relocated to the UK for more than six months since confirmation of that eligibility.

James Heappey:

As of 29 November 2022, we are aware of approximately 332 Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) eligible principals who received an eligibility decision either on or prior to 28 May 2022 that have not yet been relocated to the UK. We are relocating individuals and their family members as quickly as possible, actively communicating with individuals to resolve a range of potential barriers to travel.

The conditions in Afghanistan mean that supporting the movement of ARAP eligible persons out of Afghanistan is complex, but despite this we are continuing to move individuals to safety. To date, we have relocated over 12,000 ARAP principals and their dependants to the UK, including over 5,000 since Op PITTING concluded at the end of August 2021.

John Healey:[\[97486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2022 to Question 48226 on Afghanistan: Refugees, whether any further data breaches of personal data relating to Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applicants have occurred since May 2022; and what steps he has taken to help prevent further data breaches since that date.

James Heappey:

Since May 2022, there have been no further known data breaches of personal data relating to ARAP applicants.

A thorough review of processes has been undertaken and changes made to prevent a recurrence, including implementing a new information management system to process casework. The ARAP team also sought recommendations from Defence Digital which have been applied to further improve the team's handling and protection of casework data.

John Healey:[\[97488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2022 to Question 49057 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications were awaiting an initial decision by his Department as of 28 November 2022.

James Heappey:

To date, we have relocated over 12,000 ARAP principals and their dependants to the UK, including over 5,000 since Op PITTING concluded at the end of August 2021.

As of 29 November 2022, there are approximately 74,135 ARAP applicants awaiting a decision on their application. However, it is important to note that this includes applicants who did not provide valid contact details when submitting their application. Furthermore, based on employment records we estimate that the vast majority of the outstanding 74,135 applicants are ineligible under the ARAP Scheme.

We are focussing our efforts on identifying those eligible individuals who are still awaiting a decision and relocating all those eligible to the UK. The ARAP team continue to focus on indentifying and relocating the estimated remaining 795 ARAP eligible individuals, with an estimated 3,180 dependants, assessed to be in Afghanistan-using HMG employment records to target efforts.

John Healey:[\[97489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2022 to Question 62691 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many Afghans with confirmed eligibility for relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy were in Afghanistan as of 28 November 2022.

James Heappey:

As of 29 November 2022, there are 327 ARAP principals with confirmed eligibility for relocation to the UK who were in Afghanistan at the point that they last confirmed their location with the ARAP casework team.

There are a number of factors that contribute to how long an individual with confirmed eligibility remains in Afghanistan, such as the dynamic security environment and an applicants' personal circumstances.

It is not always possible to know whether all eligible personnel are still in Afghanistan, as it is incumbent on them to inform the ARAP casework team if they leave the country.

■ Air Force: Training

John Healey: [\[96569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time was between completing the direct-entry senior non-commissioned officer course and beginning the weapons systems operator military aviation ground school in the latest period for which data is available.

James Heappey:

The average time between completing the Direct Entry Senior Non-Commissioned Officer course and beginning the Weapons Systems Operator Military Aviation Ground School during the past 12 months is 15 Weeks.

John Healey: [\[96570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time is between completing the Aircrew Weapon Systems Operator military aviation ground school and beginning the Aircrew Weapon Systems Operator Crewman course.

James Heappey:

The average time between completing the Aircrew Weapon Systems Operator Military Aviation Ground School and beginning the Weapons Systems Operator Crewman course during the past 12 months is 15 Weeks. This average is for Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel.

John Healey: [\[96572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the average time between completing the WSO_p military aviation ground school and beginning the WSO_p (ISR) course.

James Heappey:

The average time between completing the Weapon System Operator Military Aviation Ground School to starting the Weapon System Operator Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Operational Conversion Unit during the past 12 months is eight Weeks.

John Healey: [\[96573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time is between completing the WSO_p military aviation ground school and commencing the WSO_p (ALM) course.

James Heappey:

The average time between completing the Weapon System Operator Military Aviation Ground School to starting the Weapon System Operator Air Load Master course during the past 12 months is 24 Weeks.

John Healey:

[\[96580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time is between completing the WSOp course and commencing the ISTAR OCU.

James Heappey:

The average time between completing the Weapon System Operator course to starting the Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) Operational Conversion Unit during the past 12 months is 41 Weeks.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Testing**

John Healey:

[\[99721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has analysed the data from the user validation trials for the Ajax programme; and whether the vehicles have passed their user validation trials.

John Healey:

[\[99722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his comments to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee on 2 November 2022, whether he expects Ajax to begin its reliability and growth trials in December 2022 or January 2023.

Alex Chalk:

Analysis of the data and crew feedback from the user validation trials has concluded. The trials successfully met their objectives to establish the effectiveness of the modifications proposed by General Dynamics to address the noise and vibration concerns on Ajax. The trials ensured vehicle crews remained safely within noise and vibration levels, allowing progression to the Reliability Growth Trials that we intend to commence in January 2023.

■ **Armed Forces: Discharges**

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[96671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is taking steps to help ensure that people are not medically discharged from the Armed Forces for mental health reasons without first receiving (a) a formal diagnosis, (b) information on treatment and support options and (c) referral to appropriate services where clinically recommended.

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[96673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that mental health assessments for people leaving the military with a physical injury are robust.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Medical Discharge from the Armed Forces requires a diagnosis and an assessment of the individual service person's deployability.

Service personnel have a Structured Mental Health Assessment at their discharge medical examination, which identifies any previously undiagnosed mental health needs and enables signposting and referral where necessary.

Where personnel leaving the Armed Forces have an enduring need for mental healthcare, the Defence Medical Services works in partnership with the NHS to ensure continuation of care. MOD's Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH) are accessible for up to six months after discharge to complete therapeutic work in progress and to provide continuity of care during the transition period until appropriate handover to other services can be completed as required.

In England, the NHS Op COURAGE provides a complete mental healthcare pathway for service leavers, with similar services in other parts of the UK.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

John Healey:

[\[96568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many fires were reported in single living accommodation in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

YEAR	NO OF REPORTED FIRES IN SLA
2017	16
2018	27
2019	14
2020	4*
2021	10
1/1/2022 – 31/10/2022	10

* IT technical issues prevent a definitive figure being readily available for the three-month period 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020.

John Healey:

[\[97446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many complaints his Department received about (a) broken boilers, (b) a lack of heating and (c) a lack of hot water in Single Living Accommodation in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

The information requested is not held centrally and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

John Healey:

[\[97447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 92104 on Pinnacle Group: Contracts, if he will place in the Library the Key Performance Indicators for the regional National Accommodation Management Services contracts held by Amey and VIVO.

Alex Chalk:

The Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) accommodation contracts came into service on 1 April 2022. The contracts comprise of one National Accommodation Management Services (NAMS) contract, held by Pinnacle, and four Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services (RAMS) contracts held by Amey and VIVO.

The Key Performance Indicators for the RAMS contract held with Amey and VIVO, will be placed in the Library of the House.

Attachments:

1. Key Performance Indicators; RAMS Contract [\[20221130-PQ14183 List of RAMS Library of the House.pdf\]](#)

John Healey:

[\[97482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 92018 on Armed Forces: Housing, how much his Department spent on (a) replacing and (b) repairing boilers in service family accommodation in each financial year since 2010/11.

Alex Chalk:

Information prior to 2014 is not held. The Department does not hold the information from 2015 onwards in the format requested and it can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has targeted the worst performing Service Family Accommodation (SFA) to improve thermal efficiency of 2,782 service homes over the past three years, at a rate of £25 million per year. 76% of the 47,396 boilers in SFA are less than 10 years old. Approximately 2,500 boilers are replaced annually within SFA.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement

John Healey:

[\[99720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Boxer armoured vehicles his Department has ordered; and what proportion of those vehicles are fully funded.

Alex Chalk:

As of 1 December 2022, 623 Boxer armoured vehicles have been ordered, all of which are fully funded.

■ **Bomb Disposal: Northern Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[98690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions Army bomb disposal units were called out in Northern Ireland between 1 January and 1 July 2022.

James Heappey:

Data for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 July 2022 can be found below:

TOTAL IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE DISPOSAL (IEDD) TASKS	TOTAL CONVENTIONAL MUNITION DISPOSAL (CMD) TASKS
92	14

■ **Defence**

John Healey: [\[98662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects to publish an updated Defence Command Paper.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Department expects to publish an update to the Defence Command Paper following the Government's publication of the update to the Integrated Review and following the Treasury's Spring Statement.

■ **Electronic Warfare: Reserve Forces**

Chris Evans: [\[98710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence by Lieutenant General Tom Copinger-Syme CBE to the Public Accounts Committee on 14 November 2022, HC 727, how many unpaid reservists are working on the Digital Strategy for Defence as of 29 November 2022.

Alex Chalk:

Reservists play an important part in the delivery of the outcomes detailed in the current Digital Strategy for Defence. However, the number of Reserve personnel employed in this domain is being withheld, as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[97507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether there will be a steering board for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract similar to that implemented for the delivery of the Carrier Alliance.

Alex Chalk:

I refer the right. hon Member to the answer I gave on 28 November 2022 to Question number 90733 to the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne (John Healey).

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships [[UIN 90733.docx](#)]

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[98695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any advance payments were made to any other bidder before the preferred bidder was announced for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

Alex Chalk:

No advance payments have been made to any other bidder before the preferred bidder was announced for the Fleet Solid Support ship competition.

■ Gibraltar: Spain**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[98688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times vessels from the Guardia Civil have entered (a) British Territorial Waters or (b) any Gibraltar Port in each of the last 10 days.

James Heappey:

Between 19 and 29 November 2022, there were 17 entries by Guardia Civil vessels into British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, of which 12 were classed as Innocent Passage under Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The other five entries breached UNCLOS Article 19 and were classed as Surface Incursions, with one incursion taking place on each of 19, 21, 22, 23 and 24 November. We protest these incursions directly with the vessels concerned and via diplomatic channels. There were no entries into any Gibraltar port.

■ Harland and Wolff: Fleet Solid Support Ships**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[97449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an estimate of the overall cost to Harland and Wolff Belfast to fulfil its obligations to the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

Alex Chalk:

The financial arrangements agreed between the members of Team Resolute are a matter for the companies involved and it would not be appropriate for the Ministry of Defence to comment.

■ HMS Victorious: Fires**Caroline Lucas:**[\[97575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what investigation he has undertaken into the fire on board HMS Victorious; when that fire occurred; what scale it was categorised as;

what (a) injuries, (b) radiation hazard and (c) risk to the reactor resulted from it; what the cost of repairs was; what steps he plans to take in response to the fire; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Chalk:

I am unable to provide specific information of this incident as we do not disclose information or comment on Royal Navy submarines. To do so could prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

However, all Royal Navy Service personnel are trained and qualified in firefighting techniques, and have robust emergency operating procedures for all incidents, which are practiced on a regular basis.

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

John Healey:

[\[98661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet on 28 November 2022 and pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2022 to Question 75791 on Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review, when he plans to publish the refresh of the Integrated Review.

Mr Ben Wallace:

On 21 September 2022, the Government announced its intention to refresh the Integrated Review. This intention was reasserted by the Prime Minister in his speech to Lord Mayor's Banquet on 28 November 2022. This work is being lead by Professor John Bew. We expect this work to be completed ahead of the Treasury's Spring Statement.

■ **Kenya: Armed Forces**

John Healey:

[\[97445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many complaints his Department received about the conduct of members of the Armed Forces at British Army Training Unit Kenya in each of the last five years.

James Heappey:

The Department has defined the right hon. Member's question to mean complaints made or referred to the Royal Military Police by civilians or Service personnel about alleged criminal or non-criminal conduct offences, regardless of severity.

Investigations and Reports made to the Royal Military Police

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 TO DATE
Full Investigations	30	58	11	28	15
Initial Reports with no solvability factors	37	59	16	61	44

- These figures are a single Service estimate; not an official statistic produced or checked by Defence Statistics and may be subject to data quality issues affecting their accuracy.
- These figures have been sourced from REDCAP, the Service Police crime record management system which holds investigation information, including capturing alleged offence referrals from the RMP. Figures provided are based on a manual search of the database in response to this specific request for information.
- As REDCAPS is a live system, figures may not match other similar requests.

■ Military Aircraft: Employment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[99758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK jobs have been created by the (a) E-7 Wedgetail, (b) P-8, (c) Apache and (d) Chinook programmes.

Alex Chalk:

The information needed to answer the right hon. Member's question is being compiled from a variety of sources and will take time to collate. I will write to him when the information is available, and a copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement

John Healey:

[\[97512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of when 25 per cent of his Department's procurement spend will go to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has made good progress towards its internal target that 25% of MOD procurement spend should go to SMEs by 2022, both directly and indirectly through the supply chain. The latest figures available, financial year (FY)

2020-21, show 23% of our direct and indirect spending went to SMEs and this follows a year-on-year increase from 13.1% in FY 2016-17.

The figures for FY 2021-22 are currently being collated but are not yet available. These will be published on the gov.uk website in Spring 2023.

■ Ministry of Defence: Written Questions

John Healey: [\[98700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will respond to Question 93463 tabled on 22 November 2022 by the hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne.

James Heappey:

I responded to the right hon. Member's question on 2 December 2022.

■ Navantia

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[99759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions officials from his Department have met representatives from Navantia since 1 January 2020.

Alex Chalk:

No meetings have been held with representatives of Navantia since 1 January 2020. As with any major procurement programme, Ministry of Defence officials have had regular engagements with bidders throughout the market engagement and competition phases of the Fleet Solid Support project. Such meetings were held with Team Resolute, rather than with representatives of the individual companies which constitute Team Resolute. Similar meetings were held with other bidders in the Fleet Solid Support ship competition. Such meetings are held with the express objective of ensuring the fair and equal treatment of all bidders.

■ Navantia: Fleet Solid Support Ships

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[97509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Navantia is providing a parent company guarantee for Navantia UK in relation to the Fleet Solid Support Ship programme.

Alex Chalk:

It is not for the Ministry of Defence to comment on corporate funding arrangements or guarantees between companies.

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.

■ Nuclear Submarines: Safety

Caroline Lucas:

[\[97576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment of (a) nuclear, (b) fire and (c) other safety risks on board the Vanguard nuclear fleet the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator has made; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Chalk:

The Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator, together with the Defence Maritime Regulator, as part of the Defence Safety Authority continually assesses the safety risks on board the Vanguard nuclear fleet. Nuclear Safety and the safety of our personnel remain the highest priorities for Defence and it is considered that safety risks continue to be well managed to achieve 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP) and tolerable.

■ Sheffield Forgemasters: Loans

John Healey:

[\[98666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 89724 on Defence: Loans, what the value is of the loan provided to Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited by his Department under the Working Capital Facility Agreement.

John Healey:

[\[98667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 89724 on Defence: Loans, what interest rate is being paid by Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited under the Working Capital Facility Agreement.

John Healey:

[\[98668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 89724 on Defence: Loans, when the Working Capital Facility Agreement with Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited was established; and for what purpose.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) provides Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited (SFIL) with a revolving credit facility to provide liquidity for SFIL and its subsidiaries to meet its working capital needs. This working capital facility has been established since 19 August 2021, when SFIL became a public corporation wholly owned by MOD, and has an expiry date of 31 December 2024. It has a lending limit of £15 million and the rate of interest charged is equal to the Bank of England base rate plus 2.25%.

■ UK Border Force: Military Aid

John Healey:

[\[93454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November to question 86680 on UK Border Force: Military Aid, whether his Department approved the

Military Aid to Civilian Authority (MACA) request from the Home Office to make military personnel available as part of contingency plans in the event of any industrial action by Border Force staff.

John Healey: [\[98699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will respond to Question 93454 tabled on 22 November 2022 by the hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence received a Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) request from the Home Office on 15 November asking for 600 military personnel to be made available to bolster Border Force's contingency plans to maintain public services and minimise disruption in the event of any industrial action by Border Force staff.

Defence has reviewed this request against longstanding MACA principles and has agreed to meet this request. This will ensure the Home Office can maintain suitable levels of security at the UK border.

John Healey: [\[93455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November to Question 86680 on UK Border Force: Military Aid, on what date his Department receive that Military Aid to Civilian Authority (MACA) request from the Home Office.

John Healey: [\[98698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will respond to Question 93455 tabled on 22 November 2022 by the hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence received a Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) request from the Home Office on 15 November asking for 600 military personnel to be made available to bolster Border Force's contingency plans to maintain public services and minimise disruption in the event of any industrial action by Border Force staff.

Defence has reviewed this request against longstanding MACA principles and has agreed to meet this request. This will ensure the Home Office can maintain suitable levels of security at the UK border.

John Healey: [\[93456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November to Question 86680 on UK Border Force: Military Aid, how many military personnel were requested in that Military Aid to Civilian Authority (MACA) request by the Home Office.

John Healey: [\[98671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will respond to Question 93456 tabled on 22 November 2022 by the hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence received a Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) request from the Home Office on 15 November asking for 600 military personnel to be made available to bolster Border Force's contingency plans to maintain public services and minimise disruption in the event of any industrial action by Border Force staff.

Defence has reviewed this request against longstanding MACA principles and has agreed to meet this request. This will ensure the Home Office can maintain suitable levels of security at the UK border.

Warships: Climate Change**John Healey:**[\[96567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times engines on Royal Navy ships have cut out due to rising sea temperatures in each year since 2010.

Alex Chalk:

There have been no recorded instances of engines on Royal Navy ships cutting out due to rising sea temperatures to date.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Charities: Lotteries****Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[98922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what analysis her Department has made of the impacts of charity lottery sales limits on the funds raised by charity lotteries.

Wendy Chamberlain:[\[98923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when her Department plans to update the charity lottery sales limits.

Wendy Chamberlain:[\[98924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that charity lottery sales limits do not have a negative impact on the amount of funding received by charities.

Paul Scully:

The society lottery annual sales limit was last increased as part of a wider package of reforms in 2020. These were reviewed 12 months after they were implemented, and the results of the review were published in March 2022. Early indicators were positive. The higher annual sales limit has allowed some multiple licensed operators who previously had annual sales in excess of £10 million, to restructure and become single licence holders, and divert the savings to good cause returns. The review concluded that it was too soon to reach any firm view on the impact of the changes,

especially during a time when the effect of the Covid pandemic made any evaluation more difficult, and that more data on annual growth of the sector was required before considering any further changes. My officials will continue working with the Gambling Commission, as part of its regulatory role, to keep the sector under review.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Redundancy**

Angela Rayner: [\[98808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has a voluntary exit programme for civil servants serving under her Department.

Julia Lopez:

DCMS does not currently have a voluntary exit programme for its serving Civil Servants.

■ **Football: Concussion**

Marsha De Cordova: [\[96646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will hold discussions with the International Football Association Board on the potential merits of introducing temporary concussion substitution protocols.

Stuart Andrew:

The laws of the game of football are a matter for The International Football Association Board (IFAB), as the independent body authorised to decide and agree changes to such laws within the sport. It is for the IFAB to consider the potential merits of introducing new laws for discussion in conjunction with The Football Association and other members of the IFAB as appropriate.

The safety and wellbeing of everyone taking part in sport is absolutely paramount and the Government expects sports to do all they can to protect their players. Our Command Paper on Concussion in Sport published in December 2021 outlines the steps the Government is taking to help reduce risks associated with head injuries by improving understanding, awareness, prevention and treatment of concussion in sport.

■ **Football: Gambling**

Kim Leadbeater: [\[98932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the 2022 FIFA World Cup on domestic rates of gambling-related harms.

Kim Leadbeater: [\[98933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support is in place to protect those affected by gambling harm during the FIFA World Cup.

Paul Scully:

A variety of initiatives are in place across the gambling regulatory framework and health services to protect individuals and the public from harmful gambling and raise awareness of its risks.

The Gambling Commission requires all gambling operators to make information available to customers on how to gamble safely and how to access information on problem gambling and the support available. Most operators signpost to the charity GambleAware's begambleaware.org site, which contains a wide range of information on risks as well as links to advice and support, including the 24 hour National Gambling Helpline. The NHS webpage 'Help for problem gambling' covers common indicators which suggest that individuals may be experiencing harmful gambling, and the NHS Live Well page on gambling has been updated, providing information on gambling-related harms and signposting to sources of support.

The Department for Health and Social Care is also taking steps to improve and expand specialist treatment services available for people with a gambling addiction. Under the NHS Long Term Plan, £15m has been committed to establish 15 clinics by 2023/24. Seven specialist clinics are already open and accepting patients. DHSC has committed to undertake an audit of gambling-related harm training materials for healthcare professionals to build capability in the healthcare workforce.

There have also been a number of recent voluntary and regulatory initiatives to reduce the visibility of gambling around major sporting events. The gambling industry's 'whistle-to-whistle' ban, prevents gambling ads from airing during and immediately before or after live sports coverage before 9pm. Further to this, the Advertising Standards Authority recently implemented tough new rules banning content with 'strong appeal to children' from gambling ads, including top-flight and UK national team footballers. GambleAware have also launched a new phase of their 'Bet Regret' campaign for the tournament providing increased signposting to support for gambling harm around the 2022 World Cup.

Evidence on the impacts of gambling advertising, including sponsorship around sports, is being closely considered as part of the government's Review of the Gambling Act. A white paper will be published in the coming weeks outlining our conclusions and next steps.

Local Press and Radio: Shropshire**Mark Pritchard:**[\[98747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to protect news gathering and output following the review into BBC local radio services in Shropshire.

Julia Lopez:

The Government recognises the important role that BBC Radio Shropshire plays in terms of the provision of local news and information, and of community engagement in the local area. We are disappointed that the BBC is planning to reduce parts of its

local radio output. The BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the government as set out in its Royal Charter, and decisions on service delivery are a matter for the BBC. However, I have been clear with the Chairman of the BBC Board and the Director General that the BBC must make sure it continues to provide distinctive and genuinely local radio services, with content that reflects and represents people and communities from all corners of the UK. The Government also expects Ofcom, as regulator of the BBC, to ensure the BBC is robustly held to account in delivering its public service duties. The Secretary of State has already asked Ofcom about how they are considering this issue, and I understand that Ofcom is continuing to discuss these proposals with the BBC.

■ **Musicians: Bulgaria**

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96525\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with her Bulgarian counterpart on the agreement of bilateral arrangements for UK musicians seeking to tour in Bulgaria without restrictions.

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96527\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96528\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96529\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96530\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96531\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96532\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96533\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96534\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96535\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96536\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96537\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96538\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96539\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96540\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96541\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96542\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96543\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[96544\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97391\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97392\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97393\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97394\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97395\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97396\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97397\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97398\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97399\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97400\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97403\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97404\]](#)

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

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[97405\]](#)

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

Julia Lopez:

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

EU Member States are principally responsible for deciding the rules governing what work UK visitors can undertake in each Member State. We have engaged bilaterally with all EU Member States, and nearly all (24 out of 27) have confirmed they offer visa and work permit free routes for UK performers for short-term touring.

This includes the UK's biggest touring markets such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Following engagement by the UK Government and the sector, this also includes Spain, which introduced 90-day visa- and work permit- free touring in November 2021; and Greece, which announced a visa and work permit free route for UK creatives in June 2022, currently due to be in place until 31 December 2022. The UK Government is continuing to engage with Greece on extending this arrangement beyond the end of this year, however this is ultimately a decision for the Greek Government to take.

The Government is engaged with the remaining Member States - Cyprus, Malta and Portugal - on allowing creative professionals to tour more easily. However, ultimately

it is up to these countries to align their requirements more closely with the UK's generous rules.

The UK's domestic rules allow musicians, entertainers and artists (and their technical staff) from EU Member States, to perform in the UK without requiring a visa, and the UK does not have work-permits.

■ Olympic Games: Boxing

Imran Hussain: [\[97561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had discussions with stakeholders on the potential merits of banning boxing at the Olympic Games.

Stuart Andrew:

It is for the International Olympic Committee to make any decisions on which sports should be included in the Olympic programme.

The British Olympic Association are our National Olympic Committee and as such represent us in the International Olympic Committee's governance and decision making processes. I have recently had discussions with GB Boxing and UK Sport to understand their position on international competition in the sport.

■ Prize Money: Regulation

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[98925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the amount of regulations governing prize draws compared to those regulating (a) charity lotteries and (b) the National Lottery.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[98926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that prize draws return an appropriate percentage of sales income to good causes.

Paul Scully:

We are aware of concerns, including those raised by the DCMS Select Committee in its recent report *What next for the National Lottery?*, about the different approaches to society lotteries (regulated under the Gambling Act 2005) and prize draws (which are not). The Gambling Act 2005 generally defines a lottery as requiring payment to participate, an outcome determined wholly by chance, and the allocation of prizes. Large society lotteries operate under a licence issued by the Gambling Commission. There are limits on ticket sales and prizes and a minimum return to good causes. The National Lottery, with its unique status, has its own separate legal framework under the National Lottery etc. Act 1993.

Prize draws may resemble lotteries but not meet the Gambling Act 2005 definition of a lottery because there is a free entry route or because there is an element of skill involved. Where prize draws do not meet the definition of a lottery, they are not

considered gambling under the Gambling Act 2005 and the Gambling Commission has no regulatory responsibilities for them. It does however monitor the boundary between them and society lotteries to ensure that products are regulated when required by the Act.

We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age, and will publish a white paper setting out our conclusions in the coming weeks. We are also carefully considering the Select Committee's recommendation and will respond in due course.

■ Social Media: Personation

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[98812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to tackle online impersonations on (a) social media and (b) dating applications which are carried out for the purpose of coercive control.

Paul Scully:

The Online Safety Bill will require user-to-user services to tackle illegal content. This includes social media and dating apps.

We recently announced our intention to add the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to the list of priority illegal offences under the Bill. This means that in-scope services will be required to proactively prevent users from being exposed to this type of content, strengthening protections for users from this behaviour. They will also need to swiftly remove such content if it appears on their service.

The Online Safety Bill is scheduled to return to the Commons on 5th December for its second day of Report.

■ Sports

Imran Hussain:

[\[97560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she will publish the Government's Sport Strategy.

Stuart Andrew:

DCMS has committed to delivering a new Government sport strategy that will set the direction for the government's priorities and its role in the sport sector.

This new strategy will build on the success of the previous strategy, Sporting Future, and will have a specific focus on addressing inactivity levels, the barriers that stop people from participating in sport and making the sector more sustainable for the future.

We are seeking to publish the strategy in the first quarter of 2023.

EDUCATION**■ Birkbeck College: Redundancy**

Feryal Clark: [\[95958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed redundancies of (a) academic and (b) administrative staff at Birkbeck College on the quality of (i) teaching, (ii) outcomes for students and (iii) research undertaken by the university.

Robert Halfon:

Higher education (HE) providers are independent institutions, responsible for their own decisions on staffing issues, including how they structure themselves to deliver research and teaching priorities. Where it is necessary to reshape their activities, it is important that universities carefully consider the impact of job losses on staff and students and the overall sustainability of teaching and research in this country.

■ Carers: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell: [\[97721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is she taking to ensure that (a) kinship carers and (b) adoption parents receive on-going support until the young person in their care reaches 25 years of age.

Claire Coutinho:

The national adoption strategy sets out the department's ambition to improve adoption support services across the country. Under the strategy, regional adoption agency leaders are collaborating to develop a core offer of support so that families will be able to access the same high-quality support wherever they live.

The Adoption Support Fund is available for adoptive and eligible Special Guardianship Order children and young people up to and including the age of 21, or 25 with an education, health and care plan. This funding ensures that children and their families can access vital therapies to address past trauma and attachment issues so that adoptive families can stabilise and thrive.

The review of Children's Social Care sets out recommendations on how the government can better support kinship families. The department is now considering how we can take these recommendations forward, including the recommendations to create a financial allowance and a new paid parental leave entitlement for kinship carers.

■ Children: Separated People

David Warburton: [\[96633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will take steps to encourage local authorities to help children of separated parents maintain a relationship with their grandparents.

Claire Coutinho:

Statutory guidance states that local authorities should offer Family Group Conferences to families undergoing or about to undergo care proceedings, with many providing this service before the care proceedings stage. Family Group Conferences allow extended family members to offer their practical support to parents, in order to develop a family plan that meets the needs of and promotes the welfare of the children involved. Under such circumstances, these plans can enable grandparents to maintain a relationship with their grandchildren, where the parents are separated.

A key principle of the Children's Act 1989 is that children are best looked after within their families. Under certain circumstances, grandparents can become kinship carers of children from separated parents that might otherwise have been taken into care, via informal family arrangements or through legal orders made by the court. In 2011, the department issued statutory guidance for local authorities about supporting kinship carers, explaining that there is no limit on the level of support, including financial support, that local authorities can provide them.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care published in May 2022 set out recommendations on how the department can further support kinship families. We are now considering these recommendations, including those to create a financial allowance, and will set out an ambitious and detailed response to the recommendations in the review in early 2023.

■ Children: Social Services**Rachael Maskell:**[\[97735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that children in the children's social care system are regularly screened to determine whether their physical, mental and emotional health needs are being met.

Claire Coutinho:

Statutory guidance states that health assessments must take place annually for every child in the social care system.

Local authorities are responsible for making sure this health assessment produces a health plan that addresses the child's physical, emotional, and mental health needs. This health plan includes a strengths and difficulties questionnaire that measures any emotional or behavioural difficulties experienced by the child.

The initial health plan must be completed within 20 days of the child entering care, in time for the first statutory review of the child's care plan. The health assessments are not isolated events but are reviewed annually and are part of the dynamic and continuous cycle of care planning.

■ Classroom Assistants: Pay**Rachael Maskell:**[\[97724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of the cost of living crisis on the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of teaching assistants.

Rachael Maskell: [\[97725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will launch a job evaluation scheme for teaching assistants.

Rachael Maskell: [\[97726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to introduce a national pay scale for teaching assistants.

Rachael Maskell: [\[97730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to help ensure schools use contracts that remunerate teaching assistants for work undertaken during the school holiday period rather than use of term-time only contracts for those support staff.

Rachael Maskell: [\[97733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to engage teaching assistants in the provision of (a) out-of-hours children's provision, including breakfast and afterschool clubs and (b) school holiday activity programmes.

Nick Gibb:

The Government's education reforms gives schools the freedom to make their own decisions about recruitment, pay, conditions, and use of teaching assistants. Schools should have the freedom to make these decisions, as they are best placed to understand their pupils' needs.

Many schools pay teaching assistants according to local government pay scales. These are set through negotiations between the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents the employer, and Local Government trade unions (UNISON, Unite, and the GMB), which represent the employee. Support staff on these pay scales, or in schools that mirror them, will receive a pay rise of 10% on average. This will be backdated to April 2022.

The 2022 Autumn Statement underlines the priority the Government attaches to schools, delivering a significant uplift in funding in this Spending Review period. Core schools funding will increase by £2 billion in both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

It is for schools to decide how to use teaching assistants and other support staff in activities outside the classroom, such as holiday activities and breakfast clubs.

■ Further Education: Carbon Emissions

Jim Shannon: [\[97522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she is providing additional support to further education colleges to help increase the number of courses on local Net Zero delivery.

Robert Halfon:

I refer the hon. Member for Strangford to the answer I gave on 29 November 2022 to Question [92389](#).

■ Higher Education: Fees and Charges

Matt Western:

[97671]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has conducted an impact assessment on the potential costs to higher education providers in relation to the Higher Education (Investigation Fees) (England) Regulations 2022 amendment to the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

Robert Halfon:

The department conducted a low value impact assessment prior to laying the Higher Education (Investigation Fees) (England) Regulations 2022. As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum to this instrument, a low value impact assessment was appropriate given that the estimated impact of the regulations is below the +/- £5 million equivalent annual net direct cost to business threshold.

■ Office for Students

Matt Western:

[97670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to write to the Office for Students to provide the regulator additional guidance for the remainder of financial year 2022-23.

Robert Halfon:

The department's priorities for higher education are consistent with those set out in guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) earlier this year. This includes a continued focus on delivering the government's skills mission, driving up quality and ensuring equality of opportunity and real social mobility for students.

The department will issue the OfS with new guidance for the current financial year if new issues or priorities emerge and will keep this under review.

Matt Western:

[97677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the removal of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education designation to perform assessment functions in England after the end of March 2023 on the Office for Students.

Robert Halfon:

The Office for Students (OfS) has imposed rigorous requirements for quality for all universities and colleges, and is investigating where it has information suggesting there may be cause for concern. The OfS will continue with this important work beyond 31 March 2023.

On the 14 October 2022, the OfS published an update on arrangements for assessing quality and standards from 1 April 2023. This sets out how the OfS will take on the activities currently delivered by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for new providers seeking registration or degree awarding powers. The update from the OfS is available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news->

[blog-and-events/press-and-media/ofs-sets-out-arrangements-for-assessing-quality-and-standards-from-april-2023/.](#)

The department will continue to receive advice from officials and the OfS on the effective assessment of quality and standards.

■ School Meals

Fleur Anderson:

[97642]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps his Department has taken to help ensure that students from low-income households who are not eligible for free school meals are able to eat healthy and enjoyable school lunches every school day, in the context of the cost of living crisis.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to monitor the consequences of the rising cost of living and is working with other Government Departments to provide support. The Department keeps free school meal (FSM) eligibility under review to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them. In setting a threshold, the Department believes that the current level, which enables pupils to benefit from FSM while remaining affordable and deliverable for schools, is the right one.

The Department spends around £600 million per year to ensure an additional 1.25 million infants enjoy a free, healthy, and nutritious meal at lunchtime, following the introduction of the Universal Infant Free School Meal policy in 2014. Under this policy, all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in England's state funded schools receive a free meal.

The Government encourages schools to promote healthy eating and provide healthy and nutritious food and drink. Compliance with the School Food Standards is mandatory for all maintained schools, including academies and free schools.

The Government spends approximately £1 billion annually on FSM and remains committed to supporting children, including through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and school breakfast clubs. The Government funds over £200 million a year on HAF, which provides healthy meals and holiday club places to children from low income families. The Government is allocating £24 million over two years for the national school breakfast programme, which benefits over 2,000 schools across the country.

■ Schools: Cost of Living

Stephanie Peacock:

[83713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he is taking steps to (a) issue guidance and (b) provide support for teachers where their pupils schooling has been impacted by the financial situation of their families, in the context of the cost of living crisis; and what assessment he has made of the impact of rising energy costs on school's budgets to provide support for low-income pupils.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to assess and monitor the effects of inflationary pressures on schools' budgets. This includes working with schools to understand the effects on low-income pupils.

The 2022 Autumn Statement has provided an additional net increase in the core schools budget of £2 billion in 2023/24, and a further £2 billion in 2024/25, over and above totals announced at the Autumn and Budget Spending Review 2021. This brings the core schools budget to a total of £58.8 billion in 2024/25. This will enable head teachers to continue to concentrate funding in the areas that positively support educational attainment. The 2022 Autumn Statement brings school funding for both mainstream and high needs to £4 billion higher than last year and will rise by a further £3.5 billion next year.

There will be targeted support for disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium and the National Funding Formula (NFF). In the 2022/23 financial year, the Department is allocating approximately £2,000 per pupil, for all pupils who have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point in the last six years. In total, this is an increase of 15% funding in two years.

From October 2022 to 31 March 2023, schools will benefit from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This will provide a price reduction to protect them from high energy bills over the winter period.

The Department's schools resource management (SRM) guidance includes Department approved frameworks for energy costs and ancillary services relating to energy. Schools can obtain free procurement support on energy and all other buying needs via the Get Help Buying for Schools service.

The Government is offering support to help families with the costs of childcare, housing, transport, and bills. The 'Help for Households' guidance lists Government cost of living support available to families.

■ Schools: Energy**Kim Leadbeater:****[97769]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to provide additional support to schools for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities for their energy costs.

Nick Gibb:

The 2022 Autumn Statement announced that the core schools budget will increase by £2 billion in 2023/24 and a further £2 billion in 2024/25, over and above totals announced in the 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review. This brings the core schools budget to a total of £58.8 billion in 2024/25. This additional funding will be used to support both mainstream schools and Local Authorities' high needs budgets, including funding for special schools. The Department will set out plans for allocation shortly.

Schools are receiving support from the Government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which is running until April 2023 and limits increases in schools' energy bills over the winter months.

All schools can access the Department's Schools Resource Management (SRM) guidance. The SRM includes a range of practical tools and information to help schools unlock efficiencies, which they can then redistribute in line with their own priorities.

The Department continues to monitor the financial health of schools.

■ Schools: North East Hampshire

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[97706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding North East Hampshire schools (a) received in 2015 and (b) will receive this year.

Nick Gibb:

School funding allocations for the 2015/16 financial year can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-block-funding-allocations-2015-to-2016>. This provides the actual budget allocations received by individual schools, calculated according to Local Authorities' school funding formulae.

In the 2018/19 financial year, the Department introduced changes to the school funding system with a new schools National Funding Formula (NFF) to devise notional individual school budgets.

Through the schools NFF, schools in North East Hampshire are attracting £69 million in total this year. This represents a 2.6% cash increase and reflects 2.5% more per pupil in their pupil led funding, compared to 2021/22. Schools' actual allocations in the 2022/23 financial year will be based on Local Authorities' local funding formulae.

On top of this funding through the NFF, schools in North East Hampshire are seeing £1.9 million through the Schools Supplementary Grant (SSG) in the 2022/23 financial year. The SSG was first introduced in 2022/23, with no equivalent grant in previous years.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Stephen Morgan: [\[97790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will place a copy of the underlying data from the latest Condition of School Buildings Survey in the House of Commons Library.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is preparing detailed analysis of the data collected for the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme and plans to publish the data by the end of the year. In line with the analysis, the Department will share the underlying CDC data in the library of the House of Commons.

The key high level findings of the CDC programme were published in May 2021 in the 'Condition of School Buildings Survey: Key Findings' report. This is available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf.

■ Schools: Staff

Kim Leadbeater:

[97770]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to help support the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of staff in schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's priority is to ensure that it continues to attract, retain, and develop highly skilled teachers to ensure that all pupils can reach their potential.

Over 37,000 trainee teachers were recruited in the 2021/22 academic year. The Department is enhancing the appeal of teaching by raising the starting salary for teachers to £30,000 to ensure teaching remains a popular graduate option.

As set out in the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy in 2019, the Department's reforms are not only aimed at increasing teacher recruitment, but also at ensuring teachers stay in the profession.

The Department has created an entitlement to at least three years of structured training, support, and professional development for all new teachers to bring teaching into line with other professions such as law, accountancy, and medicine. These developments are detailed in the new Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (ITT CCF) and the Early Career Framework (ECF). Together, these frameworks ensure that new teachers benefit from at least three years of evidence based training, throughout their ITT and into their induction. Consideration of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) informs both the ITT CCF and ECF, which were both produced with the support of sector experts.

The Department's Universal Services programme provides SEND specific training and continuous professional development for all teachers, head teachers, and other school and college staff at the point of need. Backed by almost £12 million, the programme commenced this year with a focus on supporting mainstream schools and colleges.

■ Skilled Workers

Jim Shannon:

[97520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of UK100's Skills for Local Net Zero Delivery briefing published in October 2021.

Robert Halfon:

I refer the hon. Member for Strangford to the answer I gave on 29 November 2022 to Question [92387](#).

Jim Shannon:[\[97521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he is taking steps to increase long-term funding for courses to develop local skills for Net Zero delivery.

Robert Halfon:

I refer the hon. Member for Strangford to the answer I gave on 29 November 2022 to Question [92388](#).

■ Skilled Workers: Vacancies**Jim Shannon:**[\[97519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of local skills shortages on achieving the Government's Net Zero targets.

Robert Halfon:

The government is assessing local skills shortages that will have an impact on achieving the goals set out in the Net Zero Strategy. This is taking place through a number of skills reforms and programmes.

The government is rolling out Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). 38 LSIPs are in development, led by employer representative bodies (ERBs) across England with plans to be submitted to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education for approval and publication in spring 2023. LSIPs may only be approved if the skills required for local green jobs have been considered. Following their publication, LSIPs will be reviewed regularly to remain relevant.

The department is underpinning these local labour market insights with investment. The Strategic Development Fund (SDF) provides capital and programme funding to enable further education (FE) providers to work together and support changes in local training facilities and provision, to better meet the needs of employers, as set out in LSIPs. Funding can be used to upgrade facilities, equipment, and curricula, build overall capacity to meet local skills priorities, stimulate employer demand for and investment in skills, and support ongoing FE quality improvement. The SDF was initially piloted in 2021/22 with £65 million across England. It was rolled out nationally in 2022, with £92 million funding. Following the designation of ERBs, funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be aligned to emerging priorities and published LSIPs.

The department also plans to invest £290 million of capital funding to establish 21 Institutes of Technology (IoTs) across the country. IoTs are prestigious and high-quality employer-led institutions delivering provision tailored and responsive to the needs of local employers. They specialise in high-level technical skills, particularly in STEM sectors like advanced digital, advanced manufacturing, engineering and construction, and a range of training in green skills sectors.

In addition, the government established the Green Jobs Delivery Group in May 2022 to act as a vehicle for industry and government collaboration on net zero jobs and skills, and understanding workforce challenges including skills gaps. The delivery group was a key recommendation of the Green Jobs Taskforce, which was convened by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and departmental ministers to build evidence on UK skills needs for a transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and which published its independent recommendations in its July 2021. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-jobs-taskforce-report>.

Skills Bootcamps are partly grant-funded and delivered by local areas based on the needs of local employers. They are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, that give learners the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills, and an offer of an employer interview. Skills Bootcamps allow local areas to provide training in sectors specific to their needs. For example, training in the North East is currently available in wind turbine maintenance and construction, to support offshore wind farms in the North East.

The department is rolling out T Levels, a high-quality technical qualification alternative to A Levels which are underpinned by the same employer-led approach as apprenticeships, that support green careers. There are three engineering and manufacturing courses and three in construction. They contain skills that underpin key green sectors like retrofit and electricity networks.

The department has introduced Higher Technical Qualifications, existing and new level 4 and 5 qualifications which align with employers' skills needs, including for green occupations like Building Energy Management Systems.

■ Social Services: Recruitment

Rachael Maskell: [\[97722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps will she take to develop and deliver a workforce plan for the recruitment, retention and development of people working in child social care services.

Rachael Maskell: [\[97723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of levels of (a) skills, (b) pay and (c) opportunities for (i) development and (ii) career progression for support workers in children's social care.

Claire Coutinho:

The department supports the children's social care workforce in many ways, such as by investing more than £50 million every year on recruiting and developing child and family social workers to ensure the workforce has the capacity, skills, and knowledge to support and protect vulnerable children. Each year, the department trains on average 800 new social workers through our fast-track programmes and provides professional development for around 4,000 others.

The department is developing an Implementation Strategy in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, National Panel Report into the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson, and the Competition and Markets Authority report into children's social care provision. We are working closely with the sector on the recommendations from these reports, including on issues related to the recruitment, retention and development of staff. The Implementation Strategy will be published in early 2023.

■ Special Educational Needs

Rosie Duffield:

[\[99943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether a summer-born child with an Education, Health and Care Plan has the right to apply to (a) start and (b) maintain education outside their chronological year group as a compulsory school age start set out in the Admissions Code.

Claire Coutinho:

A child does not have to start school until they have reached compulsory school age. For summer born children, this means that they do not need to start school until the September after their fifth birthday.

Where a child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, the School Admissions Code does not apply to the admission decision. Instead, the Children and Families Act 2014 and Regulations made under the Act set out the process for a local authority drawing up such a plan. The local authority must set out, at section B of the plan, the needs of a child and, at section F, the special educational provision to meet those needs. The local authority must review the plan at least annually.

The local authority has various statutory duties that apply to its decisions over a plan. These include a duty to have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the parents of the child. A parent of a summer born child, when an EHC plan is being reviewed or when a plan is first being drawn up, has a right to ask a local authority for them to be placed in a year group other than the usual for their chronological age.

If a child has special educational needs (SEN) that may be connected with their being summer born, such as a developmental delay, then the local authority will have to reflect these in Section B of the plan. The local authority must specify in Section F of the plan 'special educational provision' for each and every need specified in Section B. The local authority may decide that a child being placed in a year group other than the usual for their chronological age should be such special educational provision, and if so, the local authority must write this into Section F.

If the parents are dissatisfied with what an EHC plan does or does not say in relation to SEN or special educational provision, they have certain rights of appeal to the first-tier Tribunal.

■ Students: Loans

Matt Western:

[\[97672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to publish the Government's response to the Lifelong Loan Entitlement consultation conducted in May 2022.

Matt Western:

[\[97674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has conducted a review of the potential changes required to the admissions system for higher education courses in advance of the delivery of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement in the academic year 2024-25.

Robert Halfon:

To support the design and delivery of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) from 2025, the department will continue to engage with sector bodies across both further education and higher education, as well as the Student Loans Company and regulatory bodies.

On admissions, the department is continuing to work with UCAS and sector bodies to improve transparency, reduce the use of unconditional offers, and reform the personal statement to improve fairness for applicants of all backgrounds.

The LLE consultation and other ongoing engagements are an important part of delivering a transformation of student finance. The department is carefully considering the contributions and will publish a response in due course.

■ Students: Taxation

Ben Lake:

[\[97744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what marginal rate of taxation a student will be paying every year for the next five years who is repaying a loan on plan 1, earning over the repayment threshold and paying the basic rate of income tax.

Ben Lake:

[\[97745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what marginal rate of taxation a student will be paying every year for the next five years who is repaying a loan on plan 2, earning over the repayment threshold and paying the basic rate of income tax.

Ben Lake:

[\[97746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what marginal rate of taxation a student will be paying every year for the next five years who is repaying a loan on plan 4, earning over the repayment threshold and paying the basic rate of income tax.

Robert Halfon:

The amount that a borrower is required to repay is calculated on the basis of income subject to National Insurance contributions (for UK-resident PAYE borrowers) or income subject to tax (for borrowers required to complete a Self-Assessment Tax form or borrowers resident overseas).

For Plan 1, Plan 2 and Plan 4 undergraduate student loans, borrowers currently repay 9% of earnings over the relevant repayment threshold. This is in addition to tax paid, irrespective of the rate of tax. Current repayment thresholds are £20,195 for Plan 1, £27,295 for Plan 2 and £25,375 for Plan 4 student loans.

■ Teachers: Training

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[99804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to support the provision of training and professional development for teachers.

Nick Gibb:

I refer my honourable Friend, the Member for Hendon, to the answer given on 19 July 2022 to Question [26899](#).

■ Young People: Carers

Helen Hayes: [\[99920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential scale of undercounting of young carers in the children in need census.

Helen Hayes: [\[99921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that the school census accurately records the number of young carers.

Helen Hayes: [\[99922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the cost to the public purse was of services provided for young carers in the latest year for which figures are available.

Helen Hayes: [\[99923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an estimate of the annual saving to the public purse from services provided by young carers.

Claire Coutinho:

The children in need census collects information only on children who are referred to children's social care services. Therefore, it does not provide a full count of young carers in England. However, where social workers have identified that being a young carer is a factor relevant to a child being in need of children's social care services, information is collected. More information on the census is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/children-in-need-census>.

To provide a more complete count of young carers in England, information on whether a pupil has been identified as a young carer will be collected for the first time in the 2023 spring school census. This new indicator was designed in consultation with representatives from the educational, voluntary and charitable sectors and accompanying guidance for schools has been provided on completing the census. The department is continuing to work closely with these sectors to promote usage of the new indicator from January 2023 and beyond.

Information on the cost and saving to the public purse from services provided by young carers is not held centrally. Data on local authority expenditure on family support services is collected via the Section 251 return and published in the annual local authority and school expenditure statistical release. This can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-251-2021-to-2022/section-251-outturn-guidance-2021-to-2022> and here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/la-and-school-expenditure>.

Expenditure on young carers is not collected as a separate category.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Fish Products: Labelling

Sir Greg Knight:

[99748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will require (a) restaurants, (b) shops and (c) takeaways to clearly label the origin of any fish products they sell.

Mark Spencer:

In the UK we maintain high standards on the food information that is provided to consumers, but for practical reasons there are fewer mandatory labelling rules when food is sold loose, such as in a restaurant. Origin labelling is required for fish and most meat sold prepacked to consumers. Specific labelling rules also apply for fish and fishery products more generally under the Common Organisation of Markets Regulation and fisheries Control Regulation. If origin information, or any other information, is provided to consumers in any format including in restaurants and takeaways, it needs to be accurate and not misleading. The Government is committed to optimising the information that is available to consumers, and the Government Food Strategy sets out work that we will be taking forward on consumer information and transparency, including origin labelling.

■ Nature Conservation

Stella Creasy:

[99823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department has plans to (a) reform, (b) revoke or (c) retain the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Trudy Harrison:

My department is carefully considering our retained EU law, including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations). Defra's aim is to ensure that environmental law is fit for purpose, able to drive improved environmental outcomes whilst providing a UK regulatory framework that is appropriate and tailored to the UK.

■ Sewers: Waste Disposal**Alan Brown:** [\[97784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November to Question 89857 on Sewers: Waste Disposal, whether her Department is taking steps to make developers pay for sewer upgrades required to offset the potential impact of proposed developments on (a) water quality and (b) flood risk.

Rebecca Pow:

The review of the implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 is considering the impact of developments on water quality and flood risk.

■ Water Companies: Fines**Layla Moran:** [\[93626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to introduce additional penalties for water companies that miss pollution incident reduction targets consistently over 5 years.

Rebecca Pow:

Ofwat has recently announced financial penalties of almost £150 million applying to 11 water companies. These penalties are the result of missed targets on areas such as water supply interruptions, pollution incidents and internal sewer flooding. This money will be returned to customers through water bills in the next financial year.

Since 2015, the Environment Agency has brought 54 prosecutions against water companies, securing fines of almost £140 million. On 9 July 2021, Southern Water was handed a record £90 million fine after pleading guilty to thousands of illegal discharges of sewage that polluted rivers and coastal waters in Kent, Hampshire and Sussex. The fine will be paid solely from the company's operating profits, not customer bills.

■ Water Companies: Standards**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[96641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with relevant stakeholders on the quality of the service provided to customers by the water management industry.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra discusses customer service delivery with Ofwat and The Consumer Council for Water (CCW), the independent representative of household and business water consumers in England and Wales.

In October CCW published Water Mark, its annual assessment of water companies, for 2021-22. The report compares water companies' performance on a range of measures including satisfaction with service, complaints handling, affordability and value for money, and contains customers views.

www.ccwater.org.uk/households/company-performance/

Ofwat measures customer satisfaction through C-Mex, the customer measure of experience, through direct feedback from customers. C-Mex scores for 2021-22 will be published by Ofwat this month and previous performance can be found at <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/regulated-companies/company-obligations/customer-experience/c-mex-and-d-mex-2020-21-results/>.

Defra's Strategic Policy Statement published earlier this year, sets out government's priorities for Ofwat and includes a priority to 'push water companies to provide a better and fairer water service for all, by improving customer services and complaints handling'. We will continue to work with CCW and Ofwat to monitor companies' performance on customer services.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **AUKUS: Foreign Relations**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[98684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK is taking to build greater relations with AUKUS partners.

Leo Docherty:

Strong ties bind the UK, the US and Australia. AUKUS is an opportunity to deepen these relationships even further. UK Ministers regularly discuss AUKUS with trilateral counterparts. In September, the Foreign Secretary discussed AUKUS with Australian Foreign Minister Wong at the UN General Assembly. In November, the Prime Minister discussed AUKUS with President Biden and Prime Minister Albanese at the G20 Summit. Also In November, the Minister for the Indo-Pacific visited Australia to focus on joint efforts to promote regional peace and security and had conversations on AUKUS with Foreign Minister Wong and Deputy Prime Minister Marles.

■ **Burma: Political Prisoners**

Catherine West:

[\[99929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help secure the release of political prisoners in Burma; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK condemns the unlawful detention of political opponents, civil society, journalists and human rights defenders. On 27 July 2022, the UK secured a UN Security Council (UNSC) Press Statement condemning the execution of prisoners and calling for the release of all those in arbitrary detention. On 17 November 2022, the Foreign Secretary stated that all those unjustly imprisoned in Myanmar should be released. We will continue to use all available fora, including the UNSC, to raise these concerns.

■ Cyprus: Peace Negotiations

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[97556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will have discussions with his international counterparts on the appointment of a special envoy to re-start the reunification process in Cyprus.

Leo Docherty:

The UK remains committed to supporting the UN efforts to reach a Cyprus settlement. On 15 November, the Foreign Secretary and the Cypriot Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides agreed to work closely together for a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus settlement process within the UN parameters. There remain very significant differences between the parties' positions. However, we continue to believe that, with flexibility, sufficient common ground to start formal negotiations can be found. The appointment of an envoy is a matter for the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders.

■ Development Aid

Helen Hayes:

[\[98816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate has he made of the total expected amount of the UK Official Development Assistance budget to be spent within the UK in the 2022-23 financial year; and what domestic projects this spending will fund.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The official source of information on Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the Statistics on International Development (SID) publication. ODA is measured on a calendar year basis. Provisional data on 2022 ODA, including in-donor expenditure, will be published in Provisional Statistics on International Development 2022 in Spring 2023. Finalised figures for 2022 will be published in Autumn 2023.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Taxis

Mr David Lammy:

[\[88796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department spent on taxi cabs for (a) ministers and (b) civil servants in each of the last ten years.

David Rutley:

Total taxi travel spend for those financial years are in the table below.

YEAR £

FY 2013 1,404,034

FY 2014 1,746,183

FY 2015 1,925,743

FY 2016 1,521,151

FY 2017 1,662,958

FY 2018 1,691,252

FY 2019 1,773,334

FY 2020 1,989,134

FY 2021 1,072,219

FY 2022 1,312,290

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Temporary Employment**

Mr David Lammy:

[\[95772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs how much his Department has spent on temporary agency staff, in each of the past ten years.

David Rutley:

Total temporary agency staff spend for those financial years are in the table below.

This information is published in FCDO's Annual Report & Accounts and can be found online.

YEAR	£M
FY2013	7.68
FY2014	8.10
FY2015	5.56
FY2016	5.03
FY2017	6.34
FY2018	4.09
FY2019	6.66
FY2020	12.01
FY2021	25.68
FY2022	39.58

■ **Henderson Island: Biodiversity**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[97454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect the biodiversity of Henderson Island.

David Rutley:

The FCDO Blue Belt Programme supports the Government of the Pitcairn Islands to manage the large Marine Protected Area, which covers the Territory's waters including Henderson Island. Scientific surveys to Henderson Island have assessed marine litter, coral reefs, and fish and cetacean species. The Conflict Security and Stability Fund has funded a new marine science base on Pitcairn. In addition, the Defra Darwin Plus scheme is funding several projects of benefit to Henderson Island, including one on the feasibility of removing rodents, and one on understanding the importance of the Marine Protected Area for an endangered population of humpback whales.

■ **Hong Kong: Sanctions**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[97466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has plans to sanction officials in Hong Kong.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Whilst we keep potential sanctions designations under close and regular review, it is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated in the future. To do so could reduce their impact.

■ **Iran: Children**

Bob Blackman: [\[96597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that all children detained in Iran are released.

David Rutley:

The UN should also use all its power to demand the immediate release of hundreds of children detained during protests in Iran in recent weeks when it holds an urgent special session later this week. According to some estimates, more than 63 children are reported to have been killed, and between 500-1,000 children believed to be among the more than 18,000 people detained, some threatened with execution. On 24 November the Human Rights Council voted in favour of a resolution condemning Iran's brutal crackdown on protestors and launching a fact-finding mission to investigate alleged human rights violations.

Bob Blackman: [\[96598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what role the Government is undertaking (a) within in the UN Security Council and (b) bilaterally to help (i) halt human right abuses against children in Iran and (ii) hold perpetrators accountable.

Bob Blackman:

[\[96599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart to stop all human rights violations against children.

David Rutley:

The UN should also use all its power to demand the immediate release of hundreds of children detained during protests in Iran in recent weeks when it holds an urgent special session later this week. According to some estimates, more than 63 children are reported to have been killed, and between 500-1,000 children believed to be among the more than 18,000 people detained, some threatened with execution. On 24 November the Human Rights Council voted in favour of a resolution condemning Iran's brutal crackdown on protestors and launching a fact-finding mission to investigate alleged human rights violations.

Cat Smith:

[\[96617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that all children detained in Iran are released.

Cat Smith:

[\[96618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking (a) at the UN Security Council and (b) bilaterally to raise the issue of human right abuses against children occurring in Iran and on holding the perpetrators to account.

Cat Smith:

[\[96619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made recent representations to his Iranian counterpart on ending human rights violations against children in that country.

David Rutley:

The UK is committed to holding Iran to account on a wide range of human rights issues, including the appalling treatment of children throughout Iran's brutal crackdown of protests. The UK supported a successful Human Rights Council resolution to establish a UN investigation into the regime's appalling human rights violations. We are working closely with partners to remove Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The FCDO has called on Iranian authorities in multiple international fora to abide by its obligations under international law to improve the practices surrounding children in detention.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[97559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of reports that Palestinian patients seeking medical treatment in Israel are forced to pay bribes to the Palestinian Authority.

David Rutley:

The wounded and ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need. We are aware that many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza face difficulties accessing medical care. In Gaza, we are working with partners to improve cancer diagnoses and support treatment.

■ **Myanmar: Aviation**

Catherine West: [\[99930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any British companies supply of aviation fuel to Myanmar.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are unaware of any British companies that supply aviation fuel to Myanmar. On 28 February 2022, the UK updated its Overseas Business Risk Guidance to make it clear that UK businesses should conduct thorough supply chain due diligence to ensure that commodities such as aviation fuel do not reach the Myanmar military.

■ **Taiwan**

Jack Lopresti: [\[94735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Secretary of State for Defence's oral evidence to the International Relations Committee on 1st November, whether it is his Department's policy to recognise China's claims of sovereignty over Taiwan.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Our longstanding position on Taiwan has not changed. The UK does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but shares a vibrant unofficial relationship, based on dynamic commercial, educational and cultural ties. We consider the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

■ **Ukraine: State Visits**

Liam Byrne: [\[97508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2022 to Question 89754, whether His Majesty's Ambassador to Ukraine has attended any state schools to make similar presentations.

Leo Docherty:

His Majesty's Ambassador to Ukraine, Melinda Simmons, speaks regularly at Ukrainian schools and universities about the work of the British Embassy in Kyiv and the UK's ongoing support to Ukraine. In her role as Ambassador, she was also invited to speak at Eton College on 16 November 2022 by the Eton College Politics Society. The event, which is the first invitation the Ambassador has received from a British school or university, included the participation of two local state schools.

■ West Africa: Foreign Relations

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[97569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to support (a) the Accra Initiative force in Burkina Faso, (b) other Accra Initiative work, (c) human rights implementation monitoring, (d) coordination with peacebuilding efforts, (e) coordination with (i) UN agencies, (ii) the Economic Community of West African States and (iii) the African Union and (f) civilian consultation and engagement within Accra Initiative work.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK continues to monitor deteriorating security in the Sahel and West Africa, and is exploring potential support for the Accra Initiative. At the UK-Ghana Security Dialogue in July 2022, we confirmed our ambition to support Ghana to galvanise international support for regional security initiatives such as the Accra Initiative, and ensure that support for such initiatives is coordinated and coherent. The UK Minister for Armed Forces and the former Minister for Africa have also visited the region, with the Minister for Armed Forces most recently taking part in the International Conference on the Accra Initiative on 22 November in Ghana. The UK continues to support the African Union, ECOWAS, and United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel to respond to rising insecurity.

■ West Bank: Terrorism

Greg Smith:

[\[94875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the threats to security of the Lions' Den terror group in the West Bank.

David Rutley:

We continue to closely monitor the fragile security situation in the West Bank and continue to monitor developments closely. We must see an end to rising violence and instability. Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We look to all parties to take urgent steps to de-escalate tensions.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[96642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of increased waiting times in accident and emergency departments on patient safety.

Will Quince:

With NHS England, we are increasing bed capacity and operational resilience with the equivalent of 7,000 additional beds and a £500 million Adult Social Care

Discharge Fund to ensure medically fit patients can safely return home and reducing waiting times in accident and emergency.

We are also investing an additional £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to return urgent and emergency, elective and primary care services to pre-pandemic levels. The National Health Service will publish recovery plans for urgent and emergency care in the new year.

■ Atrial Fibrillation: Health Services

Sir George Howarth: [\[95790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the NHS England atrial fibrillation entitled the Detect, Protect, Perfect pathway initiatives £40m budget has been allocated in 2022.

Sir George Howarth: [\[95791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which atrial fibrillation-related stroke prevention projects have received Detect, Protect, Perfect pathway funding to date, following the implementation of the initiative in January 2022.

Helen Whately:

In 2022/23, NHS England allocated £30 million to support the Detect, Protect and Perfect in primary care.

This has been allocated to a range of atrial fibrillation-related stroke prevention projects, including community pharmacy atrial fibrillation detection; development of primary care atrial fibrillation community hubs; sponsorship for a cardiovascular disease anticoagulation academy; and an Academic Health Science Network educational programme for healthcare professionals on objectives for patients with atrial fibrillation.

Sir George Howarth: [\[95792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to include atrial fibrillation (a) detection, (b) treatment, and (c) management in the upcoming refresh to the NHS Long Term Plan.

Helen Whately:

Following the autumn statement on 17 November 2022, the Government and NHS England will prepare detailed financial and delivery plans for future years, including for the commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan. This will include consideration of plans for atrial fibrillation detection, treatment and management. Further information will be available in the new year.

Sir George Howarth: [\[95793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether funding from the Detect, Protect, Perfect pathway programme will be shared with local pharmacists to support detection initiatives.

Neil O'Brien:

Detect, Protect, Perfect funding is available for local health systems, including community pharmacies. Any proposals must be supported by the relevant integrated care board.

■ **Cancer: Medical Treatments**

Feryal Clark:[\[93708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that patients do not have to travel excessive distances to access innovative cancer treatments.

Helen Whately:

NHS England plans specialised services nationally and regionally and aims to ensure equity of access, such as for some innovative cancer treatments. Cancer Alliances consist of clinical and managerial leaders from different hospital trusts and other health and social care organisations to enable care to be more effectively planned across local cancer pathways.

■ **Cardiovascular Diseases**

Sir Christopher Chope:[\[96554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 89695 on Cardiovascular Diseases, in what format the information is held; and if the NHS will make an assessment of the potential effectiveness of the blood test being developed by the British Heart Foundation and Queen Mary University, London, to detect myocarditis.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 30 November 2022]: The following table shows the number of primary diagnoses and admissions cases for myocarditis and pericarditis in each year from 2018 to 2021. However, this does not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

	MYOCARDITIS	PERICARDITIS
2018	1,205	1,483
2019	1,151	1,598
2020	1,046	1,359
2021	1,393	1,680

Source: NHS Digital

Any assessment of the potential effectiveness of the blood test being developed by the British Heart Foundation and Queen Mary University would be made by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence.

■ Cervical Cancer

Martyn Day: [\[89866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with the Devolved Administrations to help ensure that the UK fulfils the World Health Organisation's elimination ambition for cervical cancer.

Helen Whately:

In England, we are increasing the uptake of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination to the World Health Organization's (WHO) target of 90% through dedicated immunisation teams in schools where a 100% offer is made to all school aged children eligible for these vaccinations. Community clinics are offering vaccines for those children not in mainstream education, and General Practices (GP) now also offer free HPV vaccination for anyone who missed it as part of the school aged offer. Annually, HPV vaccines are promoted to university students as they start the Autumn term, and NHS England are planning a further HPV awareness campaign in 2023.

The National Health Service Cervical Cancer Screening Programme already aligns with the WHO's target of 70% of women screened using a high-performance test by 35 and 45 years of age. Work is ongoing to improve this beyond the WHO target, through exploration into screening self-sampling via the YouScreen research.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell: [\[99896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase take up of the covid-19 vaccine.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government continues to work with the National Health Service to provide information on the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination, such as a national campaign to encourage eligible people to receive a booster dose. The COVID-19 vaccination programme continues to use mobile clinics, vaccine ambassadors and partnerships with faith and community organisations.

By the week ending 27 November 2022, the UK Health Security Agency reports that approximately 66.4% of eligible adults aged 50 years old and over have received an autumn booster dose. NHS England has delivered over 16.3 million autumn COVID-19 booster vaccinations and is continuing efforts to maximise uptake.

■ Defibrillators: Shops

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[96643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with retailers on the potential merits of installing defibrillators within stores.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 30 November 2022]: There have been no specific discussions.

■ Dental Services and General Practitioners: St Helens

Conor McGinn: [\[99893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) GPs and (b) dentists were registered as working in St Helens in each year since 2010.

Neil O'Brien:

This information is not collected in the format requested.

■ Dental Services: Children

Jeremy Corbyn: [\[97411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of children are judged to have crooked teeth requiring orthodontic treatment.

Jeremy Corbyn: [\[97412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence his Department holds on the causes of crooked teeth requiring orthodontic treatment in children.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Dental Services: Watford

Dean Russell: [\[96659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure NHS dental appointments are available to people living in Watford.

Neil O'Brien:

NHS England asked dental practices to return to full delivery of contracted activity from July 2022, including in Watford. In September, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care, including in Watford.

The plan includes improvements to ensure dentists are remunerated fairly for more complex work, allowing greater flexibility to reallocate resources and to utilise dentists with greater capacity to deliver National Health Service treatment, whilst enabling full use of the dental team. The plan also includes streamlining processes for overseas dentists and holding the local NHS to account for dentistry provision. In addition, Health Education England is also reforming dental education to improve the recruitment and retention of dental professionals.

■ Diabetes: Death

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[95886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce excess mortality among people with diabetes.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: A £5 million national recovery fund for routine diabetes care was established in 2021/22, which has approved 28 projects to be delivered in 2022/23. Integrated care boards have been asked to focus funding on recovery, the eight diabetes annual checks, prioritising those patients most at risk of diabetes-related deterioration and reducing inequalities.

■ **Diabetes: Mental Illness****Navendu Mishra:**[\[97737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to help supporting research which examines the link between diabetes and mental health issues.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including diabetes and mental health. The NIHR's Health and Social Care Delivery Research Programme, in partnership with Diabetes UK, is currently inviting applications to understand how services can be improved for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, with a particular focus on addressing the challenges of delivering integrated services to support the mental health of people living with diabetes.

■ **Disability: Children****Dan Carden:**[\[99964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of integrated care strategies for meeting the health needs of disabled children.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department published guidance on the preparation of integrated care strategies in July 2022. This states that integrated care partnerships should consider how the needs and health and wellbeing outcomes of babies, children, young people and their families can be met and improved. We expect that this would include addressing the needs of disabled children.

■ **E. coli****John McDonnell:**[\[97414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the outbreak of E. coli 0157 was first identified; and when (a) people affected and (b) the public were notified of this outbreak.

John McDonnell:

[\[97415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the (a) Food Standards Agency and (b) UK Health Security Agency in tackling E. Coli 0157.

John McDonnell:

[\[97416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time is between notification of an outbreak of E Coli 0157 and information being provided to (a) those affected and (b) the general public.

Maria Caulfield:

Between 28 August and 4 September 2022, an increase in the number of presumptive Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC) O157 referrals to UK Health Security Agency was observed. On 10 September a cluster of cases of a specific strain of STEC O157 was confirmed through whole genomic sequencing.

All cases of illness of STEC O157 are interviewed and public health advice is given to at-risk groups to prevent onward transmission. After the results were available which confirmed an outbreak, 60 people were re-interviewed for investigation from 13 September and were notified of the outbreak. The general public were not informed of the outbreak as the suspected cause of infection was not established until the latter period of the investigation. It was therefore not possible to provide appropriate public health advice.

A report on the management and outcomes of the investigation is being prepared. A routine assessment of cross-agency incident responses and any areas for improvement to develop and implement action plans for outbreak management will be scheduled imminently. We are unable to estimate the average time between notification of an outbreak based on the results of whole genome sequencing and the provision of information to those affected and the general public. Such timings are dependent on factors including the cause of the outbreak and whether epidemiological and food tracing investigations can conclusively identify a specific implicated food and supply chain. Multi-agency investigations are initiated immediately on detection of STEC O157 outbreaks. Once the food vehicle of infection is confirmed, control measures are implemented by the Food Standards Agency in a matter of days.

■ Ebola: Disease Control

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[97464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help prevent the spread of Ebola in the UK.

Maria Caulfield:

Ebola is not endemic in the United Kingdom and the appropriate reservoir animals are not present, therefore any case would be imported. The disease spreads by direct contact of an infected person's body fluids or during the funeral rites of a

deceased case. If an traveller from a country with an outbreak presents to a hospital, the clinician can contact the Imported Fever Service (IFS) 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The IFS will advise on likelihood of a case, any immediate action to take and arrange for testing of the case through the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL). The IFS and/or RIPL will inform the National Health Service High Consequence Infectious Disease network, which will arrange for isolation and care of the case. A national incident team will manage any public health issues if required.

■ Endometriosis: Health Services

David Warburton:

[97692]

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

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. However, NHS England is reviewing the service specification for severe endometriosis and will report in 2023. This will ensure that specialist endometriosis services have access to current evidence and advice to improve standards of care.

On 3 November 2022, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) confirmed it will update its guidelines on diagnosing endometriosis and surgical management if fertility is a priority. NICE will also explore mental wellbeing and support for people with suspected or confirmed endometriosis during the scoping of the update. The publication date of the updated guideline will be available in due course.

■ Essential Tremor: Magnetic Resonance Imagers

Dan Carden:

[96644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to help increase the level of patient awareness of MR-Guided Focussed Ultrasound for Essential Tremor treatment.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 30 November 2022]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published guidance regarding magnetic resonance guided focussed ultrasound for essential tremor treatment, which is available to healthcare professionals, commissioners and patients. NICE promotes its guidance online and via newsletters and other media. NHS England has also published a commissioning statement recommending the use of the treatment for eligible patients with essential tremor, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/1904-transcranial-magnetic-resonance-guided-focused-ultrasound-thalamotomy-for-treatment-of-medication-refract.pdf>

■ Fluoride: Drinking Water

Mark Jenkinson:

[\[98782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is the estimated cost of fluoridation schemes in Cumbria in (a) 2022 and (b) future years.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: The estimates for 2022/23 have not yet been finalised. The forecasts for future years are not held centrally.

Mark Jenkinson:

[\[98783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with (a) the local authority and (b) water undertakers on water fluoridation schemes in Cumbria; and whether he has undertaken a consultation under the Water Fluoridation (Consultation) (England) Regulations 2022.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: Departmental officials recently met with Cumbria County Council and United Utilities on water fluoridation schemes in Cumbria. No consultation has been undertaken under the Water Fluoridation (Consultation) (England) Regulations 2022.

■ Gambling: Rehabilitation

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[99750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is the estimated cost to the NHS of treating gambling addictions in each of the 5 years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Neil O'Brien:

NHS England has funded specialist gambling treatment clinics since 2019. Expenditure on the specialist clinics was £1 million in 2019/20, £1 million in 2020/21, £3 million in 2021/22 and is projected at £4 million in 2022/23.

■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

Wes Streeting:

[\[89873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional GPs were recruited in the NHS in each of the last eight years.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 24 November 2022]: The following table shows the number of headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) joiners to the qualified permanent general practitioner (GP) workforce, excluding doctors in GP training grade and locums in September of each year from 2015 to 2022.

HEADCOUNT JOINERS	FTE JOINERS
September 2015 to September 2016	4,596
	3,459

HEADCOUNT JOINERS	FTE JOINERS	
September 2016 to September 2017	2,731	1,897
September 2017 to September 2018	2,903	1,936
September 2018 to September 2019	3,863	2,579
September 2019 to September 2020	3,487	2,264
September 2020 to September 2021	3,333	2,182
September 2021 to September 2022	3,212	2,189

Notes:

1. Figures are based only on non-estimated qualified permanent GPs (excludes doctors in GP training grade and locums) with either a completed General Medical Council registration number, National Insurance Number or both name and date of birth details.
2. Data shows GPs who joined and/or left the cohort workforce between the beginning and end of each specified time period.
3. These figures do not capture GP migration between practices during this period.
4. Due to data quality, a GP recorded as a leaver in these figures may have left one practice and joined another practice with poor data completion. In instances such as this, a GP will be incorrectly recorded as a leaver due to the identifying information no longer being present in the dataset. Conversely, a GP could appear in the practice cohort as a joiner but may have joined from a practice with poor data completion rather than being a new addition to the GP workforce.
5. Figures shown do not include GPs working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings outside of traditional general practice such as urgent treatment centres and minor injury units.

■ Health

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[99757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to respond to the Second Report of the Health and Social Care Committee entitled The impact of body image on mental and physical health, published on 2 August 2022, HC 114.

Maria Caulfield:

We are finalising the Government's response to the Committee's report and we expect it to be published in early 2023.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[97408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his department plans to publish updated data on the take up of Healthy Start by (a) local authority areas, and (b) ethnicity groups.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: We continue to work with the NHS Business Services Authority and the Department for Work and Pensions to obtain data on the uptake of the Healthy Start scheme. We aim to have the data available by the end of the year. However, data on the ethnicity of Healthy Start beneficiaries is not collected.

■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

Ruth Jones: [\[87979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the Welsh Government on his Department's pandemic preparedness in November 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

We regularly engage with the devolved administrations, including on 7 November to discuss a range of issues in health and social care, including health protection during the winter.

The Department continues to plan and prepare for a range of pandemic and emerging infectious disease scenarios, including those caused by respiratory, contact and vector-borne pathogens and incorporating lessons learned from exercises and incidents, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pandemic Disease Capabilities Board was established in 2021 to enhance cross-United Kingdom pandemic disease preparedness and replaced the pre-COVID-19 cross-Government Pan 'Flu Readiness Board. The Board's membership comprises the four nations.

■ Life Expectancy

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[96582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report by the Health Foundation entitled Healthy life expectancy target: the scale of the challenge, published on 7 March 2022, on the length of time it will take to add five years to healthy life expectancy.

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[96583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help increase life expectancy.

Neil O'Brien:

There are no current plans to make a specific assessment. The Government is committed to supporting individuals to live healthier lives through improving access to health and care services. The Department continues to review the most effective ways to improve life expectancy and healthy life expectancy and further information will be available in due course.

Maternal Mortality**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[\[97705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the study entitled Maternal mortality in eight European countries with enhanced surveillance systems published in the British Medical Journal on 16 November 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of NHS guidance on doctors recording links to maternity on death certificates; and what steps his Department will take to improve postnatal care to prevent (a) heart disease, (b) suicides and (c) blood clots.

Maria Caulfield:

The planned digitised Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) will be completed by the medical practitioner and include the recording of maternal deaths. This will allow for information related to pregnancy recorded at the time of death, in line with international standards. Once the digitised product is deployed, guidance will be available on completing the MCCD. The intention is to introduce the revised and digitised MCCD with the introduction of medical examiners from April 2023. NHS England has commissioned 14 maternal medicine networks in England to ensure access to specialist management and care for women with chronic and acute medical problems in pregnancy.

Medical Equipment: Children**Sir Stephen Timms:**[\[97410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department can provide to families with seriously ill children whose NHS tariff payments do not sufficiently reimburse the costs of running life-saving medical equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: The Government has provided £15 billion for the most vulnerable to address the cost of living, including families of children reliant on critical home medical equipment.

Specific contracts relating to home treatments contain elements of energy reimbursement, including home oxygen concentrators (HOS), which are commissioned by integrated care systems (ICSs). NHS England has estimated the potential impact of rising electricity costs on HOS and has asked regional teams to work with ICSs to identify funding to meet these increased costs. Other bespoke arrangements may also be in place locally.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose:

[\[93489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to the correspondence of 20 September and 20 October 2022 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of constituent Johnathan Montelongo on making the UK smoke free.

Neil O'Brien:

We replied to the hon. Member on 30 November 2022.

■ **Mental Health Services: Hospital Beds**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[96635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health beds there were in the NHS in each financial year since 2010-11.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 30 November 2022]: The information is not collected in the format requested.

■ **Mental Health Services: Schools**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[97650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make additional funding available to provide Mental Health Support Teams to 65 per cent of schools and colleges that will remain without access after 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: There are currently 287 mental health support teams in approximately 4,700 schools and colleges, offering support to children experiencing anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues. These teams are now available to 26% of pupils, increasing to 399 teams or 35% of pupils by April 2023 and over 500 planned by 2024. We are investing an additional £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the National Health Service in England. Financial plans for those years, including details of further mental health support teams, will be confirmed in due course.

■ **Ophthalmic Services: Special Educational Needs**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[96657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS England Special School Eye Care Service will only serve residential schools from 2023.

Neil O'Brien:

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to ensure that children and young people with a learning disability and/or autism in special residential schools have access to eyesight, hearing and dental checks. In 2021, NHS England commenced a pilot to

evaluate a potential sight testing service model in residential schools, which is currently being evaluated and we expect this to conclude early in 2023.

NHS England has confirmed that existing pilot contracts in day schools will continue until 31 March 2023. The evaluation of the pilot will also inform whether this service should continue.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Treatment Centres

Jim Shannon:

[\[94749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the briefing by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists entitled Three steps to sustainable patient care, published in November 2021, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings on (a) patient safety and (b) the quality of service in the delivery of ophthalmic care in independent treatment centres.

Neil O'Brien:

In England, all independent sector health and care providers which require Care Quality Commission registration must meet the same standards as any other health care provider. NHS England and the Royal College of Ophthalmologists have worked with National Health Service commissioners and providers and the independent sector to develop a minimum service specification and guidance on cataract provision and guidance to ensure that ophthalmology trainees have access to the appropriate procedures.

■ Organs: Donors

Jess Phillips:

[\[97626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are on the organ donation waiting list in the West Midlands as of 28 November 2022; what the average waiting time was for an organ donation in the West Midlands in the latest period for which data is available; how many organ transplants took place in the West Midlands in the latest period for which data is available; and how many people were taken off the waiting list for an organ donation due to a clinical decision in the West Midlands in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: The following table shows the number of patients on the transplant waiting list in the West Midlands as of 28 November 2022. Suspended patients refers to those who have been temporarily removed from the list.

ACTIVE	SUSPENDED	TOTAL	
Total	687	431	1,118

Source: NHS Blood and Transplant

NHS Blood and Transplant does not hold the data on the average waiting time for organ donation in the West Midlands or the number of people removed from the waiting list in the West Midlands due to a clinical decision.

The following table shows the number of transplants which took place in the West Midlands in 2021/22 and 2022/23 as of 28 November.

2021/22	2022/23 TO DATE	
Total	377	260

Source: NHS Blood and Transplant

■ Palliative Care: Telephone Services

Dan Carden:

[\[99965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of access to 24/7 palliative care telephone advice lines for people with a terminal illness and their carers on reducing (a) distress, (b) emergency department attendances, (c) ambulance use, (d) unplanned hospital admissions and (e) other pressures on the NHS.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made. Local commissioners are responsible for ensuring access to palliative and end of life care. NHS England has published statutory guidance to support commissioners with implementation of the Health and Care Act 2022 and to define how services should meet population needs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

■ Parkinson's Disease: Diagnosis

David Warburton:

[\[96630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make a comparative assessment of the average time taken to diagnose Parkinson's disease (a) in Somerset and (b) nationally in the latest period for which data is available.

Helen Whately:

There are no plans to make a specific assessment, as data on the average time taken to diagnose Parkinson's Disease is not held centrally.

■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate

Feryal Clark:

[\[97794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in reference to the Medicines and Pregnancy Registry: Antiepileptic use in females aged 0 to 54 in England, whether his Department has reported the total number of people affected by Valproate in pregnancy to the Office of National Statistics.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department has not reported the total number of people affected by sodium valproate in pregnancy to the Office of National Statistics. The Medicines and Pregnancy Registry contains data on every woman in England receiving National Health Service-prescribed sodium valproate and all other antiepileptics taken during pregnancy and whether the individual is pregnant and accessing NHS care for that pregnancy. The Registry publishes data twice a year.

■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Construction

Naz Shah: [\[97571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy to follow the recommendation of the Royal College of Psychiatry by ensuring that six of the last eight spaces on the New Hospitals Programme are filled by mental health hospitals.

Will Quince:

The 40 announced schemes include new mental health hospitals. We have received 128 expressions of interest which are currently being assessed.

■ Smoking

Andrew Gwynne: [\[99763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November to Question 87789, how the Government will monitor its progress against the Smokefree 2030 target without a formal assessment.

Neil O'Brien:

We monitor progress through reviewing adult smoking prevalence estimates, based on data from the Annual Population Survey. Smoking prevalence estimates for 2021 are due to be published on 6 December 2022 by the Office for National Statistics in 'Adult smoking habits in the UK'.

■ Social Services: Finance

Julian Sturdy: [\[95835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help minimise waste in social care funding spending.

Helen Whately:

Local authorities are responsible for planning for the care and support needs of the local population and assuring spending on care services. All local authorities have a statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement, having regard to efficiency, economy and effectiveness. We continue to work with local authorities and other Government departments to ensure the cost-effective delivery of adult social care.

■ Sodium Valproate: Prescriptions

Feryal Clark:

[\[97793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, (a) how many women aged 15-45 years were prescribed sodium valproate in May 2022 and (b) how many women aged 15-45 years who has been prescribed sodium valproate have had their prescription changed to another anti-epileptic drug for every month between May and November 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

This information is not held in the format requested. The Medicines and Pregnancy Registry contains data on every woman in England receiving National Health Service-prescribed sodium valproate and all other antiepileptics taken during pregnancy and whether the individual is pregnant. The Registry was last updated in September 2022 and includes data from April 2018 to March 2022.

■ Special Educational Needs: Departmental Coordination

Geraint Davies:

[\[98644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 93414 on Special Educational Needs: Staff, whether his Department plans to commission (a) analysis or (b) joint analysis with other Departments to understand the need and demand for support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from specialist professionals working across health, education and other services.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 2 December 2022]: We propose to work with Health Education England, NHS England and the Department for Education to commission analysis to understand demand for support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from the therapy and diagnostic workforce. This is expected to focus primarily on the health workforce. On 29 November, the Department for Education announced it is investing £21 million to train a further 400 educational psychologists. The Government will publish a SEND and alternative provision improvement plan early in the new year.

■ Strokes

Rachael Maskell:

[\[97646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has officials in his Department with responsibility for developing (a) policies and (b) guidance on stroke (i) prevention and (ii) treatment.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 1 December 2022]: There are officials in the Department responsible for developing policies and guidance on stroke prevention and treatment. Additionally, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence develops evidence-based guidance for the health and care system on best practice.

HOME OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****John Healey:**[\[97483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of those eligible for the Afghan Relations and Assistance Policy scheme and safely evacuated to the UK have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Robert Jenrick:

Since April 2021, we have relocated over 11,200 Afghans to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

The recent update to the published '[Afghan Resettlement: Operational Data](#)', shows that, at 4th November 2022:

- The UK has welcomed 22,833 individuals from Afghanistan since June 2021.
- We have granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) to 12,296 individuals across ARAP and ACRS - of which the total number granted ILR under ARAP stands at 5,982.

The figures shown here should be considered provisional, whilst work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the ARAP and resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

■ Asylum: Norwich**Chloe Smith:**[\[96594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were moved from the Manston processing centre to hotel accommodation in Norwich in the period between 1 January 2022 and 25 November 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The significant increase in dangerous journeys across the Channel is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system and it has made it necessary to continue standing up hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers

We are committed to working closely with communities and stakeholders to ensure destitute asylum seekers are housed in safe, secure and functional accommodation. All appropriate options are being explored to ensure that suitable accommodation is secured as quickly as is necessary.

A breakdown of individual hotels, approvals, online and occupancy could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Sarah Champion: [\[98768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter of 18 November 2022 to all hon. and Rt hon. Members on Use of Hotels for Asylum Seekers, if she will place in the Library a copy of a sample factsheet and briefing pack on asylum, asylum support and accommodation.

Sarah Champion: [\[98769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter of 18 November 2022 to all hon. and Rt hon. Members on Use of Hotels for Asylum Seekers, what goods or services are (a) supplied and (b) procured by her Department from third parties to provide support to asylum seekers; who supplies those goods and services; at what cost those goods and services are supplied; and to which budget lines those costs fall.

Robert Jenrick:

Accommodation costs including costs associated with the provision of goods and services related to accommodation 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>.

The copy of the factsheet and briefing pack will be a live document and will be reviewed regularly.

■ Detention Centres: Manston

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[99773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2022 to Question 87792 on Detention Centres: Manston, what her planned timetable is for providing information on the cost to the public purse of operating the Manston immigration facility in each month in 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

In light of the requests from HASC, a costing exercise to encompass the whole of Government cost, including opportunity costs of deploying Home Office staff, for the operation of Manston has been commissioned. This is a complex process and a timetable to deliver this exercise will be provided once essential planning has been completed.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[99774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been held at Manston for longer than 24 hours in 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

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

Members: Correspondence**Maria Eagle:** [\[99728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the correspondence of 7 November and 22 November 2022 from the hon. Member for Garston and Halewood.

Chris Philp:

A response was sent by the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire on 30 November 2022.

Military Aid: Ukraine**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[100000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential risk of weapons sent to the Ukrainian armed forces coming into the possession of organised crime gangs.

Tom Tugendhat:

This Government is committed to tackling the threat posed by trafficking and the misuse of illicit small arms and light weapons which play a key role in facilitating Organised Crime Group (OCG) activity.

According to NAC Threat assessments it remains highly unlikely that the conflict in Ukraine is impacting on the Serious and organised crime small arms and light weapons threat to the UK. Despite the number of small arms and light weapons available in conflict zones, very few types available pre-conflict or donated by western governments are used by criminals in the UK.

At the end of the conflict, it is a realistic possibility that some small arms and light weapons will be traded on the European criminal marketplace. The threat is being monitored closely by agencies, in close cooperation with European Partners such as Europol. We are adopting a multi-agency approach to further develop an understanding of the illicit firearms trade and lessons learnt from previous events.

Police: British Overseas Territories**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[97461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help (a) recruit, (b) train and (c) support the development of police officers within the British Overseas Territories.

Chris Philp:

In conjunction with the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, the Home Office delivers capacity building incorporating mentoring, training and advice to local police teams across the British Overseas Territories.. The local Police Force is responsible for the recruitment of their officers.

There are currently police officers on secondment working with police forces in the territories including in Anguilla, Montserrat, and the British Virgin Islands.

■ Refugees: Children

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[99772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied children under the age of eight have been held at Manston for any period of time during 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office is not aware of any unaccompanied children among the family groups who have been processed at Manston. The Home Office does not routinely use Manston to process unaccompanied children, instead every effort is made to prioritise them through the Kent Intake Unit. There are no unaccompanied children currently at Manston.

■ Terrorism: Victims

Alberto Costa:

[\[96620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to make it an offence to harass the victims of terror attacks.

Tom Tugendhat:

This Government is determined to make sure that victims of terrorism receive the support they deserve. Victims of terrorism are provided with practical and emotional support from specialist service providers, enabling them to cope with the immediate impact of a terrorist attack and to recover from the longer-term consequences.

No victim should ever have to face harassment after experiencing trauma. The Government is determined to do everything possible to protect all victims of harassment and stop perpetrators at the earliest opportunity. Anyone who thinks they are being harassed should report any incidents to the police.

In addition, under the online safety bill, any company whose services host user-generated content (those which allow users to post their own content online or interact with each other), and search engines, will need to proactively remove and prevent users from encountering the most serious and prevalent illegal content - including content relating to harassment and stalking offences. They will need to swiftly take down any illegal content where they become aware of it. Users will be better able to report abuse, and should expect to receive an appropriate response from the platform.

■ Visas: Seasonal Workers

Stephen Kinnock: [\[99869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals have been sponsored by (a) ProForce Ltd and (b) RE Recruitment Ltd for seasonal work visas in the poultry production sector since 18 October 2022; and how many such individuals have been issued with a visa.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office does not routinely publish data on individual sponsor licence holders.

Data is published on visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of 'Seasonal Worker' visas granted are published in table Vis_D02 of the [Entry clearance visas applications and outcomes](#) dataset. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[99870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many seasonal work visas have been issued to applicants sponsored under occupation codes (a) 5431; (b) 5433; (c) 8111; (d) 9111; (e) 9119 and (f) 9134 since 18 October 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office does not routinely publish data on individual SOC codes.

Data is published on visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of 'Seasonal Worker' visas granted are published in table Vis_D02 of the [Entry clearance visas applications and outcomes](#) dataset. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[99871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people granted seasonal work visas in the poultry production sector who have (a) arrived in and (b) departed from the UK since 18 October 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office publishes data on visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of 'Seasonal Worker' visas granted are published in table Vis_D02 of the [Entry clearance visas applications and outcomes](#) dataset. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ Visas: Skilled Workers

Stephen Farry:

[96668]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps applicants for skilled worker visas need to take if their non-British passport expires while their visa application is under consideration.

Robert Jenrick:

Where a person makes an application as a skilled worker from overseas and their passport expires before a decision is made, we will consider the application and, if the application is to be granted, we will write to the person and ask them to provide a new or extended passport. If they do not provide a new or extended passport, we will refuse their application.

Where the person makes an application as a skilled worker from within the UK and their passport expires before a decision is made, we will continue to consider and decide their application. If they are granted permission to stay, they will be issued with a standalone document (a biometric residence or an eVisa) and so their grant of permission is not reliant on them having a valid passport.

■ Visas: Ukraine

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[99868]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of family groups who applied for the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme who were prevented from coming to the UK due to one or more family members having a delay in their visa application as of 30 November 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

Applications under Ukraine Schemes can be delayed for a number of reasons, including to ensure a family unit is not separated and to safeguard individuals.

The Home Office does not publish data on the reasons a decision has not been made but details of the number of applications outstanding can be found here [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Foreign Investment in UK: Departmental Responsibilities

Chi Onwurah:

[98760]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether a new Minister for Investment will be appointed.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Minister for Investment was appointed on 24th November 2022.

■ Trade Agreements: Japan**Gareth Thomas:** [\[93421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 20.2 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the impact of the work of her Department since the agreement came into effect on cooperation between the UK and Japan to (a) identify ways to assist small and medium enterprises to take advantage of commercial agreements and (b) promote and facilitate trade and investment opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises.

Greg Hands:

The UK and Japan are cooperating to implement the dedicated small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) chapter that ensures SMEs are provided with the tools and resources necessary to seize the opportunities of exporting to Japan, including through the use of an SME website and a searchable database for tariffs. The UK and Japan have shared contact points for the SME chapter. The UK SME contact points have attended all meetings of the Committees and Working Groups established by the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

To assess the impact of this work, the Department for International Trade has committed to publishing a biennial Free Trade Agreement monitoring report, starting in 2023, and a comprehensive ex-post evaluation report for the UK-Japan CEPA within 5 years of the agreement entering into force. This evaluation will cover a broad range of impacts, including impacts on SMEs.

Gareth Thomas: [\[93422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 20.2 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which non-governmental organisations her Department has promoted cooperation between to assist the business of small and medium enterprises since that agreement came into effect.

Greg Hands:

The UK Government promotes the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to business via Export to Japan, a not-for-profit organisation, part funded by the Department for International Trade (DIT), that helps UK businesses enter the Japanese market.

DIT also promotes cooperation through other non-governmental organisations that operate in Japan including the British Chamber of Commerce and the Japan British Market Council as well as JETRO (Japan External Trade Organisation).

Gareth Thomas: [\[93423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 20.4 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, on which date the Japanese Government provided the details of their contact point to the UK; and when her Department provided the contact details of their contact point to the Japanese Government.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[93425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 20.4 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, on what dates the SME contact points for small and medium enterprises have met since the agreement came into effect.

Greg Hands:

The UK and Japan exchanged contact points for all areas of the agreement in December 2020. Japan shared contact points with the UK on the 18 December 2020. The UK shared contact points with Japan on the 24 December 2020.

The UK small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) contact points have attended all meetings of the Committees and Working Groups established by the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The contact points for UK and Japan have not met to specifically discuss SMEs, but have discussed more generally utilisation of the Free Trade Agreement by business.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[93424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 20.4 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, whether either party has recommended to the Joint Committee the inclusion of additional information by the parties in their respective websites.

Greg Hands:

Article 20.4.3 establishes that the UK and Japan may, in accordance with each Party's rules and procedures, recommend the inclusion of additional information by the Parties in their respective websites.

At the first meeting of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement's Committee on Trade in Goods, the UK and Japan discussed including a contact point for Japanese Customs on the UK Government website. This will help Japanese importers identify the correct commodity code for goods entering Japan from the UK.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[93426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 4.6 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the steps taken by the Japanese Government to reduce the time and costs for (a) all businesses and (b) small and medium-sized enterprises since that agreement came into effect.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[93427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 4.6 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the work of her Department in reducing the time and costs for (a) all businesses and (b) small and medium-sized enterprises since that agreement came into effect.

Greg Hands:

The first meeting of the Joint Customs Cooperation Committee (JCCC) will be held in 2023. The UK and Japan will work towards further simplification of their respective customs procedures.

The UK makes its facilitations available to all traders fulfilling certain criteria, regardless of the size or sector of the business.

A comprehensive evaluation report for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, published within 5 years of the agreement entering into force, will cover a broad range of impacts, including the impact on small and medium-sized enterprises.

Gareth Thomas: [\[93428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 8.82 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the steps taken by the Japanese Government to identify ways to expand access to and use of public government information for (a) all businesses and (b) small and medium sized enterprises since that agreement came into effect.

Gareth Thomas: [\[93429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 8.82 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the steps taken by her Department to identify ways to expand access to and use of public government information for (a) all businesses and (b) small and medium sized enterprises since that agreement came into effect.

Greg Hands:

The UK values our cooperation and close work with Japan to implement this UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) successfully. The CEPA Open Government Data provisions encourage the publication of appropriate government datasets in an accessible format. These provisions are particularly beneficial to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as they can gain access to accurate and reliable datasets without having to collect the information themselves, which can be costly.

The Department for International Trade has committed to publishing a comprehensive evaluation report for the UK-Japan CEPA within five years of the agreement entering into force. This evaluation will cover a broad range of impacts, including the impact on SMEs.

Gareth Thomas: [\[93430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 8.83 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, how many discussions (a) ministers and (b) officials from her Department have had with the Japanese Government in which the challenges for small and medium sized enterprises in the use of electronic commerce has been discussed.

Greg Hands:

The UK and Japan held their first Committee on Trade in Services, Investment Liberalisation and Electronic Commerce under the UK-Japan Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between officials on 1st November 2021. The UK and Japan discussed mutually beneficial cooperation to promote digitalisation including through e-government and applications being accepted in electronic format, which is of particular relevance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We will continue to consider challenges for SMEs moving forward.

Gareth Thomas:[\[93431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 14.80 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the impact of the (a) exchange of information, (b) sharing of experiences and skills and (c) any other form of cooperation or activities regarding intellectual property issues relevant to small and medium sized enterprises that has taken place between the UK and Japan since that agreement came into effect.

Greg Hands:

The UK and Japan are working well together to implement the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The UK and Japan held their first Committee on Intellectual Property on 28 October 2022. The UK and Japan provided updates on relevant work on their respective domestic intellectual property regulations, this included Japan's revisions to its Copyright Act and the UK's Counter Infringement Strategy. The UK continues to engage with Japan regularly on matters relating to intellectual property.

Gareth Thomas:[\[93432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 17.2 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what assessment she has made of the work of the Japanese government to implement a transparent, effective and predictable regulatory environment since the Agreement came into effect.

Gareth Thomas:[\[93433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Article 17.2 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what steps her Department has taken to implement a transparent, effective and predictable regulatory environment since the Agreement came into effect.

Greg Hands:

Article 17.2 of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) establishes that the UK and Japan shall provide for a transparent regulatory environment. The CEPA agreement includes one of the UK's first standalone Good Regulatory Practices and Regulatory Cooperation (GRPRC) chapters which commits both parties to improving and maintaining a stable, predictable and transparent regulatory environment for businesses. The CEPA GRPRC chapter includes commitments to open and accessible public consultations for regulations in

development, and robust regulatory impact assessments to ensure regulations are proportionate. The CEPA also establishes a Committee on Regulatory Cooperation to discuss these matters.

JUSTICE

■ Bail

Steve Reed: [\[96614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of subsequent offences committed by defendants on bail while awaiting trial in the last year.

Edward Argar:

The number of subsequent offences committed by individuals on bail in 2021, the last year for which data is available, is 21,354.

This data covers England and Wales and includes all 43 police forces and the British Transport Police.

The number of offences are those committed on all types of bail. The Ministry of Justice extract of the Police National Computer does not differentiate between offences committed by defendants on bail while awaiting trial and those committed by offenders on bail after conviction and awaiting sentence.

■ Courts: Closures

Dan Carden: [\[99966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the permanent closure of courts since 2010 on trends in the level of the backlog of court cases.

Mike Freer:

The decision to close any court is not taken lightly, it only happens following full public consultation and only when effective access to justice can be maintained. Courts that have closed were either underused, dilapidated or too close to one another.

The pandemic caused significant disruption to the justice system and caused the outstanding caseload to build up. In the Criminal courts this was further impacted by the Criminal Bar Association disruptive action. Prior to the pandemic the outstanding caseload in the Crown Court had reduced significantly from 46,100 in 2010 to 38,300 in 2019.

To ensure that courts can work at full capacity to deliver swift justice for victims and reduce the outstanding caseload we have extended 30 Nightingale courtrooms beyond the end of March 2022 and opened two new super courtrooms in Manchester and Loughborough.

We continue to monitor operational needs across the estate and will ensure there is always capacity to hear cases and deliver justice.

■ Prisoners: Police Custody

Steve Reed: [\[99864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of Operation Safeguard.

Damian Hinds:

Arrangements have been agreed with police forces for the funding of Operation Safeguard. Owing to the many factors which affect demand for places, however, it is not possible to provide an estimate at this point.

We are also putting in place additional measures to maximise capacity in the prison estate and are taking all practical steps to support the continued running of the criminal justice system by fulfilling our primary responsibility to accommodate those sentenced or remanded to custody. Despite the pressures, the safety and wellbeing of the prisoners in our care and of our staff will continue to a priority.

Steve Reed: [\[99866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many police cells are being used as part of Operation Safeguard.

Steve Reed: [\[99867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prisoners using police cells as a result of the implementation of Operation Safeguard.

Damian Hinds:

We have requested the police make approximately 400 police cells available through Operation Safeguard. These cells will only be used if necessary. As of 1 December, no prisoners were housed in police cells as part of Operation Safeguard.

Police forces across the country already use police cells occasionally to house prisoners overnight, for example due to late sitting courts. The triggering of Operation Safeguard expands this practice and is not an unprecedented move. It is an established procedure that has been used before in 2007 to ensure that our prison system can operate effectively and safely during periods of high demand.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Buildings: Insulation

Tom Hunt: [\[94872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to ensure an adequate supply of replacement cladding for building remediation projects.

Lee Rowley:

From the outset of the Building Safety Fund, the Department has engaged industry to ensure sufficient capacity exists to meet demand and to have arrangements in place to address any blockages in the supply chain. We therefore provide direct expert support to Government funded projects, in the form of client side remediation advisors, and run a series of market engagements to highlight options and solutions to address challenges.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity**Angela Rayner:** [\[93560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Government's proposals on voter ID, what plans are in place for voters whose gender identity may not match their photo ID.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[93562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the number of voters aged (a) 18 to 30 and (b) over 65 who hold a form of ID which will be accepted at a polling station.

Lee Rowley:

Cabinet Office research shows that 99% of those aged 18-29 held an accepted form of photographic identification, and 98% of those aged over 70 hold an accepted form of photographic identification.

Everyone who is eligible to vote will have the opportunity to do so. Any eligible voter who does not have one of the required forms of photographic identification, or whose appearance has significantly changed in comparison to their existing identification documents, can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate that matches their current appearance.

Polling station staff will be given appropriate training and there will be a requirement for privacy screens to allow electors who wish to have their form of identification viewed in private able to do so.

The Electoral Commission will provide a comprehensive, targeted communications campaign and guidance, raising awareness throughout the electorate of the new voter identification requirements.

Northern Ireland has successfully operated photographic identification in polling stations since 2003, when introduced by the last Labour Government.

■ Homelessness: LGBT+ People**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[99993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many people who are (a) LGBTQ+ and (b) LGBTQ+ and between the ages of 18 and 25 who were the lead applicants for homelessness applications were assessed as having priority need due to domestic abuse in the 2021-2022 financial year.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:[\[99994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many people who are (a) LGBTQ+ and (b) LGBTQ+ and between the ages of 18 and 25 who were the lead applicants for homelessness applications were placed in temporary accommodation in the 2021-2022 financial year.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:[\[99995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the availability of safe temporary accommodation for LGBTQ+ people in (a) London, (b) Manchester, (c) Newcastle and (d) Bristol.

Felicity Buchan:

Homelessness Statistics for 2021-22 are available [here](#), which includes data on declared sexual identity.

Housing: Energy**Bill Esterson:**[\[99812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many homes are below an Energy Performance Certificate Level E in Sefton Central constituency as of 24 November 2022.

Lee Rowley:

The latest data tables on Energy Performance Buildings Certificates are available [here](#).

Members: Correspondence**Dean Russell:**[\[96658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the average time was for his Department to respond to correspondence from Members of Parliament in the latest period for which data is available.

Dehenna Davison:

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament and the public.

We know that it has taken us too long to reply to some correspondence recently, and are focusing on improving the time taken to respond. As the Hon. Member will be aware, there has been significant recent changes in the ministerial team. With an excellent new team now in place, and clarity on our policy positions, the department is focused on ensuring we respond rapidly to outstanding correspondence. We are determined that we will in future provide the highest level of service which the department expects, and Members of Parliament rightly deserve.

Data on the Department's correspondence performance can be found [here](#).

■ Social Rented Housing: Huddersfield**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[95780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of trends in the level of suitable social housing on overcrowding in those dwellings in Huddersfield.

Dehenna Davison:

Local councils are responsible for allocating housing and are governed by a framework of rules set by central government which ensures that they must give 'reasonable preference' to specific groups including people who are in overcrowded housing. Statutory guidance recommends local authorities consider giving 'additional preference' (high priority) to families in severe overcrowding.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund**Mike Amesbury:** [\[98860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much has been allocated to the Shared Prosperity Fund for the 2022-23 financial year.

Mike Amesbury: [\[98864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what proportion of the £400 million allocated to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the 2022-23 financial year has been spent as of 29 November 2022.

Dehenna Davison:

The department has now approved all local investment plans and has notified local authorities of the outcome.

Lisa Nandy: [\[99821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 93530 on UK Shared Prosperity Fund, for what reason the £400 million allocated towards levelling up, under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for financial year 2022-23 was included in the accompanying document for the Chancellor's Spring Statement of March 2022 but omitted from the accompanying document for Chancellor's Autumn Statement of November 2022.

Dehenna Davison:

There has been no change to UKSPF funding allocations.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ No-interest Loans Scheme: Northern Ireland****Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[99754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will have discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the roll-out of a pilot No Interest Loan Scheme in Northern Ireland.

Mr Steve Baker:

The Government has provided £3.8 million of funding to Fair4All Finance to pilot the No Interest Loan Scheme, which will help consumers in vulnerable circumstances to access affordable credit. These loans will be administered by Credit Unions, Community Development Finance Institutions and other lending organisations. HM Treasury are working with Fair4All Finance to facilitate the launch of the pilot in Northern Ireland and my officials will support HM Treasury in exploring the prospect of a quicker rollout in Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER■ **BBC****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[99756\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his oral Answer to the Question from the hon. Member for Foyle, at Prime Minister's Questions on 30 November 2022, Official Report, on BBC Radio Foyle, when he plans to meet the BBC.

Rishi Sunak:

I met the Director-General of the BBC, on 1 December 2022. I raised the proposed changes to Radio Foyle.

While the BBC is editorially and operationally independent and it is for it to decide how to deliver its services and meet the BBC's Charter responsibilities, we expect the BBC to consider the views of stakeholders when it makes the decision over whether to proceed with these plans.

■ **Detention Centres: Manston****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[99771\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his oral contribution of 17 November on G20, Official Report, column 835, when he plans to write to the Rt hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North about unaccompanied children under the age of eight being held at Manston on 17 November.

Rishi Sunak:

A reply has been sent.

TRANSPORT■ **Bus Services: Rural Areas****Richard Foord:**[\[97682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial support is available to local bus franchises to protect rural bus routes.

Richard Foord:

[\[97688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of inflation on rural bus services.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Government recognises the importance of transport for rural areas and is committed to improving access to services that provide vital connectivity. The Government pays almost £260 million per year in Bus Service Operators Grant, which benefits passengers by helping operators keep fares down, and enabling operators to run services that might otherwise be unprofitable and could lead to cancellation.

The Government has also provided nearly £2 billion in emergency and recovery funding to local transport authorities and bus operators since March 2020 to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on bus services and protect local bus routes. This includes an additional £130 million to continue support services until March 2023.

The Government does recognise that inflationary pressures, including rising fuel costs, are impacting operating costs of bus services across England. Recovery funding provided to LTAs from April this year has accounted for forecast inflationary increases.

■ Cycling and Walking

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[99755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish an updated long-term cycling and walking plan for the remaining period of this Parliament.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's ambitions for walking and cycling up to 2024/5 are outlined in the second statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) which was published in July 2022. The Strategy complements the Government's Gear Change plan, which was published in July 2020.

■ Cycling and Walking: Finance

David Warburton:

[\[97693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of additional support for the Active Travel fund.

Jesse Norman:

The Department's ministers and officials have regular discussions with their counterparts in His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) on active travel funding and other matters.

Ruth Cadbury:[\[98832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when local authorities will be invited to bid for Active Travel Fund 4.

Jesse Norman:

The Department plans to launch Active Travel Fund 4 once future budgets are confirmed through the Departmental business planning process, following the Autumn Statement of 17 November.

■ Cycling: Helmets**Mark Pritchard:**[\[98745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with road safety and cycle representative groups on making it a legal requirement for cyclists to wear helmets on public roads.

Jesse Norman:

The Department considered this matter at length in a comprehensive cycling and walking safety review in 2018 and held discussions with a wide range of stakeholders as part of that review. The safety benefits of mandating cycle helmets for cyclists are likely to be outweighed by the fact that this would put some people off cycling, thereby reducing the wider health and environmental benefits. The Department recommends that cyclists should wear helmets, as set out in The Highway Code, but has no intention to make this a legal requirement.

■ Department for Transport: Cycling and Walking**Cat Smith:**[\[98811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent on active travel in 2021-22.

Jesse Norman:

The Department spent approximately £300m of dedicated active travel funding in 2021-22, with the bulk of this going to local authorities.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[97555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to take legislative steps to implement smart road charging schemes in (a) cities, (b) regions and (c) England.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department has no plans to seek legislation to implement road charging on a national basis.

Darren Jones: [\[98871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to support the introduction of electric vehicle charging points at motorway service stations in the North of England.

Jesse Norman:

In May 2020, the Government published a vision for the rapid chargepoint network in England. To deliver this vision, the Rapid Charging Fund has been established to future-proof electrical capacity at motorway and major A road service areas in England, including the North, to prepare the network for a fully electric car and van fleet.

The Government expects the private sector to deliver chargepoints where they are commercially viable, but will intervene where there is a clear market failure.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Public Sector**

Louise Haigh: [\[98829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of public sector vehicle fleets have made the transition to electric vehicles in the UK; and what estimate he has made of the timescale to fully transition those vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

In the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the Government committed to 100% of its car and van fleet being fully zero emission at tailpipe by 31 December 2027. These targets are binding for government and advisory for the wider public sector. The Government does not hold data on wider public sector fleet vehicles and what proportion of these are electric. However, it does publish progress on the central government commitment in the Greening Government Commitments annual report.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Speed Limits**

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[98868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his Department's policy not to outlaw the production or purchase of vehicles without speed limiters.

Mr Richard Holden:

There are no plans to mandate speed limiters for cars, although they continue to be required for heavy goods vehicles and larger passenger carrying vehicles.

■ **Official Cars: Electric Vehicles**

Louise Haigh: [\[98827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the central government fleet of cars is electrified.

Jesse Norman:

As of 31 March 2022, 18% of vehicles in the government car fleet are ultra-low emission. In total, there are 24,336 cars in the central government fleet of which 4,315 are ultra-low emission.

The Government will report further updates on its progress to decarbonising its car fleet in due course.

Louise Haigh:[\[98828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of his Department's fleet of vehicles are electric.

Jesse Norman:

There are 521 electric vehicles in the Department's vehicle fleet. This represents 41.4% of the Departments fleet of 1257.

Public Transport: Assistance Animals**Alberto Costa:**[\[97531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help improve access to and prevent refusals of service on transport networks to people who use guide dogs.

Mr Richard Holden:

Under Sections 168 and 170 of the Equality Act 2010 taxi and PHV drivers must accept the carriage of passengers accompanied by assistance dogs, and the Department has committed to mandating their completion of disability awareness training when Parliamentary time allows. On buses, the Department has committed to require the provision of audible and visible announcements, helping visually impaired passengers to travel with confidence, and new vehicles funded by the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme must be equipped to provide them.

Assistance dogs are permitted on all rail stations and to board train services as long as it is safe for them to do so, and they will not incur any additional fare.

Airlines must legally allow assistance dogs to travel with their owners in the cabin of the aircraft.

Roads: Air Pollution**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[98833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure local highway authorities are tackling roadside air pollution generated by motor vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published its plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations in 2017. This has been underpinned with £883m of dedicated funding to help local authorities develop and implement local NO₂ air quality plans and support those affected by these plans. This sits alongside significant investment to

support the transition to cleaner, more sustainable transport, including funding to kickstart a cycling and walking revolution and £320 million invested so far to support zero emission buses as part of a step-change in investment into bus services.

■ Transport: Glasgow

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [\[96590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of connectivity between London and Glasgow; and what steps he is taking to help improve that connectivity.

Mr Richard Holden:

Lord Peter Hendy's independent Union Connectivity Review, published in November 2021, considered transport connectivity across the UK.

We are considering Lord Hendy's recommendations carefully and will publish our response as soon as is practicable.

■ Transport: Sark

Andrew Rosindell: [\[97460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support and develop transport links in the Crown Dependency of Sark.

Mr Richard Holden:

Transport links to Sark are a matter for the government of Sark.

TREASURY

■ Bank Services: Standards

Mark Pritchard: [\[99787\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will have discussions with the retail banking sector on improving customer service standards and reducing social and banking exclusion for customers with learning disabilities and special educational needs.

Andrew Griffith:

The Government is committed to improving access to financial services, especially for those with a characteristic of vulnerability, and regularly engages with the retail banking sector on this important agenda.

As part of this, the Government recognises that access to a transactional bank account is key to enabling people to manage their money on a day-to-day basis effectively, securely and confidently. That is why the nine largest personal current account providers in the UK are legally required to offer basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account or who are not eligible for a bank's standard current account. Basic bank accounts must be fee-free and do not have an overdraft facility or cheque book, but otherwise offer the same services as a standard personal current account.

UK banks' and building societies' treatment of their customers is governed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in its Principles for Businesses. This includes a general requirement for firms to provide a prompt, efficient and fair service to all of their customers.

The FCA's Vulnerability Guidance outlines the expectations for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, such as those with learning disabilities and special educational needs, setting out a number of best practices. The FCA expects that firms treat these customers fairly and support them to continue to interact with financial services in a way that best works for them.

In addition, like all service providers, banks and building societies are bound under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, in the way they deliver their services.

■ Customs: ICT

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:

[\[92120\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost to the public purse has been for the establishment and operation of Government IT systems on (a) declaration, (b) transit, (c) safety and security and (d) movement of goods since the UK's exit from the EU (i) in total and (ii) in relation to trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as of 21 November 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC spending on individual IT systems cannot be broken down to the level specified in the question. In total, HMRC spent £714m on Border IT systems in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

■ Energy Bills Rebate

John McDonnell:

[\[96549\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to replicate in the 2023 Energy Bills Support Scheme the £400 non-repayable discount administered by energy suppliers and paid to consumers.

James Cartlidge:

This winter, the Government is spending £55 billion to directly help households and businesses with their energy bills - amongst the largest support plans in Europe. This includes the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme. Energy suppliers are delivering this support to households in Great Britain with a domestic electricity meter over the 6 months from October 2022 to March 2023. It also includes the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) which caps the unit price households pay for electricity and gas, saving the typical household around £900 this winter.

The Government has reviewed the energy support available from April 2023 to design a new approach that is expected to cost the taxpayer less while targeting support on those most in need. At Autumn Statement the

Government announced that the EPG will be adjusted so that the typical household pays £3000 per annum from April 2023 until April 2024 on energy, saving the average household £500. At the same time, the Government has announced further support designed to target the most vulnerable households across the UK through next winter via additional Cost of Living Payments. UK households on means-tested benefits will receive a further £900 Cost of Living payment; pensioner households will receive an additional £300 Cost of Living payment and people on non-means-tested disability benefits will receive a further £150 Disability Cost of Living payment, to help with the additional costs they face. The support in 2023-24 is in addition to the support already in place to protect households this winter, including the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme, the £150 Council Tax rebate and the one-off £650 Cost of Living Payment for those on means-tested benefits, with additional support for pensioners and those claiming disability benefits.

■ Financial Services: Environment Protection

Sarah Olney: [\[99940\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his department has made in the design and implementation of a UK Green Taxonomy.

Sarah Olney: [\[99941\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefits of a UK Green Taxonomy.

Andrew Griffith:

The value of a sustainable investment framework rests on its credibility as a practical and useful tool for corporates and investors. It is important that we learn from the approach taken in other jurisdictions and take the time to get this right for the UK and the market.

The Government intends to consider the recently published recommendations from the independent Green Technical Advisory Group and engage with the market later this year on the design of policies to help steer capital to where it is needed to support the UK's net zero transition.

It is important to get this policy right for the UK. The UK Green Taxonomy Consultation is under review and the Government will be setting out next steps in due course.

■ High Income Child Benefit Tax Charge

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[97641\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the High Income Child Benefit Charge to allow it to reflect total household income instead of individual income for families who choose to provide this information to HMRC.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is not currently considering options to charge the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) on a household basis for certain claimants, who choose to submit household income information to HMRC. This would require HMRC to operate two parallel income thresholds for those liable, which would entail a significant operational burden for HMRC, and would not ensure consistency and fairness among taxpayers.

The UK has a system of independent taxation where every individual, including each partner in a couple, is treated equally within the income tax system and has their own personal allowance and set of rate bands which they can set against their own income. It is a fundamental principle of independent taxation that the individual incomes are taxed separately, and this ensures independence and privacy in their tax affairs. The Government therefore considers it appropriate to charge HICBC on an individual basis, in line with other income tax policy.

■ Low Incomes: Government Assistance**Karin Smyth:**[\[99888\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support low-income households which do not receive means tested benefits.

John Glen:

In 2022-23, the government is helping all domestic electricity customers with the impact of rising energy prices, with £400 off their bills through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. The Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) will cap the unit price households pay for electricity and gas saving the typical household around £900 this winter.

The government is providing a £150 non-repayable Council Tax Rebate for around 80 per cent of households in England, delivered as a payment to households in Council Tax Bands A-D, as announced in February.

The 12-month cut in fuel duty from March 2022 will support businesses and families with the cost of transport – worth savings for consumers of almost £2.4 billion.

In 2023-24, the £3,000 Energy Price Guarantee will save the average household £500. The government is also providing another £1 billion funding to enable an extension to the Household Support Fund over 2023-24, which will continue to support English Local Authorities in delivering local welfare to vulnerable households.

From 1 April 2023, the National Living Wage will increase by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over - the largest ever cash increase worth over £1,600 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on National Living Wage.

■ Motor Vehicles: Taxation

Stephen Farry:

[\[96667\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of revising vehicle tax to reflect the lower emissions resulting from the adoption of E10 fuel.

James Cartlidge:

E10 is the standard grade petrol in the UK. Fuel duty is levied on E10 at the same rate as other types of petrol and diesel. This is currently 52.95 pence per litre.

Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) is a tax on vehicle ownership sometimes referred to as a 'vehicle tax'. Cars first registered since April 2017 already pay a first year VED rate based on their CO2 emissions, with the least polluting models paying £10 on first registration, whilst the most polluting pay over £2,300.

This is based on CO2 emissions as measured through laboratory tests and recorded on a vehicle's type approval certificate ensuring a consistent approach is used for all new cars. Since 2020, the government has used the improved Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP) standard for measuring CO2 emissions, which aims to reflect real world driving conditions.

All taxes are kept under review.

■ Small Businesses: Tax Allowances

Chi Onwurah:

[\[99832\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide guidance to small businesses looking to respond to changes in Small Business Tax Credits without reducing research activity.

Victoria Atkins:

At Autumn Budget 2021 and Tax Administration & Maintenance Day 2021 the Government announced a series of changes to the Research & Development (R&D) tax credits. These included allowing Data and Cloud costs to qualify for relief, introducing restrictions on overseas spend and measures to target abuse and improve compliance.

At Autumn Statement 2022 the Government announced that it would rebalance the rates of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and R&D expenditure credit (RDEC) reliefs to ensure taxpayers' money is spent as effectively as possible.

HMRC will publish draft guidance on these changes before the end of the year and will invite comments on the guidance. HMRC will also engage with business representative bodies to ensure they are aware of the changes.

The Government will also consult on the design of a single scheme, and ahead of Budget work with industry to understand whether further support is necessary for R&D intensive SMEs, without significant change to the overall cost for supporting R&D.

■ Taxation: Refugees

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[97623\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to levy a tax on Ukrainian refugees on income earned in the UK while they reside in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

Under UK tax rules, income earned through employment is taxable. The Government is committed to a fair tax system in which those with the most contribute the most. The income tax system is highly progressive, with different rates of tax sitting above an internationally high tax-free Personal Allowance.

■ Wealth: North East

Chi Onwurah:

[\[98889\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Autumn Statement 2022 on levels of household wealth in the North East.

Andrew Griffith:

The Distributional Analysis published at Autumn Statement 2022 shows that government decisions made at this fiscal event are progressive: low-income households will receive the largest benefit in cash terms and as a percentage of income, and will on average be net beneficiaries from decisions on tax, welfare and amendments to the Energy Price Guarantee in 2023-24.

The government announced at Autumn Statement an additional £900 Cost of Living Payment in 2023-24, benefitting around 400,000 households in the North East. A further 266,000 households in social rented housing in the North East will benefit from the Social Rent Cap.

In addition, the government will shortly be agreeing an expanded mayoral devolution deal with local authorities in the North East.

WALES

■ Devolution: Wales

Ruth Jones:

[\[98776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many meetings he has held at (a) Downing Street and (b) the House of Commons with elected representatives from Wales since his appointment; and if he will make a statement.

David T C Davies:

As Secretary of State for Wales, I conduct the vast majority of Government businesses within the Wales Office, including meetings with elected representatives in Wales.

I have had meetings with elected representatives from Wales in Parliament and in Downing Street.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Conversion Therapy**

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[95978\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps her Department is taking to improve support for people who have undergone conversion therapy.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government has launched a support service open to all victims and those at risk of conversion practices regardless of their background or circumstances. We have committed up to £360,000 over three years to this service, which includes a helpline, instant messaging service, and website to enable people to get the support they need.

More widely, the Government remains committed to protecting everyone from these practices. We are carefully considering the responses to the public consultation which closed earlier this year and will respond in due course.

■ Equal Pay

Stella Creasy: [\[99825\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 and the Answer of 3 November 2022 to Question 73835 on Equal Pay, if she will publish the report in accordance with Section 16 of that regulation by 1 January 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

As this is a statutory review it must be approved by the Secretary of State. It is appropriate that the Minister for Women and Equalities, who was only appointed at the end of October, takes time to properly consider the analysis and findings prior to publishing the report.

In line with the Government's own best practice for post-implementation reviews, the report also needs to be signed off by the Department's Chief Economist.

Once the review has completed these stages it will be published alongside the regulations.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Carer's Allowance**

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[99858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the eligibility rules for Carer's Allowance on the ability of unpaid carers to work more hours and increase their earnings.

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[99912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an estimate of the cost of raising the earnings threshold for Carer's Allowance to work for up to 21 hours a week at National Living Wages rates for financial year 2023-24.

Tom Pursglove:

Many carers who are receiving Carer's Allowance are also in households receiving Universal Credit, whose structure of tapers and work allowances (where applicable) effectively takes precedence over the earnings rules in Carer's Allowance for these carers. This helps ensure that, if they wish to work, carers on the lowest incomes are better off doing so. There is, however, no requirement for those caring for 35 hours or more a week to undertake work search whilst receiving Universal Credit. In work or out of work, these carers may also receive the Universal Credit Carer Element, worth around an additional £2,000 a year.

Some carers may not be able to receive Universal Credit, for example due to their levels of household capital or income. These carers may only be receiving Carer's Allowance. This is not means-tested and not based on National Insurance contributions. It has an earnings limit which permits carers to undertake some part-time work if they are able to do so. This recognises the benefits of staying in touch with the workplace, including greater financial independence and social interaction.

We know that some carers who are above Universal Credit thresholds are keen to maintain contact with the labour market, so we want to encourage carers in this position to combine some paid work with their caring duties wherever possible. That is why we regularly increase the earnings limit when it is warranted and affordable. The Carer's Allowance earnings limit is currently £132 a week. Subject to parliamentary approval, this will increase to £139 a week from April 2023. This will mean that the earnings limit will have increased by over one third since 2010.

There is no "hours rule" in Carer's Allowance as far as earnings are concerned.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[99859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending eligibility for Carer's Allowance to provide a level of income replacement for unpaid carers who care for someone for fewer than 35 hours a week.

Tom Pursglove:

Successive Governments have maintained the caring threshold for Carer's Allowance at 35 hours a week since the benefit was first introduced. Carers who provide less than 35 hours of care can already receive financial support through the benefit system where eligible, including through Universal Credit. Carers have their Universal Credit conditionality adjusted to reflect their caring responsibilities.

Since April 2010, carers who do not get Carer's Allowance have been able to apply for Carer's Credits if they are caring for one or more disabled people for at least 20

hours a week. Carer's Credits are Class 3 credits which can help towards the conditions of entitlement to the new State Pension and Widowed Parent's Allowance.

■ **Chemicals: Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[99830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that chemical products can move from the UK to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland while remaining compliant with the chemical classification, labelling and packaging (CLP) regulatory framework; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of adopting a more flexible approach to encourage the concept of dual labelling when developing UK CLP policy.

Mims Davies:

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

HSE is considering how to deliver for CLP the requirements outlined in the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill which would facilitate a dual-regulatory regime that gives choice to Northern Ireland businesses and can deal flexibly and durably with any barriers within the UK internal market, alongside robust commitments to protect the EU single market. As part of these considerations HSE will assess the potential impacts of policy decisions on stakeholders but will seek to ensure that the provisions within CLP that protect consumers and workers through clear and easily identifiable labelling are upheld.

■ **Cost of Living Payments: Carers**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[99857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing Cost of Living Payments to recipients of Carer's Allowance who do not receive means-tested benefits.

Tom Pursglove:

Not all carers live in low income households. For those that do, means-tested benefits may be payable, which provide extra weekly income and may trigger support with cost of living increases. The Government would encourage not only carers, but anyone in financial need, to check their eligibility for additional financial support. Full details of DWP benefits are available on Gov.UK, and advice can also be sought through organisations such as Citizens Advice.

The Government understands the pressures people, including carers, 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 announced £26 billion in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes

Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable. In 2023/24, households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to a further £900 in Cost of Living Payments. A £300 payment will be made to pensioner households and individuals in receipt of eligible disability benefits, which will include some carers, will receive a £150 payment. Also included is the amended Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24 and raising the benefit cap by 10.1% in line with inflation.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

■ Cost of Living Payments: Pensioners

Sir Greg Knight:

[99749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Cost of Living Payments have been issued to pensioners in East Yorkshire constituency.

Mims Davies:

In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, the number of Cost of Living Payments made to specific client groups is the subject of an upcoming statistical release, and cannot be released before that publication is ready, subject to usual quality assurance.

The Department for Work and Pensions has published management information on the total number of Cost of Living Payments made. The information which will be updated as new payments are made can be found here: [Cost of Living Payment management information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-payment-management-information).

■ Cost of Living Payments: Solihull

Julian Knight:

[97604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Cost of Living Payments have been issued to pensioners in Solihull constituency.

Mims Davies:

In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, the number of Cost of Living Payments made to specific client groups is the subject of an upcoming statistical release, and cannot be released before that publication is ready, subject to usual quality assurance.

The Department for Work and Pensions has published management information on the total number of Cost of Living Payments made. The information which will be

updated as new payments are made can be found here: [Cost of Living Payment management information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](#).

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Neale Hanvey:

[100001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what was the total (a) expenditure on and (b) number of benefit claimants receiving Employment Support Allowance in each of the last five years, in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales, (iv) Northern Ireland, (v) each local authority and (vi) each constituency.

Tom Pursglove:

The information to answer parts (a) i-iii, v) and vi) of the question can be found in the benefit expenditure and caseload tables ([Benefit expenditure and caseload tables 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)). Data for 2021/22 will be published in due course.

Information on the number of claimants who received Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the last five years, broken down by various geographies in Great Britain, is published and can be found on [Stat-Xplore](#).

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found [here](#). An account is not required to use Stat-Xplore; the 'Guest Login' feature gives instant access to the main functions.

The Department for Communities is responsible for Employment and Support Allowance in Northern Ireland.

■ Employment Schemes: Contracts

Jonathan Ashworth:

[96606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on nationally contracted employment support programmes in each of the last five years.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 30 November 2022]: In each of the last 5 years the Department has spent the following nationally on contracted employment support programmes.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
292,136,763	157,945,919	101,156,049	178,851,370	642,083,414

The expenditure has increased in 21/22 compared to previous years due to the Departments response to the COVID pandemic to support those unemployed as a consequence.

■ Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013

Stella Creasy:

[\[99822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has plans to (a) reform, (b) revoke or (c) retain the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 are concerned with the control of injury and infection risks to healthcare workers from needles, scalpels and other medical sharps.

As the regulations implement aspects of the European Council Directive 2010/32/EU (the Sharps Directive), not specifically addressed in existing GB health and safety legislation, they are subject to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill 2022 (REUL Bill) currently passing through Parliament. With the introduction of the REUL Bill, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) remains focused on ensuring that regulatory frameworks maintain the UK's high standards of health and safety protection and continue to reduce burdens for business. HSE's approach aligns closely with the Government's pledge to do more for business to help promote growth by removing disproportionate burdens and simplifying the regulatory landscape. Our standards of health and safety protections are among the highest in the world. HSE will continue to review its retained EU legislation to seek opportunities to reduce business burdens and promote growth without reducing health and safety standards.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Neale Hanvey:

[\[100002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what was the total (a) expenditure on and (b) number of benefit claimants receiving Personal Independence Payments in each of the last five years, in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales, (iv) Northern Ireland, (v) each local authority and (vi) each constituency.

Tom Pursglove:

The information to answer parts a) i)-iii), v) and vi) of the question can be found in [Benefit expenditure and caseload tables 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for the years up to 2020/21. Data for 2021/22 will be published in due course.

The Scottish Government took on responsibility for Personal Independence Payment in Scotland from 2020/21, so expenditure data for Scotland only covers the years up to 2019/20. Information on expenditure in Scotland from 2020/21 is the responsibility of the Scottish Government.

The available information on the number of claimants who received PIP in the last five years, broken down by various geographies, is published and can be found on [Stat-Xplore](#).

You can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest user and, if needed, you can access [guidance](#) on how to extract the information required.

The Department for Communities is responsible for PIP in Northern Ireland.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Dan Carden: [\[98843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to recognise the social model of disability; and what assessment he has made of the impacts for his policies of the potential benefits of such a model.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government recognises the benefits of the Social Model of disability across the breadth of our policy-making that affects disabled people. It guides us as we attempt to break down barriers for disabled people, for example helping them to start, stay and succeed in work.

■ State Retirement Pensions

John McDonnell: [\[96548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of what the potential rate of the basic state pension would have been in financial year 2022-23 had the earnings link not been ended in 1980.

Laura Trott:

We do not hold the information required to answer this request. The Office for National Statistics are responsible for estimates of earnings growth. A time series consistent with the Average Weekly Earnings growth measure used for benefit uprating is only available from 2001 onwards.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Underpayments

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[99856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will set out a timeline for repaying the remaining 200,000 pensioners identified in 2020 as having been underpaid their State Pension.

Laura Trott:

As stated in DWP's Annual Report and Accounts 2022, the Department expects to complete the exercise for CAT BL and CAT D by the end of 2023. For missed conversion cases, we aim to complete these as soon as we can but for this group the exercise could run through to late 2024.

The Government is fully committed to ensuring that any historical errors, unaddressed by previous Governments, are put right as quickly as possible. We have increased the number of people working on the exercise and at its peak, we plan to have around 1500 staff dedicated to the exercise. Our delivery is backloaded, with case reviews expected to significantly increase this year and going forward.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOME OFFICE

■ Detention Centres: Manston

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[99773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2022 to Question 87792 on Detention Centres: Manston, what her planned timetable is for providing information on the cost to the public purse of operating the Manston immigration facility in each month in 2022.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 5 December 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Robert Jenrick:

In light of the requests from HASC, a costing exercise to encompass the whole of Government cost, ~~including opportunity costs of deploying Home Office staff~~, for the operation of Manston has been commissioned. This is a complex process and a timetable to deliver this exercise will be provided once essential planning has been completed.

JUSTICE

■ Members: Correspondence

Jess Phillips:

[\[80725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the letter dated 27 June 2022 from Lorraine Harris, Area Coroner for Kingston Upon Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, to the Secretary of State for Justice setting out the coroner's recommendations as a result of the inquest into the death of Jessica Louise Laverack and requesting a response by 23 August 2022, for what reason his Department has not responded to the letter.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 November 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Mike Freer:

I can confirm that we received the Area Coroner's Report to Prevent Future Deaths and the findings of fact on 29 June 2022. The Victims Minister ~~has now written~~ **replied on 1 December** to apologise for the delay in acknowledging receipt and thanking her for the comprehensive report into this terrible and tragic case.

We are aware that the Home Office responded to the Coroner within the 56-day timescale and we are supportive of the work that they have referenced in the cross Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan (published in March 2022) that is looking to address a number of these issues including:

- developing the evidence base and interventions to prevent suicides linked to domestic abuse, as well as support a package of measures to tackle suicides which take place following domestic abuse;
- updating police guidance on suicide so that it explicitly includes references to domestic abuse and for the police to consider whether domestic abuse was a contributing factor in cases of unexplained deaths and suspected suicides; and
- promoting the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance (published in August 2022) which sets out what best practice in supporting victims looks like, including for multi-agency working and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Employment Rights

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business) (Kevin Hollinrake): [\[HCWS411\]](#)

The Government has today published its response to the consultation on flexible working. This delivers on our manifesto commitment to encourage flexible working, and represents an important part of our drive to deliver growth by helping people to access and stay in work.

Flexible Working Consultation Response

In 2021, the government consulted on changes to the right to request flexible working. This right currently supports all employees with 26 weeks continuous service to make applications to change their work location, working hours and/or working pattern. The legislation enables employees and employers to find arrangements that work for both sides. The consultation proposals were intended to help ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The response, published today, states that the Government will legislate to:

- Make the right to request flexible working a day one right – this will bring an estimated additional 2.2 million people into scope of the legislation and encourage early conversations about flexibility in the job design, recruitment and appointment phases. Supporting employees and employers to agree flexible working arrangements from day one will be an important measure in the context of a tight labour market, as it will assist those who wish to return to work but can only do so on certain patterns.
- Introduce a new requirement for employers to consult with the employee when they intend to reject their flexible working request – this will enable both parties to explore the types of flexibility that may be available within the specific role before reaching a conclusion.
- Allow two statutory requests in any 12-month period (rather than the current one request) – this will help to ensure that individuals do not feel ‘trapped’ in certain work arrangements they know are not sustainable for them, particularly in the event that their circumstances change within 12 months.
- Require a decision period of two months in respect of a statutory flexible working request (rather than the current three) – this acknowledges that long delays in responding to requests can lead to negative outcomes for both employers and employees, for example where a response is needed quickly, and the alternative is the person dropping out of work.
- Remove the existing requirement that the employee must explain what effect, if any, the change applied for would have on the employer and how that effect might

be dealt with – this will create a level playing field among those making requests as it will mean the legislation no longer favours those with more experience or better writing skills.

The first of these measures will be delivered through secondary legislation. The other measures require primary legislation, and the Government is pleased to support the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Bill introduced by Yasmin Qureshi MP.

The response also commits to non-legislative action: developing guidance to raise awareness and understanding of how to make and administer temporary requests for flexible working; and launching a call for evidence to better understand how informal flexible working operates in practice.

As a package, these steps will encourage better two-way conversations about flexible working and prompt both the employer and employee to focus on identifying an arrangement that works for them both.

The Review of the Flexible Working Regulations 2014 showed that flexible working can reduce vacancy costs; increase skill retention; enhance business performance; and reduce staff absenteeism rates. In the current context of a tight labour market, flexible working can also play a key role in attracting people into work. Research conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team has shown that offering flexible working can attract up to 30% more applicants to job vacancies, and a recent ONS publication revealed that older workers working flexibly would be more likely to say they were planning to retire later. Strengthening the legislative framework will therefore help to ensure that those who are under-represented in the workforce have access to more employment opportunities.

The Government recognises there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to work arrangements since the needs of businesses and individuals will differ in each circumstance. It is therefore important that the legislation remains a right *to request*, not a right *to have*, and that employers continue to be able to refuse requests for specified business reasons.

The territorial extent of the proposals included in the Government’s consultation response extends to Great Britain (employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland).

I will place copies of the consultation response in the Libraries of the House.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Homelessness Update

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove): [\[HCWS410\]](#)

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken decisive action to support households. This includes the Energy Price Guarantee, to support households with their energy bills over the winter, and a further £37 billion of support for the cost of living this year. At Autumn Statement the Chancellor also unveiled £26 billion of support to protect the most vulnerable households in 2023/24.

I recognise that some vulnerable households may find themselves at risk of homelessness and may need additional support. The Government wants to make sure councils are able to respond effectively to support households and prevent homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention Grant – Winter 2022 financial support

I am therefore announcing an additional £50 million that will be made available to local authorities in England in 2022/23 through a top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant. The additional funding will support local authorities to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless. Local authorities will target this funding to those who need it most to help manage local homelessness pressures.

The details of individual local authority allocations can be found [here](#). This additional £50 million investment builds on the £316 million in funding already available to local authorities through the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2022/23, bringing total spend through that grant to £366 million. This is part of £2 billion of Government funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.

■ **Update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Minister for Levelling Up (Dehenna Davison):

[\[HCWS412\]](#)

Today, my department is announcing the outcome of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan validation process: the approval of plans for England, Scotland and Wales, and the publication of the UKSPF Investment Plan for Northern Ireland.

When we launched [the UKSPF Prospectus](#) in April, my department outlined the ambition of the Fund to invest in domestic priorities and target funding where it is needed most: building pride in place; growing pay, employment and productivity; supporting high quality skills training; and increasing life chances across the UK. This announcement represents a significant step in delivering on this ambition.

Councils and mayoral authorities across England, Scotland and Wales, have worked with the private sector, civil society and others, as well as the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, to develop local investment plans. These plans set out how funding will be targeted on local priorities, against measurable goals. All investment plans for England, Scotland and Wales have now been validated and approved, unlocking three years of investment, and we now expect UKSPF delivery to commence in earnest.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is responsible for delivery of the UKSPF. My department has worked closely with key partners and other stakeholders to develop the [UKSPF Northern Ireland Investment Plan](#), ensuring it reflects the needs and opportunities of Northern Ireland's economy and its people. The plan published today outlines the specific interventions which will be supported, and how these will be delivered. Information regarding project funding, including commissions and our plans for project competitions, will be announced shortly.

The delivery of the UKSPF, worth £2.6 billion including Multiply, is a central pillar of this government's levelling up agenda and a significant component of its support for places

across the UK. As such, today's announcement reaffirms our manifesto commitment to match EU structural fund receipts in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and all areas of England.

The approval of investment plans kickstarts delivery in every part of the country and will lead to visible, tangible improvements to the places where people work and live. Alongside investment in skills, supporting those furthest from the labour market, and promoting community cohesion, this will give individuals right across the UK even more reasons to be proud of their area.

TRANSPORT

■ Ship Safety – draft Merchant Shipping (Inspections of Ro-Ro Passenger Ships and High-Speed Passenger Craft) Regulations 2023

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Richard Holden):
[\[HCWS409\]](#)

The draft Merchant Shipping (Inspection of Ro-Ro Passenger Ships and High-Speed Passenger Craft) Regulations 2023 were published today, along with an accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum. The draft Regulations revoke and replace the Merchant Shipping (Mandatory Surveys for Ro-Ro Ferry and High Speed Passenger Craft) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/152) and implement a revised safety inspection regime for ro-ro passenger ships and high-speed passenger craft.

The draft Regulations are being published for 28 days. Following the conclusion of this period, and once any observations on the draft regulations have been taken into account, they will be laid for approval by each House of Parliament. This procedure is required under paragraph 14 of schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 because these regulations revoke an instrument, the 2001 regulations, that was made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. Statutory statements explaining the steps taken to publish the draft Regulations and the reasons for the revocation of the provision made by section 2(2) are contained in the annex to the draft explanatory memorandum

The main objective of the draft Regulations is to remove duplication amongst the current inspection regimes applicable to ro-ro passenger ships and high-speed passenger craft in regular service. Vessels operating on international voyages within the Paris MOU region (the Port State Control Regime we work within) are already subject to priority based inspections. These will continue to occur at a frequency determined by the level of risk for each vessel.

The draft Regulations retain a distinct safety inspection regime for ro-ro passenger ships and high-speed passenger crafts. They provide a level of certainty and expectation to the industry as to when and where their inspections will take place and exactly what will be required. UK registered ro-ro passenger ships and high-speed passenger crafts visiting EU countries will be subject to inspection by those countries under the European legislation. The draft Regulations will provide an inspection regime for ro-ro passenger

ships and high-speed passenger craft consistent with that of the EU so that the same standards have to be met by all such vessels operating out of the UK, regardless of route they take.

The draft Regulations also include an ambulatory reference provision to ensure that the international conventions referred to in the draft Regulations will always be understood to be the most up to date versions of such Conventions applicable at the time of consideration. As described in the Explanatory Memorandum, when one of these conventions is to be amended internationally, a Ministerial Statement will be provided to both Houses of Parliament ahead of the amendment taking effect and coming into force in UK law.

The draft Regulations and the accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum can be found on www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-inspection-regulations-for-ro-ro-passenger-ships-and-high-speed-craft