



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 December 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:35 P.M., 06 December 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Animal Experiments

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[97583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Animals in Science Regulation Unit's annual reports for 2019-2021, if he will increase the support available to researchers in replacing animals with (a) computer modelling, (b) organ-on-a-chip technology and (c) other New Approach Methodologies.

**George Freeman:**

The Government actively supports and funds the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). This is achieved primarily through funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for the National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs). Since the NC3Rs was launched in 2004, it has committed £100 million in research to develop 3Rs technologies.

UKRI also funds a portfolio of research projects involving non-animal technologies. This includes a £4 million joint funding call focussed on supporting next generation non-animal technologies, such as organ-on-a-chip and computer modelling, to work towards providing more reliable and applicable alternatives to reduce the use of animals in research.

#### ■ Bankruptcy: Wales

**Beth Winter:**

[\[97732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many individual bankruptcies were recorded in (a) the Cynon Valley constituency, (b) Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority area and (c) Wales in each month in the last year.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Individual bankruptcy data for Wales are sourced from the Insolvency Service case information system. Below is a table of the number of bankruptcies by month in each of Cynon Valley (parliamentary constituency), Rhondda Cynon Taff (local authority) and Wales in 2021.

Information on individual insolvency by location for 2022 will be available in Official Statistics published in March 2023. To ensure compliance with the rules relating to the pre-release of Official Statistics the Insolvency Service is unable to provide the requested information for 2022 until this time.

MONTH	A) CYNON VALLEY CONSTITUENCY	B) RHONDDA CYNON TAFF LOCAL AUTHORITY	C) WALES
January 2021	2	4	38
February 2021	1	2	53
March 2021	1	4	73
April 2021	0	0	45
May 2021	1	2	31
June 2021	1	1	31
July 2021	2	6	35
August 2021	2	7	35
September 2021	1	5	38
October 2021	0	2	30
November 2021	1	3	36
December 2021	0	0	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>465</b>

#### ■ British Business Bank: Northern Ireland

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[100899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 4 November 2021 to Question 67078 on Future Fund, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the British Business Bank's performance on its objectives of (a) identifying and (b) reducing imbalances in access to finance for small businesses in Northern Ireland.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The British Business Bank has an objective to identify and help to reduce imbalances in access to finance for smaller businesses across the UK. In 2021/22, the Bank supported £166 million of funding to 2,699 businesses in Northern Ireland.

At Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced over £1.6 billion for the British Business Bank's Nations and Regions Investment Funds, including a new £70m Investment Fund for Northern Ireland.



The Bank gathers data and publishes research to identify gaps and imbalances in access to finance, including the Nations and Regions Tracker, available at <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/research/nations-and-regions-tracker-2022/>.

## ■ **Business: Ownership**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[100913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the number of businesses in Denton and Reddish constituency that are BME owned.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government does not hold regional information on the proportion of BME-owned businesses in Denton and Reddish. The Government is aware of the challenges faced by ethnic minority businesses and is taking action to support them and working with stakeholders to agree interventions to improve access to finance. Since its launch (2012) the Start Up Loans programme has issued around 20% of its loans to Black, Asian, and Ethnic-minority business.

We are also delivering actions set out in the Inclusive Britain report (2022), which aim to support ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Ministers regularly engage with ethnic minority business leaders and networks to better understand the issues facing them.

## ■ **Copyright**

**Sarah Olney:**

**[101038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) timeline and (b) eligibility criteria for the Intellectual Property Office's extended consultation on the Text and Data Mining proposals.

**George Freeman:**

The Government has launched a period of stakeholder engagement on implementation options for its proposals for text and data mining and aims to conclude this engagement in early 2023. The Intellectual Property Office will invite views on implementation options from stakeholders representing both rights holders and users of data mining techniques.

## ■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Incentives**

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[97589]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 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.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Park Retail Ltd supply non-cash award vouchers to the Department since September 2018. Non-cash spend prior to September 2018 is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Expenditure on non-cash vouchers awarded to BEIS staff was as shown in the table.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL SPEND (£)
(a) 2017-18	-
(b) 2018-19 (Apr to Sep)	202,240
(c) 2019-20	299,079
(d) 2020-21	326,135
(e) 2021-22	349,940

## ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[99760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of applications for electric vehicle charging points to connect to the electricity network awaiting approval.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

*[Holding answer 5 December 2022]:* The Government does not estimate or hold this information. Electricity network companies are required to provide connection offers within timescales set and monitored by Ofgem.

## ■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Denton and Reddish

**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[100909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises are receiving the correct level of support from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme in the Denton and Reddish constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme is set out in legislation. It will be applied in a uniform way by all licensed suppliers. The regulations include a robust compliance and enforcement regime to ensure requirements are being met. Suppliers are also required to inform customers about the details of support, including the amount of the discount and discounted supply price.

## ■ Energy Bills Rebate: Meters

**Royston Smith:**

[\[97708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2022 to Question 88033 on Energy Bills Rebate: Meters, how many and what proportion of people on pre-payment meters have taken up support through the Energy Bill Support Scheme as of 28 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

Figures were published on GOV.UK on 18 November 2023. As at 1 November, 2,053,580 vouchers were provided to traditional pre-payment customers. Of those, 1,205,337 (59%) had been redeemed.

Energy Bill Support Scheme credit is applied automatically to smart prepayment meters. Customers who use a traditional prepayment meter are encouraged to make sure they have received their voucher from their supplier and should redeem them promptly, so they get the energy bill support to which they are entitled.

## ■ Energy Charter Treaty

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[101000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the feasibility of reforming the Energy Charter Treaty in the period since 23 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK has been a strong advocate for the Energy Charter Treaty modernisation. At the Energy Charter Conference on 22 November, the decision to adopt the modernised Treaty was postponed. 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.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[101070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 95943 on the Energy Charter Treaty, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of France's High Council on Climate's Report on the Modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty, published in October 2022.

**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 Efficiency Taskforce**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[97524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether local government representatives will form part of the Energy Efficiency Taskforce.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[97525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Energy Efficiency Taskforce takes into account local government voices.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Autumn Statement announced a new national ambition to reduce the UK's final energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030, against 2021 levels.

To support the delivery of this target, a new Energy Efficiency Taskforce will be established. More details on the scope and membership of the Taskforce will be announced in due course.

**■ Energy Supply: Crown Dependencies**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[97459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support and develop energy self-sufficiency in the Crown Dependencies.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Crown Dependencies are self-governing jurisdictions that are not part of the UK. These jurisdictions are members of the British-Irish Council through which the Government engages with Crown Dependencies on energy matters, including energy security, two to three times a year. These meetings are designed to share experiences on energy matters and to work together on practical and mutual issues where appropriate, in line with the tenth report of the Justice Select Committee regarding the relationship between the UK and the Crown Dependencies.

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

**Bill Esterson:** [\[100934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on how much funding has been used for retrofitting homes in Sefton Central constituency through the Local Authority Delivery Scheme as of 24 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

Figures for grants issued by the scheme are held by the local authority and Local Net Zero hub. The total amount of funding that has been used for retrofitting homes in

Sefton Central via the local Authority Delivery Scheme, is not available to the Department.

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

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[100936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average time was from submission of an application to the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme to receiving vouchers for homeowners in Sefton Central constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Based on the report by the National Audit Office published on 1 December 2021, 'it took 138 days on average to issue a voucher to those homeowners who applied in September 2020, but the time taken to issue vouchers reduced over time reaching 50 days in March 2021'. Constituency level data is not held by the Government.

■ **Housing: Denton and Reddish**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[100910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on in which wards in Denton and Reddish constituency external wall insulation has been fitted.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[100911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on which wards in Denton and Reddish constituency have the highest number of homes with retrofitting measures installed.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) schemes, external wall insulation measures have been installed in the following wards in Denton and Reddish: Reddish North, Audenshaw and Denton South.

The ward in Denton and Reddish with the highest number of energy efficient measures installed is Dukinfield. The order from highest to lowest is as follows:

1. Dukinfield;
2. Denton South;
3. Reddish South;
4. Audenshaw;
5. Reddish North;
6. Denton North East;
7. Denton West.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[100912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the number of homes that have been retrofitted through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in Denton and Reddish constituency since the introduction of that fund.

**Graham Stuart:**

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period. SHDF Wave 1 awarded around £179m of grant funding, delivering from 2022 into 2023, of which £10.4m was awarded to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to retrofit 1,280 homes, including homes in Denton and Reddish. The SHDF Wave 2.1 competition, which closed on 18th November 2022, will allocate up to £800m of grant funding, with successful projects likely to be notified in March 2023.

■ **Housing: Feltham and Heston**

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[100978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Feltham and Heston 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, ten heat pump installations were registered in the Feltham and Heston 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.

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[100979\]](#)

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

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[100980\]](#)

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

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[100982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes in Feltham and Heston constituency had external wall insulation installed as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) schemes, around 900 loft insulation measures, around 200 under floor insulation measures and 49 external wall insulation measures have been installed in Feltham and Heston constituency.

Data for ECO covers January 2013 to September 2022. Data for the GHG schemes covers October 2020 to September 2022.

**Seema Malhotra:**[\[100981\]](#)

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

**Graham Stuart:**

At the end of October 2022, there were 742 domestic installations of solar panels recorded in Feltham and Heston constituency.

■ **Insolvency: Wales****Beth Winter:**[\[97731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many registered company insolvencies were recorded in (a) Cynon Valley constituency, (b) Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority area and (c) Wales in each month in the last year.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The data used for insolvency statistics is compiled from information at Companies House and the Insolvency Service, and the registered office address for a company may not be representative of its trading location. Subject to this caveat, the table below sets out the data on estimated company insolvencies by month between 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, in the Cynon Valley constituency, Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority and Wales.<sup>[1]</sup>

Source: Insolvency Service and Companies House

MONTH	A) CYNON VALLEY CONSTITUENCY	B) RHONDDA CYNON TAFF LOCAL AUTHORITY	C) WALES
November 2021	2	3	29
December 2021	1	1	36
January 2022	1	1	43
February 2022	0	1	34
March 2022	2	2	36
April 2022	2	2	50

MONTH	A) CYNON VALLEY CONSTITUENCY	B) RHONDDA CYNON TAFF LOCAL AUTHORITY	C) WALES
May 2022	3	3	39
June 2022	1	2	37
July 2022	0	0	37
August 2022	2	2	42
September 2022	0	0	35
October 2022	1	1	26
<b>Total (Nov 2021 – Oct 15 2022)</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>444</b>

<sup>[1]</sup> Location is based on registered company address at date of insolvency, which may not be representative of a company's trading location.

## ■ Life Sciences: Innovation

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[97474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential of (a) artificial intelligence, (b) organ-on-a-chip technology and (c) other New Approach Methodologies to benefit the UK economy: and whether he considers the development of these technologies to be a particular area of strength for the UK.

**George Freeman:**

Harnessing the potential of AI is predicted to grow the economy by £232bn or 10.3% of GDP by 2030. In 2021 the Government published its National AI Strategy – a 10 year plan to ensure the UK remains a leader in AI. We are behind only the US and China and home to a third of Europe's AI companies – more than 1,300 with a turnover of \$2B.

Through UK Research and Innovation, the National Centre for reduction, replacement and refinement of animal testing in medicine has committed £100 million in research to develop new approach methodologies, including organ-on-a-chip.

## ■ Materials: Standards

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[95814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take steps to (a) launch a consultation on and (b) develop proposals for minimum



product standards for the procurement or use of foundation materials, including cement and steel.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government has worked closely with the steel sector through the Steel Procurement Task Force, and the cement sector through the Green Construction Board, to ensure these sectors can support net zero carbon, greater energy efficiency and reduced waste and the creation of social value in communities across the UK. Therefore, we have no plans for further consultation at this time.

■ **Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia**

**Wayne David:**

[\[99751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the recommendation from the BEIS Investment Security Unit on the Newport Wafer Fab divestment decision.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

*[Holding answer 5 December 2022]:* The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy takes decisions under the National Security and Investment Act 2021 in a quasi-judicial capacity, based on the facts and evidence. It would not be appropriate to share details of the national security assessment, including advice provided by officials to the Secretary of State in support of his quasi-judicial role.

■ **Newport Wafer Fab: Staff**

**Wayne David:**

[\[99752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the jobs at the Newport Wafer Fab are protected.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

*[Holding answer 5 December 2022]:* The Government understands the importance Nexperia Newport Ltd (formerly Newport Wafer Fab) to the local economy and the South Wales semiconductor Cluster and that this will be an uncertain time for employees. Decisions regarding the day-to-day running of the Newport site are a matter for the owners, but officials will work closely with Nexperia BV to implement the Secretary of State's decision.

■ **Research: Finance**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[97528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to 93536 on Research: Finance, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of the reduction of the European Regional Development Fund's regional science spend.

**George Freeman:**

Funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is due to finish by the end of 2023. The Government has launched its domestic successor fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which will ramp up to £1.5bn in 2024-25, matching EU structural fund receipts. UKSPF is being planned and delivered locally and includes provision for interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.

The Government is committed to supporting regional growth across the UK and, to this end, has pledged to increase domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East by at least 40% by 2030.

**Retail Trade: Insolvency****Richard Foord:**[\[97683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many high street businesses are currently at risk of financial insolvency in each region of England.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

While there is no established definition of a business at risk of financial insolvency, the most recent Monthly Insolvency Statistics produced by the Insolvency Service show that in September 2022 there were 143 registered companies operating in the retail industry in England and Wales that became insolvent. This represents 8 per cent of all insolvencies in September. The equivalent figures for September 2021 were 94 registered companies representing 6 per cent of insolvencies in that month. The Insolvency Service does not provide insolvency data for each region of England.

*Source: Insolvency Service, Monthly Insolvency Statistics (October 2022).*

**Social Rented Housing: Insulation****Jim Shannon:**[\[97523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report by UK100 entitled End the wait, Insulate: Social housing energy efficiency and the energy crisis, published on 16 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

In the Autumn Statement the Government announced £6 billion of new Government funding that will be made available from 2025 to 2028 for energy efficiency. The design of future waves of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will consider all relevant evidence to ensure effective delivery.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Amazon Web Services: Contracts****Florence Eshalomi:**[\[100025\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the value of the contract with reference number YPO001-DN387210-63601854 was awarded to Amazon Web Services EMEA SARL.

**Alex Burghart:**

The contract in question is not a Cabinet Office contract. The contracting authority is YPO (formerly Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation), which is a publicly owned organisation formed by Local Authorities to aggregate procurement spend. The Cabinet Office has no visibility or control over the YPO.

**■ Cabinet Office: Incentives****Emily Thornberry:**[\[97501\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The value of non-cash vouchers awarded to Cabinet Office staff as performance related bonuses is as follows:

2017-18 - £56,473.65

2018-19 - £110,020.50

2019-20 - £244,985.00

2020-21 - £414,400.00

2021-22 - £581,615.00

These figures are not in the Annual Reports and Accounts or not broken down.

**■ Cabinet Office: Telefónica****Emily Thornberry:**[\[97495\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) key datasets and (b) other deliverables are that will be obtained through the contract agreed by his Department with Telefonica on 14 September 2022 with procurement reference C2289; if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of that contract; and if he will publish the business case for that contract.

**Alex Burghart:**

The datasets, deliverables and business justification for this contract will not be published, nor a separate assessment prepared, on security grounds. This procurement activity relates to the National Situation Centre, which is exempt from publishing Commercially Sensitive documents under National Security Exemptions.

This procurement activity is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Sections 23 (Security Bodies) and 24 (National Security), and also under Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Section 15 (National Security).

The National Situation Centre's business justification, which will not be published in full for the reasons listed above, included the following requirements for this contract:

1. Anonymised and aggregated people count estimates at low levels of geography
2. Data down to equally-sized geographic areas (for example grids or hexagons). These areas should be reasonably low levels of geography, such as having a radius of 500m or smaller.
3. Ideally, in addition to the above, data provided at MSOA (Middle Layer Super Output Area) level of detail or more geographically granular
4. Data anonymised and aggregated (no private/personal data to be collected or communicated from the supplier)
5. Minimum coverage of 30% of the UK population and data weighted/aggregated up to population level
6. No more than 15 minute latency period
7. Underlying data delivered through API and CSV file formats
8. Access to real-time data in front-end map format via a portal
9. Must cover the UK (including Scotland)
10. Total contract value to not exceed £803,500 (Ex VAT)
11. A reasonable baseline figure for people counts. This may be average hourly people counts in a given area for historic and current months.
12. Derived products must be shareable across resilience and operational partners

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[97496]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department is taking steps to obtain insights on the (a) movement, (b) demography, (c) mobility-patterns and (d) behaviour of the proportion of the UK population whose data will not be covered by the contract agreed by his Department with Telefonica on 14 September 2022 with procurement reference C2289.

**Alex Burghart:**

The department is not taking any steps to obtain insights on the movement, demography, mobility-patterns and behaviour of the proportion of the UK population whose data will not be covered by the contract at present. The data obtained through the contract, which covers 30% of the UK population, may be weighted and aggregated up to population level.

## ■ Census: Languages

**Tom Hunt:**

[101069]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made on the potential merits of the inclusion of statistics on Kannada speakers in census releases from the Office for National Statistics.

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question on 1 December is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Kannada speakers [\[UKSA Response to PQ101069 \(2\).pdf\]](#)

## ■ Civil Service: Industrial Relations

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [99894]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has made an assessment of the state of industrial relations in the Civil Service.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Cabinet Office is not the employer for all civil servants, and departments are responsible for engaging with recognised trade unions at departmental and local level. At Cabinet Office level, we engage with the National Trade Union Committee.

The Public and Commercial Services Union are currently in dispute with a number of Civil Service employers and have called for strike action in several departments. We remain open to continued dialogue in order to bring about a resolution.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Homosexuality

**Philip Davies:**

[97546]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of domestic abuse within (a) gay and (b) lesbian couple relationships in each of the last 5 years.

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 28 November is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. domestic abuse [\[UKSA Response to PQ97546 \(2\).pdf\]](#)

**■ Dominic Raab****Florence Eshalomi:****[100024]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 95851, how many civil servants were assigned to work on the investigation into the conduct of the Deputy Prime Minister on 30 November 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the Hon Member to my previous answer to question 95851 of 29 November 2022.

The number of officials assigned to the investigation at any one time will vary. The investigation will be provided with the necessary resources to be carried out in line with the Terms of Reference. The Government does not comment on the specifics or resourcing of an ongoing process.

**■ Fraud: Telephone Services****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[100900]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many calls were made to the COVID Fraud Hotline 0800 587 5030 since October 2020; how many cases were forwarded for consideration for prosecutions; and how many convictions were obtained.

**Jeremy Quin:**

4772 calls were made to the COVID Fraud Hotline between its launch in October 2020 and its closure on 30 September 2022. Of these, 4300 were disseminated to the relevant department or organisation for investigation. The remainder are being processed and will be disseminated before March 2023.

Investigations take time to get to the stage where the Crown Prosecution Service can consider prosecution, and further time to go through the court system to secure convictions. Our Hotline intelligence is forwarded to the relevant department/agency for consideration for investigation, with the decision to investigate sitting with the relevant department/agency. The department/agency then submits cases for consideration for prosecution, with the decision being taken by the CPS in most cases.

The value of intelligence is not only for progressing prosecutions - the sharing of intelligence with the BBL accredited lenders has led to interventions and recoveries by the lenders. In addition, the Hotline intelligence has helped government to better understand the threat across Government and significantly contributed to media campaigns by providing guidance to the general public.

**■ Mortality Rates****Emma Hardy:****[98831]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Office for National Statistics data entitled Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week

ending 18 November 2022 published on 29 November 2022, whether he has made an assessment of the reasons excess deaths have increased since October 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question: PQ98831 is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Excess Deaths [[UKSA Response to PQ98831 \(1\).pdf](#)]

■ **Sikhs**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[98820]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the data by the Office for National Statistics entitled Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021, published on 29 November 2022, what steps his Department has taken to estimate the number of people who identify as Sikh by (a) ethnicity and (b) religion.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[98821]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the data by the Office for National Statistics entitled Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021, published on 29 November 2022, if he will make an assessment of the accuracy of the estimate of the number of people who are of Sikh ethnicity, in the context of there not being an option to choose Sikh ethnicity on the 2021 census form.

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Questions: PQ98820 and PQ98821 are attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Sikh statistics [[UKSA Response to PQ98820 PQ98821 \(1\).pdf](#)]

**DEFENCE**

■ **Agnes Wanjiru**

**John Healey:**

[97444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Royal Military Police have had recent involvement in the investigation into the murder of Agnes Wanjiru.

**Dr Andrew Morrison:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the former Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Leo Docherty) on 5 January 2022 to Question 92810 which remains extant.

**Attachments:**

1. Agnes Wanjiru [[92810 - Agnes Wanjiru.docx](#)]

**■ Ajax Vehicles: LE TacCIS Programme****Chris Evans:** [\[98705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence by Charlie Forte to the Public Accounts Committee on 14 November 2022, HC 727, which component of Morpheus is causing delays to installation in Ajax.

**Chris Evans:** [\[98708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence by Charlie Forte to the Public Accounts Committee on the Digital Defence Strategy on 14 November 2022, HC 72; what steps he is taking to ensure that technology ordered for individual pieces of equipment for Morpheus is not restricted by a lack of digital capabilities when it is integrated with AJAX.

**Chris Evans:** [\[98709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans for Morpheus to be fitted to Ajax vehicles.

**Alex Chalk:**

The component that caused MORPHEUS to be delayed, as briefed to the Public Accounts Committee on 14 November 2022, is the Evolve to Open (EvO) element, which will reduce vendor lock-in to General Dynamics Mission Systems UK.

The delivery of MORPHEUS is not a requirement for the Armoured Cavalry Programme to achieve Full Operating Capability. As planned, AJAX will be integrated with the latest version of Bowman and will be upgraded to MORPHEUS alongside other in-service platforms.

The MOD will continue to meet all of its operational requirements, providing secure Battlefield Communication and Information Systems (CIS) until MORPHEUS is fielded.

**■ Appledore Shipyard****Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[97506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Appledore shipyard is capable of building block modules over 1,000 tonnes.

**Alex Chalk:**

Yes. Appledore has the capability to undertake the work required for the Fleet Solid Support ship.

**■ Armed Forces: Health****John Healey:** [\[99723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2022 to Question 90747 on Armed Forces: Health, if he will provide a breakdown of the reasons for which the 14,763 personnel are classed as Medically Non Deployable as of 1 April 2022.



**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

At 1 April 2022, the top two causes of medical downgrading among Medically Non Deployable personnel were musculoskeletal disorders and injuries (42%) and mental and behavioural disorders (25%).

The following table provides the number and percentages of UK Armed Forces personnel Medically Non Deployable by principal cause group, numbers and percentages as of 1 April 2022.

	NUMBER	%
All Medically Non Deployable	14,763	
All ICD-10 coded medically downgraded	14,053	100
Infectious and parasitic diseases	183	1
Neoplasms	257	2
Blood disorders	50	
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	233	2
Mental and behavioural disorders	3,530	25
Nervous system disorders	263	2
Eye and adnexa diseases	105	
Ear and mastoid process diseases	361	3
Circulatory system disorders	400	3
Respiratory system disorders	114	
Digestive system disorders	407	3
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	202	1
Musculoskeletal disorders and Injuries	5,924	42
Genitourinary system diseases	141	1
Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium	~	

	NUMBER	%
Other disorders originating in the perinatal period	0	-
Congenital malformations	32	
Clinical and laboratory findings	688	5
External causes of morbidity	~	
Factors influencing health status	1,145	8
Electronic medical record description not codable in ICD-10	200	
No cause information held on electronic medical record	510	

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

The figures have been grouped as per the chapters of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

Where stated 'Electronic medical record description not codable in ICD-10', the principal cause of downgrading provided in the electronic medical record could not be matched to ICD-10.

Where stated 'No cause information held on electronic medical record', no medical downgrading information was available from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme.

In line with Joint Service Publication 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed.

## ■ Australia: Nuclear Submarines

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[98689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support he is providing to his Australian counterpart on Australia's acquisition of nuclear submarines as a member of AUKUS.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Secretary of State exchanges regularly with his Australian and US opposites on a wide range of defence issues, including AUKUS. Australia asked for our help in

acquiring a nuclear-powered submarine. We are meeting the request of a close partner, with whom we have a long history of co-operation, including on submarines. We will use the 18-month scoping period to establish exactly what the best way is to meet Australia's capability requirement. We will not pre-judge the outcome of the scoping period. Throughout this process, strengthening the non-proliferation regime will be our highest priority. We are undertaking every step in this process in a way that reflects our longstanding leadership in global non-proliferation and steadfast support for the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). We are pursuing rigorous verification standards, in partnership and consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

■ **Defence: Loans**

**John Healey:**

[\[98669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November to Question 89724 on Defence: Loans, whether interest rate payments by defence companies on loans to fund defence projects are paid to his Department or the Treasury.

**Alex Chalk:**

Interest generated from loans is returned to the Treasury.

■ **Electronic Warfare: Inflation**

**Chris Evans:**

[\[98707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence by David Williams to the Public Accounts Committee on 14 November 2022, HC 727, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of inflation on the delivery of (a) Morpheus, (b) Ajax and (c) other projects.

**Alex Chalk:**

We continue to monitor the impact of inflation on the Department's budget. Inflation remains a pressing concern for Defence and we are managing its impact through new and existing controls, including a greater use of index-linked fixed price contracts and forward purchasing of foreign currency.

Additionally our unreserved contingency funding will also help offset this pressure.

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[97505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many blocks for the Fleet Solid Support Ship will be built in the United Kingdom.

**Alex Chalk:**

The majority of blocks will be built in the UK. Across all three ships 14 will be built in the UK and seven in Spain. All block assembly will take place in the UK.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Incentives****Emily Thornberry:** [\[97591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government. The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) 'Thank You' scheme allows for managers to reward staff with a non-cash gift, typically vouchers, up to a maximum of £100. MOD operates its Thank You voucher scheme at an individual business unit level; the award, purchase and allocation is handled by individual financial units within the scheme rules up to a maximum of 0.1 per cent of the relevant pay bill. For this reason, the requested information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Travel****Emily Thornberry:** [\[97497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2022 to Question 59548 on Ministry of Defence: Travel, what was his Department's net expenditure on travel and accommodation using Electronic Purchasing Cards against the centralised Ministry of Defence travel solution in the individual months of (a) June, (b) July, (c) August and (d) September 2022.

**Alex Chalk:**

Total net expenditure on travel and accommodation, for the months requested, using Electronic Purchasing Cards against the centralised Ministry of Defence travel solution was as follows:

June 2022 - £14,591,140.93

July 2022 - £17,398,688.47

August 2022 - £12,605,818.19

September 2022 - £17,887,193.99

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Broadband: Standards****Drew Hendry:** [\[97678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of the Inverness-model for the rapid increased delivery of access to full-fibre broadband within communities.

**Julia Lopez:**

Building Digital UK (BDUK) is working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland Council, with the support of the Scottish Government, to identify where Project Gigabit might support the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal and improve digital connectivity in the region. A Public Review to confirm suppliers' commercial plans was carried out from 7 October to 14 November 2022 and the results of this review are currently being assessed, alongside engagement with broadband providers, to identify the potential scope of a gigabit broadband procurement in the Inverness area.

BDUK is also working with the Scottish Government on options for Project Gigabit procurement activity across the rest of Scotland.

**■ Building Digital UK: Cornwall****Mrs Sheryll Murray:**[\[97516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with Building Digital UK on Type A procurements for Cornwall; and what the timetable is for announcing a decision on those procurements.

**Julia Lopez:**

As part of Project Gigabit, we are delivering two local supplier procurements (Type A) for Central Cornwall and South West Cornwall. Combined, the two procurements are estimated to cover up to 19,000 premises, with a total value of £18 million. We expect to award contracts in January 2023.

**■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Incentives****Emily Thornberry:**[\[97596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 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.

**Julia Lopez:**

The total spend on non-cash reward vouchers has been obtained from departmental records and is as follows. This includes administration costs, which cannot be separated from the voucher values within time and cost limits.

2017-18 - £4,011

2018/19 - £4,826

2019/20 - £11,521

2020/21 - £9,772

2021-22 - £85,975

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices: Taxation

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[99882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment has she made of the impact of the apprenticeship levy on the number of people starting an apprenticeship starts since 2018.

**Robert Halfon:**

Since 2017/18 there has been over 1.7 million apprenticeship starts. An annual breakdown is provided in the table below:

ACADEMIC YEAR	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Apprenticeship Starts</b>	375,760	393,380	322,530	321,440	349,190

It is encouraging to see last year's strong recovery in apprenticeship starts, supported by incentive payments for employers and training flexibilities, which gave employers confidence to offer new apprenticeships and to deliver them in the way that works best for their business.

The department has created flexible training models, such as flexi-job and accelerated apprenticeships, to make apprenticeships accessible for all sectors. We have also developed 'career starter' standards to attract more young people to apprenticeships. The department is supporting employers to make greater use of their levy funds and have improved the transfer system to make it easier to find employers who wish to take on apprentices with transferred funds.

The department is increasing apprenticeship funding to £2.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year to support more employers and apprentices to benefit from high-quality apprenticeship training.

### ■ Carbon Emissions: Curriculum and Teaching Methods

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[99807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the (a) curriculum and (b) teaching aids available to schools in helping to inform young people about the Government's net-zero target.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy sets out new initiatives which include support for teaching about nature and climate change, the introduction of a Natural History GCSE, a National Education Nature Park, and the Climate Leaders Award. It also supports head teachers to take a whole school approach to climate change and help achieve net zero.

The National Education Nature Park online hub will also provide free access to high quality curriculum resources, so teachers in all schools and subjects can choose those that will support teaching sustainability and climate change.

From 2022, to assess the effect of the Department's action, an annual climate literacy survey will be introduced to benchmark progress in improving the climate knowledge of school leavers, including topics related to net zero.

Topics related to climate change and the environment are included within subjects such as geography, science and citizenship throughout the National Curriculum.

By September 2023, a T Level in Agriculture, Land Management and Production will be available. T Levels in Construction and Engineering skills are already running and are designed to train young people for careers in a range of careers that contribute to net zero.

## ■ Carers: Cost of Living

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[98907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on kinship carers.

**Claire Coutinho:**

Kinship carers play a vital role in caring for children and the department recognises the impact increased cost of living pressures will place on their ability to provide that care.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care sets out recommendations that seek to improve the financial and practical support kinship carers receive. The department is due to respond to those recommendations early in 2023.

Statutory guidance issued to local authorities makes clear that children and young people should receive the support that they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is no limit on the level of support, including financial support, that local authorities can provide. All local authorities should have in place clear eligibility criteria in relation to the provision of support services.

## ■ Carers: Health

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[97739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to help ensure that those people who (a) adopt, (b) foster or (c) provide kinship care for children receive timely support in respect of their own wellbeing.

**Claire Coutinho:**

Local authorities must appoint an adviser to give advice and information to people affected by adoption, including adoptive parents. The adviser must also signpost appropriate services and give guidance on how those services may be accessed. The Adoption Support Fund is available where children and families are in particular need of help.

Fostering services: national minimum standards (NMS), outlines that fostering service providers must ensure foster carers receive the support and supervision they need in order to care properly for children placed with them. This includes supporting peer support, foster care associations and/or self-help groups for foster carers. It should also include providing foster carers with breaks from caring as appropriate, and effective out of hours advice and support.

The NMS also requires that all foster carers have access to adequate social work and other professional support, information and advice, to enable them to provide consistent, high quality care to the child.

The department funds Fosterline to provide independent, confidential and impartial advice on fostering issues aimed at supporting existing and prospective carers. Fosterline can be contacted on 0800 040 7675 or by visiting their website at: <http://www.fosterline.info>.

The government issued statutory guidance in 2011 for local authorities about supporting family and friends providing care for children who cannot live with their parents. The guidance states that children and young people should receive the support that they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare. It explains that support, including financial support, can be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. There is no limit on the level of support, including financial support, that local authorities can provide. The local authority should have in place clear eligibility criteria in relation to the provision of support services.

The department also supports kinship carers through a contract with the charity Kinship, which will see us establish up to 100 peer to peer support groups across England by January 2024.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care made a set of recommendations which aim to improve the support kinship carers receive. The department will respond to the review in early 2023.

## ■ **Childcare: Havering**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[97465]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to tackle shortages of childcare providers in Havering.

**Claire Coutinho:**

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities are responsible for ensuring that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area. At present, Havering London Borough Council's Early Years Team reports that it is fulfilling its duty to ensure sufficient childcare.

The key measure of market health monitored by the department is whether the supply of available places is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents and children. The department continue to monitor the sufficiency of childcare through regular surveys and through regular conversations with local authorities.



## ■ Children's Centres: Closures

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[97718]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of closures to Sure Start Children's Centres on the level of demand for children's social services.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department continues to monitor what is beneficial to the level of demand for children's social services. In May 2022, the department published an analysis of the drivers of activity in children's social care since 2013, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drivers-of-activity-in-childrens-social-care>.

This report outlines explanations for changes in activity, highlights children's journeys within social care, and quantifies the association of social care activity with specific factors including family income and local authority of residence. It also summarises research around other factors including investment into prevention.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care made a series of recommendations that aim to reduce the number of children in care, including creating more options for children to remain safely within their family networks. The department is working up an ambitious and detailed implementation strategy.

Although no specific assessment has been made of the potential impact of closures to Sure Start Children's Centres, early help services continue to play an important role in promoting safety, stability and resilience in families, thus reducing the need for intervention, including care placements. The department recently announced over £1 billion for programmes to improve early help services from birth to adulthood. This includes delivering on Family Hubs and helping families through the Supporting Families programme and the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

## ■ Department for Education: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[97588]**

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

**Nick Gibb:**

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 to non-cash vouchers for staff.

The Department uses Instant Reward vouchers to reward individuals who have a positive impact on delivery of the Department's business, with awards usually ranging between £25 and £100.

The total value of non-cash vouchers provided to employees working for the Department is as follows (rounded to the nearest £1,000):

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND
2017/18	£289,000
2018/19	£353,000
2019/20	£329,000
2020/21	£753,000
2021/22	£469,000

The rise in spend during 2020/21 was due to a new HR system being launched in the Department, with an increase made to the Instant Reward budget. This was to enable rewards to continue during a wider payroll freeze and a corresponding reduction in other reward budgets.

#### ■ Free School Meals

**Richard Burgon:** [98890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the annual cost of free school meals.

**Nick Gibb:**

The core allocations that schools attract through the National Funding Formula (NFF) include funding in respect of free school meals (FSM). The FSM factor is worth £470 per eligible pupil in 2022/23. This will increase to £480 in 2023/24. The factor values for each year are published on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-for-schools-and-high-needs>.

The Department spends over £1 billion each year on FSM. This includes around £600 million on Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), where the per meal rate has been increased from £2.34 to £2.41, and backdated to 1 April 2022, in recognition of increased costs.

The Department continues to keep FSM eligibility under review to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

#### ■ Further Education: Expenditure

**Rachel Hopkins:** [101099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the spend on 16-19 education in the current financial year.

**Robert Halfon:**

Funding is allocated to institutions for education and training for 16 to 19-year-olds and young people aged up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities

(SEND) by academic year. For the 2022/23 academic year the department has made available £6.5 billion.

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 made available an extra £1.6 billion for 16 to 19 education in 2024/25 compared with financial year 2021/22. This is the biggest increase in 16 to 19 funding in a decade. This will help to fund the additional students anticipated in the system, 40 extra hours per student, and provide an affordable increase in funding rates per student. This includes an up-front cash boost which will see the national rate of funding increase by over 8% in academic year 2022/23, from £4,188 to £4,542 per student.

## ■ Further Education: Finance

**Tom Hunt:**

**[98909]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of further education college funding for (a) 16-19 provision, (b) adult education and (c) apprenticeships.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department is investing a further £3.8 billion in further education and skills over this parliamentary session to ensure people across the country have access to the skills they need to build a fulfilling career in jobs the economy needs. Providers of post-16 education, including further education colleges, can benefit from the investment announced in the 2021 Spending Review, which made available an extra £1.6 billion for 16-19 education in the 2024/25 financial year, compared with 2021/22 - the biggest increase in 16-19 funding in a decade. This will help to fund the additional students anticipated in the system, 40 extra hours per student, and provide an affordable increase in funding rates per 16-19 student, including an up-front cash boost which will see the national rate of funding increase by over 8% in 2022/23, from £4,188 to £4,542 per student.

The department are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) at £1.34 billion in the 2022/23 academic year. The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to help them gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.

As part of the department's £2.5 billion investment aimed at re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities for adults, we have introduced the Free Courses for Jobs offer and Skills Bootcamps. The Free Courses for Jobs offer enables learners without a level 3 qualification (or learners with any qualification level but earning below the National Living Wage) to gain a qualification for free. Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with an employer.

The department is committed to supporting more employers in using apprenticeships to develop the skilled workforces they need, and to supporting more people to benefit from the high-quality training that apprenticeships offer. To support more employers

and learners to access apprenticeships we are increasing funding for apprenticeships in England to £2.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year.

The department is also investing £2.8 billion of capital funding for skills over the Spending Review period, including to improve the condition of further education estates, create more post-16 places and support the rollout of T Levels.

**Karin Smyth:**

**[99890]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of increased funding to schools announced in the Autumn Statement 2022 will be distributed to Further Education.

**Robert Halfon:**

The additional revenue funding announced at the Autumn Statement is for the core schools budget, which covers primary and secondary phases of education, and high needs.

However, those engaged in further education, as part of the 2021 Autumn Budget, may benefit from the £1.6 billion investment in the National Skills Fund over the years 2022-25, including £550 million investment to significantly expand Skills Bootcamps.

Further decisions on future funding rates for 16-19 education and other budgets for further education colleges, will be taken in light of overall needs, and pressures across the department's funded sectors, and will be announced in due course.

## ■ Higher Education

**Matt Western:**

**[97673]**

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

**Robert Halfon:**

On 24 February 2022, the department published the Higher Education Reform Consultation. This set out reforms to the student loan system to put it on a fair and sustainable footing and a package of investment into the higher education (HE) Sector.

This included an investment of almost £900 million into the HE system over the next 3 years, in addition to ensuring that new student loan borrowers from the 2023/24 academic year onwards will benefit from a reduction in interest rates to retail price index (RPI) only. Under the new Plan 5 terms, no-one who takes out a loan will repay more than they borrowed when adjusted for inflation. The department also proposed reforms to improve outcomes for students and help them move into high-value employment.

The department is considering the views received in light of the current financial and economic situation and plans to publish a response in due course.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Special Educational Needs**

**Catherine West:**

[\[99934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of children with a CAMHS referral listed on their education, health and care plan who have been waiting more than 6 months for mental health support through CAMHS.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department does not hold information on the number of children with a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) referral listed on their education, health and care (EHC) plan, who have been waiting more than six months for mental health support through CAMHS.

The department collects data on the number of EHC plans maintained by local authorities and on the request and assessment process, but this does not include information on whether a CAMHS referral has been listed on the EHC plan.

## ■ **Office for Students**

**Matt Western:**

[\[97675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had discussions she has had with the Office for Students on the potential merits of uprating the registration fee charged to providers in line with the rate of inflation for the 2023-24 academic year.

**Robert Halfon:**

Ministers, department officials and the Office for Students (OfS) regularly consider the funding and resourcing the OfS needs to deliver its current and future priorities, and how to set registration fees. When considering this, the department takes into account various factors, including the rate of inflation.

## ■ **Office for Students: Finance**

**Matt Western:**

[\[97676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to conduct a review into the sustainability of the funding given to support the monitoring and intervention functions of the Office for Students ahead of responsibilities conferred upon the regulator under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2022.

**Robert Halfon:**

Ministers, department officials and the Office for Students (OfS) regularly consider the funding and resourcing the OfS needs to deliver current and future priorities. When considering this, we take into account various factors, including the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2022.

If the OfS determines that it needs additional funding to fulfil its obligations under the Bill, it will utilise existing communications channels.

The department continues to work closely with the OfS to ensure that their responsibilities are fulfilled, and that the world-class standards of our higher education institutions are maintained.

### ■ Overseas Students: Immigration Controls

**Rachael Maskell:**

[98861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of Border Force actions on (a) students and (b) universities on incorrect detention of students with the right visas and having fully paid their fees.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department is continuing to work with colleagues across government, including the Home Office, to ensure up to date immigration advice is available to students to help with their student visa journey. We fully anticipate the UK continuing to be an attractive destination for students from around the globe.

### ■ Primary Education: Mental Health Services

**Layla Moran:**

[97789]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of primary schools employ a (a) play and (b) creative arts therapist in England as of 28 November 2022; and how many and what proportion of Ofsted reports published in 2022 made a positive mention of play and creative arts therapy.

**Nick Gibb:**

The 2022 Schools White Paper set out the Government's plan for all schools to provide safe, calm and supportive school environments, with targeted academic, pastoral and specialist support, helping children and young people to fulfil their potential. It is for schools to decide what support or therapies they provide, taking into account the needs of their pupils.

The Department collects information on the roles of staff employed by schools through the annual School Workforce Census each November: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>. Data from the November 2022 census is currently being collected and will be published in the summer of 2023.

Ofsted's inspections focus on the quality of education provided for pupils and the outcomes they achieve rather than any specific pedagogical or therapeutic approach.

**Mohammad Yasin:**

[98788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many primary schools in (a) Bedford constituency and (b) England employ a play or creative arts therapist.

**Nick Gibb:**

The 2022 Schools White Paper sets out the Government's plan for all schools to provide safe, calm and supportive school environments, with targeted academic,

pastoral and specialist support, helping children and young people to fulfil their potential.

It is for schools to decide what support or therapies they provide, considering the needs of their pupils. The information requested is not held by the Department.

The roles of staff employed by schools is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. The data can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

Data from the November 2022 census is currently being collected and will be published in the summer of 2023.

### ■ Schools: Antisemitism

**Michael Fabricant:**

**[97437]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the article in the Jewish Chronicle article entitled Children chant massacre-Jews song at North London school, published 24 November, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her Department's policies of the events reported in that article.

**Nick Gibb:**

All registered independent schools must, as a condition of registration, meet the Independent School Standards (ISS). The ISS include, among other things, an obligation to provide teaching that does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and provide personal, social, health and economic education which encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The Government takes allegations seriously and, where appropriate, will investigate further. The school in question was inspected in October 2022. The Department awaits the publication of the final report of that inspection, confirming whether those standards were met. The Department will consider this report carefully before deciding what regulatory steps are appropriate, in line with the published policy.

### ■ Schools: Attendance

**Mr Robin Walker:**

**[98733]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been out of school for a year or more due to not being able to find a setting to meet their needs in (a) England and (b) Worcestershire.

**Nick Gibb:**

Local Authorities hold the duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to identify children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. Between 6 October and 4 November this year, the Department requested Local Authorities aggregate data on Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education to improve its



understanding of these cohorts. This data is currently being analysed and will be published in due course.

It is also the responsibility of Local Authorities to ensure there are sufficient school places for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Children and Families Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEND under review, including its sufficiency, working with parents, young people, and schools.

In March 2022, the Department announced High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) amounting to over £1.4 billion of new investment. This funding is to support Local Authorities to deliver new places for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision. Worcestershire received a total of just over £10.7 million through the HNPCA. Prior to that, the Local Authority received just over £1.5 million through its 2021/22 HNPCA funding, announced in April 2021.

#### ■ **Schools: Defibrillators**

**Henry Smith:**

[\[98714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her planned timetable is for opening the tendering process for the supply of defibrillators for schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has completed a compliant tendering process for the supply of defibrillators for schools through Crown Commercial Services Framework RM6157.

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

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[97774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has held with headteachers from schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities regarding the adequacy of the funding settlements in place for those schools.

**Claire Coutinho:**

Ministers and departmental officials meet with head teachers from special schools and their representatives, on a regular basis. As a result of these discussions, the department is aware of the cost increases that special schools are facing.

In July 2022, the department announced high needs funding will be increased by £1.65 billion over two years, between the 2021/22 and 2023/24 financial years. This is an increase of 21% and will bring total high needs funding to £9.7 billion by 2023/24. The increase will help schools to support children with the most complex needs

In addition to the £9.7 billion funding next year, and following the £2 billion funding increases for schools and high needs announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement, the department will be allocating a further funding increase for high needs funding, in 2023/24 and 2024/25. We will shortly set out plans for the allocation of this funding.



## ■ Schools: Finance

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[101087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December to Question 97665 on Schools: Finance, when her Department will set out plans for the allocation of the additional funding announced in the Autumn Statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department confirmed further details on 6 December 2022 regarding how the £2 billion additional funding for schools, announced in the Autumn Statement, will be allocated in 2023/24 financial year.

£400 million will be allocated to Local Authorities' high needs budgets, with the rest allocated to schools through a new grant and to boost the pupil premium.

Mainstream schools will receive this additional funding through a new grant from April 2023, on top of the core funding allocations they receive via the National Funding Formula. The methodology for calculating allocations for schools via this new grant will largely mirror that of the 2022/23 Schools Supplementary Grant. The Department will publish further details and funding rates for the new grant before the end of December 2022.

For a typical primary school with 200 pupils, this new revenue equates to approximately £28,000 additional funding, and approximately £170,000 for a typical secondary school with 900 pupils.

Special and alternative provision schools will receive an increase comparable to that for mainstream schools, from the £400 million that will be allocated to Local Authorities' high needs budgets. The Department will confirm details on how this will work shortly.

## ■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

**Richard Foord:**

[\[97681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the next allocation of School Rebuilding Programme funding will take place.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department intends to confirm the next schools prioritised for the School Rebuilding Programme shortly. Details will be published on GOV.UK.

## ■ Skilled Workers: Carbon Emissions

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[98912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on (a) upskilling workers to improve local net zero delivery and (b) the role that local authorities in that upskilling.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department holds regular discussions with other government departments, through the Green Jobs Delivery Group, which is co-chaired by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. This group is a vehicle for industry and government collaboration on net zero jobs and skills.

The government is assessing local skills shortages that will have an impact on achieving the goals set out in the Net Zero Strategy:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf).

The department is rolling out Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). LSIPs may only be approved by the Secretary of State if the skills required for local green jobs have been considered. We are underpinning these local labour market insights with investment. The Strategic Development Fund provides funding to enable further education to support local training facilities and provision, better meeting employers' needs. 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 quality improvement.

Likewise, we plan to invest £290 million of capital funding to establish 21 Institutes of Technology across the country. IoTs are prestigious, high-quality employer-led institutions delivering provision tailored local employers' needs. They specialise in technical skills, particularly in STEM and a range of green sectors.

In addition, the government established the Green Jobs Delivery Group in May 2022, for industry and government collaboration understanding workforce challenges. The Delivery Group is attended by ministers from the department, BEIS, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as well as representatives from industries and local government bodies.

Skills Bootcamps grant-funded for areas to deliver training based on local employers' needs. 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.

The government has devolved approximately 60% of the Adult Education Budget to nine Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Mayor of London. This enables local areas to directly support adults in developing the skills that local employers need.

**Alexander Stafford:****[98913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential role of local skills improvement plans in net zero delivery.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department recognises the importance of skills required for the delivery of net zero. In approving a Local Skills Improvement Plan, the Skills and Post-16 Education Act ensures that the department is satisfied that there has been consideration of the skills required in relation to jobs that support compliance with the UK net zero emissions target.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Greater London

**Kate Osamor:**

**[97655]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the number of SEND places in mainstream schools in (a) Edmonton, (b) Enfield and (c) London.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places, including places for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), sits with local authorities.

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

As part of this commitment, in March 2022 the department announced High Needs Provision Capital Allocations amounting to over £1.4 billion of new investment, focused on academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The borough of Enfield received a total of just over £6.1 million through the allocations announced in March 2022, and over £1.3 million through previous allocations announced in April 2021 (to deliver new places for the 2022/23 academic year). As funding is allocated at a local authority level, the department cannot provide data on funding for the Edmonton constituency.

Local authorities within both inner and outer London collectively received a total of just under £305.6 million through the allocations announced in March 2022. Prior to that, the regions received a combined total of just under £75.9 million through the funding announced in April 2021.

Local authorities can use this funding to work with any school or institution in their area, including mainstream and special schools. It is ultimately up to local authorities to determine how to best prioritise their funding to address their local priorities.

From Summer 2023, the department will be collecting data from local authorities on the physical capacity of special schools and special educational needs units/resourced provision in mainstream schools, as well as corresponding forecasts of demand for specialist places. We expect this to be an annual data collection, forming part of the existing School Capacity Survey.

## ■ Teachers: Workplace Pensions

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[101023]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 9 February 2022 to Question 117005 on Teachers: Workplace Pensions, what new regulations were implemented following engagement with the independent education sector.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Teachers' Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 were implemented following engagement with the independent private sector.

These Regulations amended the participation rules for independent schools to allow phased withdrawal from the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

■ **T-levels****Karin Smyth:****[99879]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the efficacy of the T-Levels transition programme.

**Robert Halfon:**

The T Level Transition Programme is being phased in alongside T Levels. It is too early to make an overall assessment of the programme based on available evidence from the first year. The programme is new and the first year was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. T Levels are also new, and providers will still be learning what works in supporting progression onto T Levels. The department has published two research reports relating to the first year of teaching. These can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-on-early-delivery-of-the-t-level-transition-programme>, and: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-education-learner-survey>.

The programme has been updated from September 2022 and the department will continue monitoring the programme as it is rolled out.

■ **T-levels: Business****Karin Smyth:****[99881]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy on ensuring that businesses understand the T-level qualification.

**Robert Halfon:**

Departmental officials have engaged directly with officials from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) business engagement forum to raise awareness of T Levels.

The department's employer engagement strategy is designed to raise awareness of T Levels and support employers to deliver high quality industry placements. The department has engaged with a broad range of employers and employer associations, including the wider public sector and other government departments to raise awareness. We also have a comprehensive package of support available offering online guidance, webinars, and direct hands-on support to help employers understand what T Levels are and prepare them for industry placements.

The department has established a T Level Ambassador Network of employers who engage with others in their industries on T Levels and placements, and our

communications campaigns are continuing to raise the profile of the programme to all employer audiences.

The department will continue to work with other government departments to ensure that we continue to raise the profile of T Levels.

### ■ **Training: Carbon Emissions**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[99844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made with Cabinet colleagues of the potential contribution of local skills improvement plans to delivering net zero by 2030.

**Robert Halfon:**

The government recognises the importance of skills development for the delivery of net zero.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act requires that any skills improvement plans consider the skills required for jobs that support compliance with the UK net zero emissions target. In approving the Local Skills Improvement Plan, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State is satisfied that this is the case.

The Department continues to work with other departments to ensure that the requirements of businesses and industries supporting the transition to net zero are fed into the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ **Avian Influenza: Norfolk**

**James Wild:**

[\[97763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department has paid in compensation to claimants in Norfolk with premises affected by avian influenza in each month of 2022.

**Mark Spencer:**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> December, there have been 59 cases of avian influenza confirmed in poultry and other captive birds in Norfolk in 2022. We have to date processed payments of £15.8 million in compensation to claimants at 40 of these infected premises, with payments to a remaining 19 premises in the process of being agreed with keepers.

We do not comment on individual claims and the amount of compensation that individual keepers receive is not disclosed. It is not possible to disclose a monthly breakdown of compensation payments as this would enable individual payments to be identified.

## ■ Environment Protection

**Dan Carden:** [\[82435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her planned timetable is for setting the statutory targets for (a) air and water quality, (b) biodiversity and (c) waste and resource efficiency under the Environment Act 2022.

**Trudy Harrison:**

As the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs set out in a written statement published on 28 October, we continue to work in order to lay the draft statutory instruments. It is our intention to publish the targets before the end of the year.

## ■ Hedges and Ditches

**Zarah Sultana:** [\[97663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Committee on Climate Change's report entitled Net Zero - The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, published May 2019, and research by CPRE on increasing the hedgerow network by 40 per cent by 2050; whether the Government plans to set a target on hedgerow planting.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Hedgerows make a valuable contribution to climate change, our countryside, nature and much more and we are already investing heavily in this crucial habitat. Through Countryside Stewardship up to 2022, there were over 11,000 live agreements that included hedgerow management covering 58,000 kilometres of hedgerow. There are also over 4,000 km of new hedges planted through the scheme. Defra will encourage and support increased hedgerows through our environmental land management schemes, including providing funding through the Sustainable Farming Incentive which we intend to roll out next year.

## ■ Hen Harriers

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[97463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 January 2021 to Question 133641 on Hen Harriers, how many hen harrier nests there were on (a) RSPB and (b) non-RSPB reserves in each of the last five years, and what information her Department holds on (a) how many failed to have any chicks fledge and (b) what the reasons were for such failures.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Over the last five years there have been eight hen harrier nests on RSPB reserves (all Geltsdale). Based on information held by Natural England there were:

- None in 2018 or 2019.
- In 2020 two nesting attempts failed, likely due to the disappearance of the breeding male.

- 2021 three nesting attempts, one successful and two failed, likely due to disappearance of breeding males.
- 2022 three nesting attempts, one successful and two failed, likely due to disappearance of breeding males.

On non-RSPB reserves,

- Nine successful nests in 2018 and five failed nesting attempts. Three were thought to be predated, and two were deserted.
- Twelve successful nests in 2019, and three failed nesting attempts. These nests likely failed due to poor weather conditions.
- Nineteen successful nests in 2020, and three failed nesting attempts. Two of these nests were abandoned and one likely failed due to predation.
- Twenty-three successful nests in 2021, and five failed nesting attempts. Three likely failed due to predation, one failed when the adults disappeared, one was unknown.
- Thirty-three successful nests in 2022, and thirteen failed nesting attempts. The thirteen attempts failed due to a variety of reasons, including predation and the adults disappearing. The dead chicks in two failed nests tested positive for Avian Influenza, and one nest is being investigated for illegal human activity.

## ■ National Parks: Barbecues

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[97779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to introduce restrictions on the use of disposable barbecues in national parks.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We are commissioning research to examine the impact that disposable barbecues have on the environment and potential avenues for mitigating significant risks. We expect this research to be completed in the new year, when we will be in a position to consider further action.

Current legislation allows for local authorities to restrict and enforce against the use of disposable barbecues in parks and other public spaces. There are also existing powers in legislation which can be used by authorities to regulate and prohibit the lighting of fires on Access Land in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks.

The Government is working with AONBs, National Park Authorities, and other Government Departments to promote a series of videos containing guidance about travelling to the wider countryside and safely spending time outdoors. This includes an updated Countryside Code, which advises not to light fires and to only have BBQs where signs say you can.



## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **British International Investment: Fossil Fuels****Caroline Lucas:**[\[99794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to media reports that British International Investment holds at least 20 investments in fossil fuel companies, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of these holdings with the UK's commitment to end investments in fossil fuels overseas.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

All investment commitments made by British International Investment (BII) since December 2020 meet the conditions set out in BII's Climate Change Strategy (<https://www.bii.co.uk/en/climate-change-strategy/>) and the UK Government's fossil fuel policy. The policy excludes investment in the vast majority of fossil fuel sub-sectors with very limited exceptions, such as where an investment would be part of enabling a transition to a net-zero economy.

Commitments made by BII prior to the implementation of the above policies are subject to the legal terms agreed at the time of the commitment.

Through its Climate Change Strategy, BII is committed to achieving net-zero by 2050. Since 2017, BII has committed £1.7 billion in climate finance. Information on all of BII's investments including their energy portfolio is published on its website (available <https://www.bii.co.uk/en/news-insight/insight/articles/the-transition-to-net-zero-explaining-our-current-energy-portfolio/>).

■ **British Overseas Territories: Town Twinning****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[97453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has in place to promote county and town twinning arrangements between settlements in the British Overseas Territories and the UK.

**David Rutley:**

Individual Overseas Territories have twinned with places in the United Kingdom, such as the city of Stanley which is twinned with Whitby and Portsmouth. The FCDO has been working to build working partnerships between the public services in each Overseas Territory and their counterparts in the United Kingdom, notably in the field of policing and social services. In the case of Montserrat, successful partnerships have been built up between the local social services and police with their counterparts in Suffolk. The FCDO are working to expand these partnerships across the Overseas Territories and to increase the range of sectors they include.



## ■ Colombia: Forests

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[89747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of agreements signed at COP27 to help tackle deforestation in the Colombian part of the Amazon.

**David Rutley:**

At COP27 the UK and Colombia renewed our bilateral 'Partnership for Sustainable Growth' to further deepen cooperation on fighting climate change, including through efforts to protect nature and halt deforestation in the Amazon. Colombia has ambitious national decarbonisation plans and has committed to achieve zero net deforestation by 2030. Our Partnership for Sustainable Growth will support the delivery of these targets, including through the UK's flagship £64 million 'Sustainable Forest Territories' Programme ('TEFOS'), which supports the protection of forests in high-deforestation, conflict affected areas.

## ■ Equatorial Guinea: Elections

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[97568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) credibility, (b) freedom and (c) fairness of the election held in Equatorial Guinea on 20 November 2022.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

We are aware that international election observers, civil society groups and opposition leaders have questioned the credibility of the recent elections in Equatorial Guinea (EG) and have cited widespread instances of fraud and intimidation. One of the defeated candidates who ran for the presidency has declared the results of the elections 'fraudulent' and plans to launch a legal challenge. We will continue to monitor developments in EG via the British High Commission in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and work closely with our international partners who are resident in EG to advocate for the promotion of transparent and representative elections in EG.

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Consultants

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[88794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department has spent on the services of external consultants in each of the last ten years.

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[95770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his Department's total expenditure has been on external consultants in each year since 2012.

**David Rutley:**

Total external consultancy 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.

**TOTAL CONSULTANCY SPEND**

YEAR	£ m
FY 2013	8.09
FY 2014	1.58
FY 2015	1.67
FY 2016	1.12
FY 2017	0.82
FY 2018	1.33
FY 2019	2.58
FY 2020	2.96
FY 2021	2.74
FY 2022	5.76

**Mr David Lammy:****[95771]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much has been spent on external advertising consultants in each year since 2012.

**David Rutley:**

FCDO's total consultancy since 2017 is set out below. Information for prior years could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Consultancy spend is published in our annual accounts, which are publically available

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-to-2022>).

FCDO 2021/22	FCDO 2020/21	FCO + DFID 2019/20	FCO + DFID 2018/19	FCO + DFID 2017/18
£5.7 million	£2.7 million	£3 million	£2.6 million	£1.3 million

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Messaging

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[95897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department's policy on (a) Ministers and (b) civil servants using (i) SMS, (ii) WhatsApp, (iii) Signal and (iv) other messaging platforms for (A) sending information and (B) holding discussions relating to departmental business been reviewed or amended in each of the last five years.

**David Rutley:**

The FCO "WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Line, Signal or WeChat Policy" (2017) was reviewed and updated in December 2018 and remained in place throughout 2019. The policy was next updated in August 2020 ahead of the merger with DFID (on 2 September 2020) when it was re-named "FCDO WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Line, Signal or WeChat Policy". The FCDO policy was updated in January 2021 and again in February 2022 when it was re-named the "FCDO Instant Messaging Policy" and included instructions to staff to enable two-factor verification on all instant messaging applications used for business purposes.

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[97500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what was the value of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working for his core Department as performance-related bonuses was in financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20, (d) 2020-21 and (e) 2021-22.

**David Rutley:**

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government. The total bonus spend for the financial years are in the table below. We do not capture data for non-cash vouchers only, therefore the figures could include cash and non-cash values. These figures are for both UK based and Country based staff.

### TOTAL BONUS SPEND

YEAR	£
FY2018	7,161,858
FY2019	8,502,365
FY2020	9,044,711
FY2021	9,299,589
FY2022	9,913,561

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ministerial Boxes**

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[95773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department has spent on ministerial red boxes in each of the last ten years.

**David Rutley:**

This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ministers' Private Offices**

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[95768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department has spent on (a) furnishing and (b) redecorating Ministerial offices in each year since 2012.

**David Rutley:**

The FCDO captures information on spend on furnishing and re-decorating for its buildings. The FCDO does not capture information on where within a building the spend has been used.

**■ Israel: Peace Negotiations**

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[97557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will hold discussions with international counterparts on appointing a peace envoy to promote a two-state solution in Israel.

**David Rutley:**

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution, resulting in a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community. We will continue to press the parties strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions that make peace more difficult.

**■ Jerusalem: Bombings**

**Mrs Sheryll Murray:** [\[97562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the two bomb attacks in Jerusalem on 23 November 2022.

**David Rutley:**

We are appalled by the recent terrorist attacks. There can be no justification for such acts of violence. Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security.

## ■ Nigeria: Religious Freedom

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[97452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Nigerian High Commission on (a) religious tension and violence in Nigeria and (b) whether it should be categorised as religious persecution or criminality.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK Government condemns all violence against civilians in Nigeria. The root causes of conflict are complex. Religious identity can be a factor, and competition over land and resources, historical grievances, violent extremism, and criminality are also important drivers of conflict.

FCDO officials regularly meet the Nigerian High Commission. Former Minister for Africa, James Duddridge, raised religious identity and violence with the Nigerian High Commissioner in July 2021.

We welcomed the pledge from the High Commissioner at the Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief to uphold Nigeria's constitutional right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

## ■ Nigeria: Terrorism

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[97451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance his Department is providing to help with the suppression of (a) domestic terrorism by in Nigeria perpetrated by (i) Boko Haram and (ii) the Islamic State of West Africa Province and (b) other domestic terrorism in that country.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Nigeria is facing multiple, worsening, security challenges that affect people of all ethnic and religious identities across the country. The UK Government is committed to supporting Nigeria to tackle the threat posed by terrorist groups through our Security and Defence Partnership.

In Northern Nigeria, terrorist groups such as Islamic State West Africa and Boko Haram attack those of all faiths who do not subscribe to their extremist views. In North east Nigeria we fund a range of activities including operational and strategic capability in a range of technical areas, community stabilisation committees, and security infrastructure.

## ■ Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[97457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he expects the UK-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council next to meet.

**David Rutley:**

The UK Government greatly value the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) as the main forum to discuss issues of mutual interest and to agree actions to tackle shared challenges. The Minister for Overseas Territories, Lord Goldsmith, is consulting Territory Leaders on their preferred date for the next JMC.

■ **Palestinians: Intelligence Services****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[97558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment has the Department made of reports that the Palestinian Authority's Preventative Security Organisation has used practices of arbitrary arrest and torture.

**David Rutley:**

Human Rights is a crucial element underpinning the UK's foreign policy. We continue to urge the Palestinian Authority (PA) to respect human rights, to ensure complaints of mistreatment or arbitrary detention are properly investigated and to continue to improve the performance of the security sector. An essential aspect of our efforts to prepare the ground for a two state-solution is to support a stable PA that can deliver services to its people and act as an effective partner for peace with Israel. The UK will continue to monitor these areas closely and raise with the highest levels of the PA.

■ **Tigray: Humanitarian Aid****Hilary Benn:**[\[97467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Tigray.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The humanitarian situation in Tigray remains very serious. According to the UN, approximately 5.4 million people require life-saving aid and hundreds of thousands are on the brink of famine. The recent peace agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) contained commitments to provide unfettered humanitarian access and the restoration of essential services. We welcome the early signs of progress, but humanitarian delivery needs to scale-up rapidly if it is to meet the desperate needs.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mrs Sheryll Murray:**[\[902622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of nursing in care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

I created the post of Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care. Deborah Sturdy is providing outstanding leadership for social care nursing in this role. She has been raising the profile of social care nursing and increasing the recognition of excellence in social care. As we take forwards our social care reforms, social care nurses and care workers are front and centre of our workforce ambitions.

**Karl Turner:**[\[902623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for NHS treatment.

**Mick Whitley:**[\[902630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for NHS treatment.

**Steve Barclay:**

In the Autumn Statement we committed an additional £3.3 billion per year until 2024-25 to respond to significant pressures facing the NHS. This is on top of the £8 billion already committed until 2025 to reduce waiting times. This funding will increase capacity to get patients diagnosed and treated quickly, by creating new Community Diagnostic Centres and Surgical Hubs and prioritising the patients waiting longest.

**Patricia Gibson:**[\[902624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on public health in the next five years.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, this winter we are spending £55 billion to help households and businesses with their energy bills, amongst the largest support plans in Europe. A typical household will save around £900 this winter through the price guarantee in addition to the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme.

We are also spending £9.3 billion over the next five years on energy efficiency and clean heat, making homes easier and cheaper to heat. We will spend £26 billion in total on cost of living support next year, including the £900 cost of living payment for eight million poorer households.

We have also put in place the largest ever increase to the National Living Wage - for 2 million workers – taking it up to £10.42, which is worth over £1,600 a year to a full-time worker aged 23 and over.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[902626\]](#)

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

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is supporting the recovery of routine diabetes care to pre-pandemic levels through the provision of a £5 million recovery fund established in 2021. This is

in addition to £75 million of targeted funding being made available for Integrated Care Systems for the next two years.

The NHS is prioritising people at highest risk of diabetes-related complications and, in line with the Long-Term plan, is focusing on addressing health inequalities and variations in outcomes.

**Mr Gagan Mohindra:**

**[902628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce ambulance handover times.

**Steve Barclay:**

Reducing handover delays and improving ambulance response times for patients is one of my top priorities. We are increasing hospital capacity by 7,000 beds and providing £500 million to increase patient discharges. NHS England is providing targeted support to hospitals facing the greatest delays to help get ambulances back on the road quickly.

**David Simmonds:**

**[902629]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone on access to healthcare in London.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The decision to extend the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is a matter for the Mayor of London. The NHS in London has been engaged in consultations on these plans, and impacts on access to NHS services are being considered. NHS patients may be able to claim the ULEZ charge through their treating NHS provider if they cannot travel by public transport and meet clinical criteria. The existing Zone is making an important contribution to the health of Londoners.

■ **Adult Social Care Discharge Fund: Solihull**

**Julian Knight:**

**[97600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was awarded to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as part of the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund.

**Helen Whately:**

Solihull Council has been allocated £725,297 from the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund. Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board has also been allocated £5,063,000. The funding will be combined locally through the Better Care Fund to facilitate joint planning and decision-making across health and care systems.

■ **Cancer: Newcastle upon Tyne**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[98888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for urgent cancer referrals in Newcastle upon Tyne.



**Helen Whately:**

We have allocated more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund already made available in 2021/2022 to increase elective activity, including cancer services.

**■ Cancer: Waiting Lists****Dame Caroline Dineneage:**[\[99808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce waiting times for cancer treatment.

**Dame Caroline Dineneage:**[\[99809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to increase cancer treatment capacity in the NHS.

**Helen Whately:**

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out how the National Health Service will recover and expand elective services over the next three years, including cancer services. The plan states the ambition that the number of people waiting more than 62 days to start treatment following suspected cancer will return to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023. We have allocated more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund already made available in 2021/2022 to increase elective activity, including cancer services.

**■ Care Homes: Abuse****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[97586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to stop the abuse of vulnerable people by care home staff.

**Helen Whately:**

All regulated providers, including care homes, are responsible for assuring the skills and competence of staff to prevent any abuse of those with care and support needs. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) holds regulated providers to account to ensure that care homes provide safe care. Where the CQC identifies evidence of abuse, it will take appropriate action, including raising concerns with the relevant local authority, integrated care board or the police.

The local authority also has a statutory duty to make enquiries regarding safeguarding concerns in all settings, including care homes. The local authority must decide what action is necessary to protect individuals and ensure that any such action is taken. The Health and Care Act 2022 includes provision for the CQC to assess the performance of local authorities' delivery of adult social care statutory duties and improving safety is a consideration in the development of the framework. This is expected to be implemented from April 2023.

**■ Care Workers**

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[98764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of reclassifying care workers as skilled workers on care worker (a) recruitment, (b) retention and (c) retraining.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made.

**■ Carers**

**Karin Smyth:** [\[99886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on reviewing the efficacy of carer's assessments.

**Helen Whately:**

There have been no specific discussions.

**■ Children: Coronavirus**

**Geraint Davies:** [\[98646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by the First 1001 Movement and the Institute of Health Visiting entitled Casting Long Shadows, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of that report's finding that a higher number of babies and young children born or growing up during the covid-19 outbreak had delayed social skills and were at risk of harm or affected by parental mental health.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* In order to address the impact of poor parental health on early child development, we are investing £301.75 million in the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme in England. This includes £100 million for perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships and commissioning guidance for the Healthy Child Programme led by health visitors. Guidance recommends that local service commissioners use multi-agency risk assessment and the consideration of vulnerabilities to inform recovery planning from COVID-19.

**■ Clinical Trials: Costs**

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[98763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to legislate to make clinical trial costs public information.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* There are no plans to do so.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Sam Tarry:**

[95964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the names of (a) Ministers (b) Members of Parliament and (c) Officials who referred firms onto expedited route for supplying personal protective equipment.

**Will Quince:**

Details of the High Priority Lane were published on 17 November 2021. This list was updated on the 11 February 2022 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ppe-procurement-in-the-early-pandemic>

## ■ Dental Services

**Antony Higginbotham:**

[97659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the number of dentists taking on NHS patients in (a) Burnley constituency and (b) England.

**Neil O'Brien:**

NHS England asked dental practices to return to full delivery of contracted activity from July 2022, including in Burnley. 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 Burnley.

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.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Coronavirus

**Philip Davies:**

[95816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 21 November to Question 83584, how many people in his Department are working on matters relating to covid-19.

**Will Quince:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 November 2022 to Question [83584](#).

**■ Essential Tremor: Liverpool****Mick Whitley:** [\[98931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the levels of patient awareness of the MR-Guided Focussed Ultrasound for Essential Tremor centre in Liverpool; and what steps he is taking to inform patients that this treatment is available.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made.

**■ Gambling: Rehabilitation****Ronnie Cowan:** [\[98845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have accessed NHS gambling treatment care since the start of the FIFA World Cup.

**Neil O'Brien:**

This information is not currently held in the format requested. Data on referrals to the National Health Service gambling service is collected on a quarterly basis.

Information on Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022/23 will be published later in 2023.

**■ General Practitioners: Living Wage****Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[97635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of GP surgeries to comply with increases in the Living Wage to £10.42 from 1 April 2023.

**Neil O'Brien:**

As self-employed contractors to the National Health Service, general practitioner (GP) practices are responsible for determining pay increase for employees within the agreed terms of the current GP contract.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[97636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he will provide GP Surgeries in addition to core contract funding to enable them to comply with increases in the Living Wage to £10.42 from 1 April 2023.

**Neil O'Brien:**

As self-employed contractors to the National Health Service, general practitioner (GP) practices are responsible for determining pay increase for employees within the agreed terms of the current GP contract.

**■ General Practitioners: Pay****Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[97633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made with Cabinet colleagues of the ability of GP surgeries to increase staff pay in accordance

with directions from pay review bodies earlier this year to increase the salaries of (a) GPs and (b) NHS staff.

**Neil O'Brien:**

As self-employed contractors to the National Health Service, general practitioner (GP) practices are responsible for determining pay increase for employees within the agreed terms of the current GP contract.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[97634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he will provide GP Surgeries in addition to core contract funding to enable them to comply with directions from pay review bodies earlier this year to increase the salaries of GPs and NHS staff.

**Neil O'Brien:**

As self-employed contractors to the National Health Service, general practitioner (GP) practices are responsible for determining pay increase for employees within the agreed terms of the current GP contract.

## ■ GP Surgeries: Energy

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[97632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of the rising cost of energy on GP surgeries; and if he will take steps to provide support to GP Surgeries to meet the cost of rising energy bills in addition to their core contract funding.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme caps the unit price of energy for public sector businesses, such as general practitioner surgeries, until the end of the current financial year. This will be automatically applied to all eligible bills.

## ■ Health Services: Standards

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[99834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to an article published in the Financial Times entitled, Britons now have the worst access to healthcare in Europe, and it shows , published in November 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of that articles reporting's on (a) comparative access to health care in the UK and Europe (b) rising rates of chronic illness in the UK's working-age population.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made.

**■ Health: Public Consultation**

**Yvonne Fovargue:** [97622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timetable is for the publication of responses to the consultation entitled Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s, published on 22 July 2019.

**Yvonne Fovargue:** [97624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timetable is for the publication of next steps following the consultation entitled Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s, published on 22 July 2019.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We have no current plans to publish a summary of the responses to the consultation 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s' and there are no plans to publish next steps.

**■ Healthy Start Scheme**

**Chi Onwurah:** [98767]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2022 to Question 62832 on Healthy Start Scheme: Newcastle Upon Tyne, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of collecting data on Healthy Start Vouchers use and claims at a city or constituency level; and what regional data his Department collects or holds on Healthy Start Voucher uptake.

**Neil O'Brien:**

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.

Historical data on the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers and prepaid cards by local authority is available at the following link:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthcare-professionals/>

**■ Hyperactivity: Alcoholic Drinks**

**Dan Carden:** [98842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment for the implications of his policies of the relationship between ADHD and alcohol addiction.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No recent assessment has been made.

**■ Memory Clinics**

**Liz Twist:** [98799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many memory assessment services there are in (a) Tyne and Wear and (b) England as of 29 November 2022.

**Liz Twist:**

[\[98800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are waiting for an appointment with a memory assessment service in (a) Tyne and Wear and (b) England as of 29 November 2022.

**Helen Whately:**

There are currently two memory assessment services provided by Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, with 682 patients currently waiting to attend a first appointment, of which 527 are yet to be offered an appointment date. The data requested for England is not held centrally.

## ■ **Mental Capacity Act 2005**

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[98645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will publish his response to the consultation on the proposed changes to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice and implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards 2022 which closed on 14 July 2022.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* We are currently analysing more than 700 responses received during this consultation.

## ■ **Mental Illness: Employment Schemes**

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[100969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have left the Individual Placement and Support programme as a result of finding employment in the last 12 months.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 6 December 2022]:* From September 2021 to August 2022, it is estimated that at least 4,760 people with serious mental illness were in employment on discharge from a local individual placement and support service.

## ■ **Mortality Rates**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[98892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of levels of Government spending on mortality trends between 2012 and 2019.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* There are no current plans to make a specific assessment.

**■ NHS: Staff****Steve McCabe:** [\[97448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to conduct a consultation with third sector organisations on the NHS workforce plan; and if he will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* NHS England is currently developing the long term workforce plan and is engaging with a range of stakeholders. The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan next year, which will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals in future years and take account of improvements in retention and productivity.

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[98751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the long-term workforce plan announced in the Autumn Statement 2022.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan next year, which will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals required in future years.

**■ Palliative Care****Sir George Howarth:** [\[97473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Marie Curie's Better End of Life Report of November 2022's findings, what assessment his Department has made on the availability of (a) pharmacies able to dispense palliative and end of life care medicines throughout the out-of-hours period for people with a terminal illness and (b) district and community nurses able to prescribe palliative medicines during the out-of-hours period.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made. Local commissioners are responsible for ensuring access to palliative and end of life care medicines. NHS England has included a new criteria in this year's Pharmacy Quality Scheme which incentivises pharmacies to maintain stock levels of 16 critical palliative and end of life care medicines.

**■ Public Service: Finance****Richard Burgon:** [\[98887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of cuts to public services on trends in the level of excess deaths.



**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made.

■ **Restaurants: Allergies**

**Mrs Sheryll Murray:**

[\[97515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that standards on (a) food labelling and allergens and (b) staff training on allergens in restaurants are (i) maintained and (ii) enhanced.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Information provided to the consumer must not mislead and must enable the safe use of food. The United Kingdom maintains high standards on the information provided on food labelling to ensure consumer confidence. The Government food strategy sets out further action on consumer information and transparency.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) aims to reduce harm to people with food hypersensitivity and ensure that related food safety standards are maintained. This includes improving the provision of information for people with allergies and working with food businesses to increase allergen training in the sector. The FSA's programme on food hypersensitivity is focused on policy, research and evidence to support enforcement and engaging with consumers and businesses.

■ **Social Services: Asylum**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[99906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Home Secretary on the potential merits of enabling asylum seekers with English language proficiency to work in social care while they await a decision on their status in the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

There have been no specific discussions.

■ **Social Services: Fees and Charges**

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[99887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people with care costs higher than the proposed new adult social care cap of £86,000, as of 30 November 2022.

**Helen Whately:**

The impact assessment for the consultation on charging reform, published in January 2022, states that one in seven people aged over 65 years old will have care costs above £100,000 over their lifetime and approximately one in 10 will have costs above £120,000.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Albanian Independence Day**

**Selaine Saxby:** [\[98928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the police took to (a) ensure safety and (b) enforce the law during celebrations in London of Albanian Independence Day on 28 November 2022.

**Selaine Saxby:** [\[98929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the police will take steps to ensure the adequate policing of Albanian Independence Day celebrations in 2023.

**Chris Philp:**

The Metropolitan Police Service is operationally independent of government. They confirm that they responded quickly to deploy spontaneous resources in response to a large no-notice event in London, celebrating Albanian Independence Day. Police worked closely with partners to minimise disruption.

MPS confirmed that the force will ensure there is an adequate, appropriate policing plan in place for the next event in 2023.

The management of public processions and public assemblies is as an operational matter for the police. Ministers are unable to intervene in individual cases or in operational decisions made by the police. To do so would undermine the principle that the police are operationally independent of Government.

**■ Animal Welfare: Fish**

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[97582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to in the Animals in Science Regulation Unit's annual report for 2021, what steps she is taking to help ensure that fish are not subjected to additional harms beyond those licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

**Chris Philp:**

Animals used in science, including fish, are given protection under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA). Work is only authorised after a rigorous assessment process through a three-tiered licensing system and the principles of replacement, reduction and refinement must be followed at all times.

The ASPA requires that each project licence holder ensures adherence to the severity limits as specified in their licence and observance of any other controls. If these constraints appear to have been, or are likely to be, breached, the holder shall ensure that the Regulator is notified as soon as possible.

Licensed establishments that use animals in scientific procedures are subject to both announced and unannounced inspections to assure compliance with the conditions of their licences under ASPA.

## ■ Asylum

**Rachael Maskell:**

[97644]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has taken steps to construct a programme of community activities for asylum seekers whilst they are awaiting the outcome of an asylum application and unable to work.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

We encourage asylum seekers to undertake volunteering activities, so long as it does not amount to unpaid work. Volunteering provides a valuable contribution to their local community and may help them to integrate into society if they ultimately qualify for protection.

## ■ Asylum: Albania

**Gary Sambrook:**

[97780]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum applications made by people from Albania were accepted in the latest period for which data is available.

**Gary Sambrook:**

[97781]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum applications made by people from (a) Albania and (b) other European countries were accepted in the latest period for which data is available.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on initial decisions made on asylum applications, by nationality, can be found in table Asy\_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate to the year ending September 2022. Data for the year ending December 2022 will be published on 23 February 2023.

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

## ■ Asylum: Applications

**Antony Higginbotham:**

[97658]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve processing times for asylum applications.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office is developing comprehensive plans to improve processing times.

The Asylum Transformation programme aims to bring the system back into balance and modernise it. It is focused on increasing productivity by streamlining, simplifying and digitising processes to speed up decision making to increase efficiency and output.

We have increased the number of asylum caseworkers by 80% from 597 staff in 2019/20 to more than 1,000 today. We are on course for a further 500 people by March 2023, which would take our total to approximately 1,500. We are planning fresh recruitment of decision makers to ensure that vacancies can be filled quickly, and to build a sustainably resourced decision-making system. In addition, we have implemented a recruitment and retention allowance which has reduced Decision Maker attrition rates by 30%, helping us maintain experienced asylum Decision Makers.

### ■ Asylum: Hotels

**Grahame Morris:**

[97538]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2022 to Question 82237 on Asylum: Hotels, how many asylum accommodation places were (a) Serco, (b) Mears Group, and (c) Clearsprings Ready Homes providing on (i) 1 September 2022, (ii) 1 October 2022, and (iii) 1 November 2022 under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contracts.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts ([AASC](#)), three accommodation providers have been contracted to procure and provide accommodation for asylum seekers.

The contracts have been awarded on a regional basis as follows:

- Serco - Midlands and East of England, North West
- Mears Group - North East, Yorkshire and Humberside, Northern Ireland and Scotland
- Clearsprings Ready Homes – South of England and Wales

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each region and local authority area. These statistics can be found at Asylum and resettlement datasets - [GOV. UK](#) ( [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) ). Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published on 24 November, correct to end September.

**Selaine Saxby:**

[97786]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether asylum seekers have absconded from the Dilkhusa Hotel in Ilfracombe since the hotel was adopted by the Home Office.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office has no power to hold asylum seekers in hotels or any temporary accommodation if they wish to leave.

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of statistics which disaggregates the number of adult asylum seekers leaving hotels. These figures are not available.

**Selaine Saxby:**[\[97787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to process the asylum claims for vulnerable refugees in the Dilkhusa Hotel in Ilfracombe.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office is developing comprehensive plans to improve processing times.

The Asylum Transformation programme aims to bring the system back into balance and modernise it. It is focused on increasing productivity by streamlining, simplifying and digitising processes to speed up decision making to increase efficiency and output.

We have increased the number of asylum caseworkers by 80% from 597 staff in 2019/20 to more than 1,000 today. We are on course for a further 500 people by March 2023, which would take our total to approximately 1,500. We are planning fresh recruitment of decision makers to ensure that vacancies can be filled quickly, and to build a sustainably resourced decision-making system. In addition, we have implemented a recruitment and retention allowance which has reduced Decision Maker attrition rates by 30%, helping us maintain experienced asylum Decision Makers.

For safeguarding reasons, we do not publicly comment on individual hotels which may or may not be utilised.

**■ Asylum: Housing****Grahame Morris:**[\[97534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has published transparency data on expenditure associated with asylum (a) accommodation and (b) support services contracts.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[97535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department's spending on Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts is published as part of its Transparency Data.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Home Office publishes invoice expenditure for spend > £25,000 and expenditure made on Government Procurement Cards (GPC) > £500 under Transparency arrangements.

Invoice expenditure by Asylum and Support is recorded under the Transparency arrangements.

Contract information, including value at award, is published on Contract Finder. Spend by contract(s) is not reported, although contract related expenditure may be published in the reports where arrangements allow.

**Grahame Morris:**

[97536]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost was for the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contracts in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The United Kingdom has a statutory obligation to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation and other support whilst their application for asylum is being considered.

The costs of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts (AASC) 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>

#### ■ Asylum: Human Trafficking

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[100996]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government has received (a) advice and (b) analysis from the (i) Third Country Unit and (ii) other Home Office experts, on (A) the potential impact of the Rwanda policy on tackling people smuggling and (b) the likelihood of asylum seekers who have been removed to Rwanda seeking to re-enter the UK illegally.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Secretary of State has received advice on all aspects of the policy from operational and other experts and is committed to evaluating its impact, including evidence of reduced people smuggling and attempted re-entry.

The Home Office is committed to ending people smuggling. The Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda is part of a suite of measures aimed at dismantling the business model of organised crime gangs.

#### ■ Asylum: Monmouth

**Mr David Davis:**

[97417]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Monmouth constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:**

[97418]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Chippenham constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Hertsmere constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Salisbury constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Surrey Heath constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Forest of Dean constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire constituency have been identified for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Daventry constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any sites in South West Surrey constituency have been identified as temporary housing for asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Dumfries and Galloway constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Newark constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Chichester constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Plymouth, Moor View constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Sutton Coldfield constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Portsmouth North constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Banbury constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Horsham constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Esher and Walton constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Welwyn Hatfield constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[97436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has identified any sites in Central Devon constituency for the temporary housing of asylum seekers.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Successive years of record numbers crossing the channel has placed our immigration system under substantial pressure. To meet our statutory obligation, we ask our accommodation providers to source accommodation in all areas.

When a site becomes available and meets the requirements of our accommodation standards, we follow our engagement process and notify the local MP as well as local authority officials in advance of using the location.



## ■ Asylum: Northern Ireland

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[97540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2022 to Question 86410 on Asylum: Northern Ireland, how many of the 22 hotels in Northern Ireland ended their contracts in the last six months.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Due to the continuing unprecedented high volume of small boats arrivals and the historical pressure from COVID-19 measures on the asylum system it has been necessary to continue to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers to meet our immediate statutory need. During the past six months one hotel has been stood down in Northern Ireland.

We are working tirelessly to increase dispersal accommodation across the United Kingdom as fast as possible, and in turn significantly reduce our reliance on contingency accommodation such as hotels.

## ■ Asylum: Rwanda

**David Simmonds:**

[\[97762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers deported from the UK can be accommodated in Rwanda.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The number of individuals who can be relocated to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership is uncapped. Rwanda has made initial provision to receive 200 people and has plans to scale up capacity once flights begin.

## ■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[96628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Answer of 24 November 2022 to Question 88967, how many and what category of incident has each Asylum Accommodation provider reported to the Home Office in each month from January 2010 to November 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not record this data in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[98823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of 28 November 2022 by the Minister for Immigration on Manston Update, Official Report, column 687, which states homes are being used to provide accommodation for asylum seekers in the UK.

**Robert Jenrick:**

For safeguarding reasons, we do not publicly comment on individual hotels which may or may not be utilised.

■ **Detention Centres**

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[101090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to take steps to open a new (a) short-term holding facility and (b) holding room for processing people who arrive in the UK on small boats.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office keeps the future of the Manston site under review to ensure that we can detain people safely and legally.

■ **Detention Centres: Manston**

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[101088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people held at the Manston short-term holding facility were moved to (a) private accommodation, (b) another short-term holding facility and (c) an immigration detention centre in the last 12 months.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office do not hold this data in a reportable format.

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[101089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to publish statistics on the number of people who were detained at the Manston short term holding facility in same format as it used for data on other short-term holding facilities.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Official statistics published by the Home Office are kept under review in line with the code of practice for statistics.

**Chloe Smith:**

[\[96592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what level of security screening checks did the asylum seekers who were moved from Manston undertake prior to their re-location to hotels throughout the UK.

**Chloe Smith:**

[\[96593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether individuals who have transferred from the Manston processing centre to hotel accommodation in Norwich have all been through the initial stage of their asylum application process.

**Robert Jenrick:**

All asylum seekers, including those who are moved from Manston and relocated to hotels throughout the UK, undergo identity and security checks.

We capture biometric data which is checked and compared against relevant Home Office systems and police criminality databases, including domestic and international data, so we can establish whether the person is a threat to public safety.

Everyone passing through Manston will have full border security checks completed before being moved. Where possible, asylum registration will also be carried out; however, asylum registration can happen after a person leaves Manston.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[97537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2022 to Question 75828 on Detention Centres: Manston, how many people were transferred from Manston immigration facility to a hotel between 1 September 2022 and 1 November 2022.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[97539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2022 to Question 77330 on Detention Centres: Manston, how many hotels proposed for potential use as contingency asylum accommodation were given approval to progress between 1 August 2022 and 5 September 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Due to the nature of Manston as a Processing Centre the numbers of individuals moving in and out rapidly changes. We are committed to working closely with communities and stakeholders to ensure destitute asylum seekers are housed in safe, secure and suitable accommodation, and that they are treated with dignity while their asylum claim is considered. All appropriate options are being explored to ensure that suitable accommodation is secured as quickly as is necessary.

Between 1 September 2022 and 1 November 2022, internal management information shows that 11,104 people were transferred from the Manston processing centre to private accommodation, immigration removal centres and asylum accommodation. Records are not held in a format that permits a breakdown of transfers by final destination or accommodation type and such information could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual records

Between 1 August 2022 and 5 September 2022, 42 hotels were approved to progress for potential use as contingency asylum accommodation.

## ■ Fixed Penalties: Coronavirus

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[99803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many fixed penalty notices for breaches of covid-19 regulations during the periods of restrictions have been issued in each month since February 2022.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[99805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether penalty charge notices for the breach of covid-19 regulations are still being levied.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[99806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is the policy of her Department that fixed penalty notices should continue to be issued under coronavirus regulations in relation to incidents that occurred in the period when those regulations were in force.

**Chris Philp:**

The issuing of FPNs, during the pandemic and now, is a matter for police forces who are operationally independent. Data on FPNs issued is not collected by the Home Office, but rather the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).

The most recent tranche of figures relating to coronavirus breaches were published on 16 March 2022 and can be found on the NPCC website at [Update on Coronavirus FPNs issued by forces in England and Wales, and the payment of FPNs \(npcc.police.uk\)](https://npcc.police.uk)

## ■ Hate Crime: LGBT+ People

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[101026]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to tackle the recent increase of reported violent hate crimes towards LGBTQ+ people in (a) Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, (b) Greater London; and whether she will increase funding for the police.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The Government takes all forms of hate crime seriously. We expect the police to fully investigate these hateful attacks and make sure the cowards who commit them feel the full force of the law.

We also welcome the apparent greater willingness to report hate crimes to the police and that the police are better at identifying them. That helps to explain the increase seen in hate crime this year.

Our priority is to get more police onto our streets, cut crime, protect the public and bring more criminals to justice. We are supporting police by providing them with the resources they need, including recruiting 20,000 extra police officers.

The Metropolitan Police Service's funding will be up to £3.24 billion in 2022/23, an increase of up to £169.3 million when compared to 2021/22.

As at 30 September 2022, the Metropolitan Police Service have recruited 3,109 additional uplift officers against a total three-year allocation of 4,557 officers. The deployment of all officers is an operational decision for Chief Constables.

## ■ Home Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[97490]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2022 to Question 31787 on Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, what net

expenditure was incurred through the use of Travel and Expenses cards against her Department's budget in calendar years (a) 2019, (b) 2020, and (c) 2021.

**Chris Philp:**

Net expenditure through the use of Travel and Expenses against the Home Office's budget in calendar years 2019 to 2021 is detailed in the below table.

YEAR	AMOUNT (£)
2019	844,746
2020	761,535
2021	799,042

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[97491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2022 to Question 31787 on Home Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, what transparency publication is used to publish details of expenditure against her Department's budget through the use of Travel and Expenses cards.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not publish the Travel and Expenditure (T&E) card expense data.

However, the Home Office does publish Senior Civil Servant 2 grade and above business expenses, in the transparency data on Gov.uk ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/home-office-board-expenses> ) which may include T&E expenses expenditure.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[97492]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2022 to Question 31787 on Home Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, how many of the (a) Government Procurement and (b) Travel and Expenses Cards were held by staff employed within her Department's Policy and Enablers sections.

**Chris Philp:**

Following an organisational restructure, Policy and Enablers is no longer a recognised sub-set of Home Office business.

Whilst we can sort by Corporate Enablers this does not stretch to a generic policy identification. The answer would only be available by manual sort at disproportionate cost.

**■ Immigration Controls**

**Gary Sambrook:** [\[97782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of adopting a process similar to the Swedish Migration Agency's (a) list of safe countries and (b) rules on expulsion in the UK.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We already have provision for a list of designated states through section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

**■ Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service**

**Cat Smith:** [\[98850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the financial stability of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service; and if she will make a statement.

**Cat Smith:** [\[98852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to increase funding for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to meet rising costs.

**Chris Philp:**

In 2022/23, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority has a core spending power of £61.8 million, an increase of £4.7 million (8.2 per cent) compared to 2021/22. As at 31 March 2021, the Authority held £35.2 million in resource reserves; an increase of £21.0 million since 31 March 2020.

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

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

**■ Members: Correspondence**

**David Linden:** [\[101042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the correspondence of 27 September, 31 October and 14 November from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11291.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office replied on 2 December 2022.

## ■ Passports: British Nationals Abroad

**David Warburton:**

[\[97694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how British nationals returning to the UK can establish the reason why their e-passport was not accepted by an e-passport gate at a UK border.

**Robert Jenrick:**

There are a number of technical and security reasons why a person's passport may fail to be accepted by the ePassport gates. It is not possible to identify the reason on a case by case basis.

## ■ Police Management of Registered Sex Offenders Independent Review

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[101733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the independent review into the police management of registered sex offenders.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The UK has some of the toughest powers in the world to deal with sex offenders and those who pose a risk of sexual harm, and we are committed to ensuring that the system is as robust as it can be. We are strengthening the regime through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 with measures that will come into force on 29 November.

In March former chief constable Mick Creedon was appointed to conduct an independent review into the police management of registered sex offenders.

The reviewer has delivered their findings and recommendations to HM Government, and Ministers will consider how best to share the findings of the review with due regard to issues like operational sensitivities.

## ■ Refugees: Age

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[98813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee will publish a report on proposed scientific measures to determine the age of asylum seekers.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[98822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential costs of using (a) x-rays, (b) MRI scans and (c) other medical technologies as part of her Department's proposed scientific methods to determine the age of asylum seekers.

**Robert Jenrick:**

In December 2021, the Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office set up an independent Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee to provide her with independent scientific and associated ethical advice, recommendations for best

practice, and advice relating to issues raised by key stakeholders on the implementation of scientific methods of age assessment.

We have always been clear that any decision to implement scientific methods of age assessment would be subject to independent scientific advice. No official decisions have been made about what and how scientific methods would be implemented.

The potential costs of implementing any scientific methods will also be considered alongside scientific advice regarding potential methods recommended by the committee before making a decision on what methods to implement.

### ■ Visas: Married People

**Mary Kelly Foy:** [98904]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has taken recent steps to help tackle the backlog of spousal visa applications.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office had been prioritising Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As such earlier this year the service standard for family entry clearance applications was changed from 60-days to 120-days as a direct result.

The bulk of resource has now returned to the route, along with a recent additional investment of new staff.

**Mary Kelly Foy:** [98905]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of spousal visa applicants who paid for a priority service received a decision within the priority timescale in the latest period for which data is available.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The transparency data includes a range of processing data and the latest data can be found at: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data).

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Department for International Trade: Coronavirus

**Philip Davies:** [83580]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many employees in her Department work on matters related to covid-19.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Following a search of our central records and engagement with teams across the Department for International Trade, there are no employees with a job title including COVID-19.



The Government published its Living with Covid plan in February 2022 to help and support citizens as we transition out of the pandemic. Additional guidance has also been published on the Department for International Trade intranet to support staff.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Community Orders: Coronavirus

**Andrew Bridgen:**

[\[99849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Courts and Probation Service on ensuring that community sentences handed out since the covid-19 pandemic will be fully enforced.

**Mike Freer:**

As with other public services, probation had to find alternative ways of working during the pandemic.

Where offenders fail to engage with requirements, we take robust steps to enforce sentences and return them to court for breach.

For unpaid work, one of the key community sentence requirements, we are investing an additional £90m over this and the next 2 years to increase staffing levels and delivering significantly more hours of work – a target of 8 million a year compared to 5 million before the pandemic.

We have also invested £195m to procure over 120 contracts across England and Wales with charities and private sector organisations to deliver specialist services in partnership with probation, to support rehabilitation. These services include:

- accommodation support,
- education,
- training and employment,
- finance, debt and benefits, and
- support to address drug dependency.

### ■ County Courts: Judgements

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[100959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including claimant data for county court judgments on the public Registry of Judgments, Orders and Fines.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[100960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of including claimant data for County Court Judgments on the public Register of Judgments, Orders and Fines.

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[100961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of calls received by the Courts Service on claimant data information.

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[100962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department is taking steps to reduce the number of enquiries seeking information on claimant data to the Courts Service.

**Mike Freer:**

The Ministry of Justice is considering the proposal that has been made by Registry Trust Ltd to include information about the claimant on entries about judgments on the Register of Judgments, Orders and Fines. We are discussing the benefits and risks of this proposal with Registry Trust Ltd to inform an assessment of whether to make reforms in this area.

We recognise that this proposal could reduce the number of enquiries about claimant data that are received by HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). We do not, however, hold data to allow us to estimate the number of enquiries that are received by HMCTS asking for information about claimant data.

## ■ Courts

**Steve Reed:** [\[99863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Government's past announcement of removing the limit to court sitting days, how many days courts are currently being instructed to sit.

**Mike Freer:**

In April this year, we removed the limit on sitting days in the Crown Court for 2022/23.

While the listing of cases into allocated sitting days is a matter for the independent judiciary, Resident Judges and listing officers are clear that they are free to list to sit as many days as capacity, particularly judicial capacity, will allow.

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Dan Carden:** [\[99970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with the courts on properly ensuring that prepayment meter installations under court warrants are being done on a case-by-case basis.

**Mike Freer:**

The Gas Act 1986 and the Electricity Act 1989 give utility suppliers a right of entry to premises to fit a prepayment meter in the event of payment default. Where that right cannot be exercised, for example where access is denied or the premises are vacant, the provider can apply to a justice of the peace for a warrant to enforce the right.

Prior to such an application, a notice is sent to the occupier of the premises to the effect that such an application will be made, and that if the occupier wishes to make representations concerning the application, it can be listed at a convenient local court.

Applications are dealt with by the justice of the peace in the manner prescribed by law and procedure. My Department has no right or role to intervene in that process, or to interfere in the administration of justice.

## ■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT

**Steve Reed:** [97605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the total forecasted cost of the Common Platform to the public purse.

**Mike Freer:**

I refer the honourable Member to the answer given on 5 September 2022 to Question 42141: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/42141>.

**Steve Reed:** [97606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the cost of the Common Platform to the public purse to date.

**Mike Freer:**

I refer the honourable member to the answer given on 5 September 22 to question 42140: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/42140>.

**Steve Reed:** [97607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made an estimate of the number of potential job losses as a result of the Common Platform.

**Mike Freer:**

Common Platform has been designed to provide the ability to view and share information across all stakeholder groups and provides a single location for the sharing of case information and notifying parties when new case material is available for them to view. It incorporates functionality to assist HMCTS staff in meeting the expectation that most decisions can be recorded at the time of hearing. This live 'in-court' recording of the outcomes of the court proceedings and the sharing of those outcomes with stakeholders such as the police are intended to protect the public and enable those authorities to respond immediately where for example a breach of an order occurs, or further offences are committed.

As part of the business case for the reform programme HMCTS conducted data gathering exercises in 2019 and 2020, where staff allocated their time by activity. The impact of the changes introduced by the Crime Programme (including the Common Platform) on the amount of time required to perform activities was then estimated by staff with experience of performing the relevant roles and understood

the likely impact of the changes. These estimates were used to estimate time savings and efficiencies. Now that the Common Platform is in use, we are working with staff to validate the estimates made and ensure the actual impact on roles is understood.

The impact of the Reform programme on permanent Civil Servants across all jurisdictions will be mitigated by managing and reducing the flexible resources in our workforce, and not recruiting to vacancies where possible. Few redundancies are anticipated, and we will redeploy permanent Civil Servants where possible and support our temporary employees to find roles with us as their contracts end. It has always been our intention to invest and support our workforce as part of the overall reform programme – this means continuing to develop our people and ensuring they have the skills they need to provide the best service possible. We will ensure that everyone has personal and professional support through organisational change.

### ■ Ministry of Justice: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[97592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

**Mike Freer:**

The Ministry of Justice actively encourages employees to engage with the reward and recognition process and recognises the positive impact this can have on employee engagement and wellbeing across the department.

The hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury can find the information that has been requested in the table below:

YEAR	TOTAL FOR THE YEAR
2017-2018	£1,280,060.00
2018-2019	£2,131,025.00
2019-2020	£2,657,105.00
2020-2021	£2,621,422.00
2021-2022	£4,876,693.00

These figures represent the total value of non-cash reward and recognition awarded to Ministry of Justice employees, including its agencies, over the given period.

Agencies include:

- Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)
- Her Majesty's Court and Tribunals Service (HMCTS)
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)

- Legal Aid Agency (LAA)
- Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)
- CAFCASS
- Criminal Cases Review Commission
- Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC)
- Legal Services Board
- Parole Board (PB)
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB)
- Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace
- Civil Justice Council
- Civil Procedure Rule Committee
- Criminal Procedure Rule Committee
- Family Justice Council
- Family Procedure Rule Committee
- Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody
- Insolvency Rules Committee
- Law Commission
- Prison Service Pay Review Body
- Sentencing Council for England and Wales
- Tribunal Procedure Committee
- Academy for Social Justice
- HM Inspectorate of Prisons
- HM Inspectorate of Probation
- Independent Monitoring Boards
- Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman
- Judicial Office
- The Legal Ombudsman
- Official Solicitor and Public Trustee
- Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
- Victims' Commissioner

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government. The increase in 2021-2022 can be attributed to a combination of wider selection of non-cash gifts being added to the catalogue of reward and recognition gifts, and with

internal promotion of performance-based awards this has resulted in an increase in reward and recognition nominations.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Sick Leave

**Steve Reed:**

[\[99862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff in his Department's Headquarters took time off work due to (a) poor mental health, (b) stress and (c) anxiety in the period between (i) March 2019 and March 2020, (ii) March 2020 and March 2021 and (iii) March 2021 and March 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

**Number of Ministry of Justice HQ payroll staff<sup>1</sup> who recorded sick leave for 'Mental Health' sick reasons<sup>2</sup> - for 12 months to March 2020, 2021 and 2022**

	2020		2021		2022	
	MARCH 2019 – MARCH 2020	PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE	MARCH 2020 – MARCH 2021	PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE	MARCH 2021 – MARCH 2022	PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE
<b>Anxiety and Depression</b>	93	2%	84	1.5%	126	2.7%
<b>Stress</b>	81	1.7%	60	1.1%	101	1.6%
<b>Mental Health - Other</b>	21	0.5%	31	0.5%	40	0.6%

### **Notes and caveats:**

1. Each member of staff is only recorded once per sick reason - even if they took more than one period of absence for the selected reason. A person may appear in more than one sick reason category.
2. Absences are categorised according to International Classification of Diseases, which is an approach used across the civil service.
3. MoJ transitioned to a new reporting system at the end of 2016 and the first part of 2017. Sickness categories were not exactly mapped across which is why the 2017 distributions appear different to 2018 and 2019.
4. Data covers employees in Ministry of Justice Head Quarters, which includes the following ALBs (Arms Length Bodies):
  - DIV - HMI Prisons
  - DIV - HMI Probation
  - DIV - IMB Secretariat
  - DIV - Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman

- DIV - Judicial Offices
- DIV - Official Solicitor and Public Trustee
- DIV - Prisons & Probation Ombudsman
- DIV - Sentencing Council
- DIV - The Law Commission
- DIV - UK National Preventive Mechanism
- DIV - Victims Commissioner

1. MoJ HQ payroll staff headcount for 31st March 2020, 2021 and 2022

<b>MAR-20</b>	4,641
<b>Mar-21</b>	5,469
<b>Mar-22</b>	6,221

## ■ Prison Accommodation

**Steve Reed:**

**[98790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of prison cells between 2010 and 2022.

**Damian Hinds:**

Monthly capacity reports from 2009 are publicly available at the following link: [Prison population statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-statistics).

Over the past decade, prison capacity has been taken out of use both temporarily and on a longer-term basis for a number of reasons, including for essential maintenance and refurbishment.

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

## ■ Prison and Probation Service: Sick Leave

**Steve Reed:**

**[99860]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2022 to Question 87949 on Prison and Probation Service: Sick Leave, if he will make an estimate of the cost to the public purse of working days that were lost due to work-related stress in (a) HM Prison Service and (b) the Probation Service in 2022 and 2021.

**Damian Hinds:**

The information requested can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Prisoners: Females**

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[97768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of women in prison.

**Damian Hinds:**

As set out in the 2018 Female Offender Strategy, the Government is committed to ensure more women are managed successfully in the community and that fewer women go to prison, particularly on short sentences. Since the Strategy was published, the number of women entering the criminal justice system for the first time has fallen by 20%.

We are investing tens of millions of pounds over the next three years into community services for women, drug rehabilitation and accommodation support, so fewer women end up in prison.

We will shortly publish a Delivery Plan for the Female Offender Strategy. This will set out our ambitious cross-Government approach for the next three years.

■ **Prisoners: Police Custody**

**Steve Reed:** [\[100990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will estimate (a) the total number of police cells used during Operation Safeguard and (b) the cost to the public purse of each police cell used during Operation Safeguard.

**Steve Reed:** [\[100991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much funding his Department has made available for Operation Safeguard.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Ministry of Justice has made provision to fund approximately 400 places from within the overall departmental budget. The use of police cells is part of normal business: recently, however, there has been a significant increase in demand, prompting the formal request to implement Operation Safeguard.

An initial £14 million has been allocated, based on a three-month forecast requirement.

The total cost to the Ministry of Justice will depend on the number of cells occupied under Operation Safeguard and how long they are occupied for.



## ■ Prisoners: Victims

**Steve Reed:**

**[97585]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many unwanted prisoner contacts were recorded in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

**Damian Hinds:**

The information held relates to requests received via the former Victims' Helpline Service concerning unwanted calls, and is shown below. Figures for requests received via other routes relating to unwanted calls are not collated centrally.

2020 – 74 calls

2021 – 62 calls

2022 – 150 calls (includes figures from a pilot to test a new enhanced Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service which has replaced the Victim Helpline Service).

Steps are routinely taken to block contact with victims who are not related to the offender, and in cases where domestic abuse is a known part of the sentence being served, unless the victim requests otherwise.

We have this week launched a new national replacement service for the Victim's Helpline Service, the Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service, which we have worked with the police and national charities to design and develop. Where there is a pattern of domestic abuse, the improved system enables more referral routes for blocking of contact with members of the victim's family.

## ■ Prisons

**Ellie Reeves:**

**[97765]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prisons provide planned activity to all inmates who are neither unwell or undergoing punishment which involves morning and afternoon purposeful activity between Monday and Friday.

**Damian Hinds:**

All prisons have systems in place for the day-to-day management of regime delivery. This ensures that regimes are safe, decent, secure, resilient and sustainable. Each prison has a Regime Management Plan that clearly sets out the full range of prisoner activities and services delivered within the prison, morning and afternoon, from Monday to Friday, in accordance with [Regime management planning: PSI 07/2017 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

REGIME MANAGEMENT PLANS AS OF 23 NOVEMBER 2022 (LATEST RETURN PROVIDED BY 122 SITES)

Regime	Number of sites	Proportion (%)
Green (Full delivery)	18	14.8
Green - Amber (Majority of activities and services delivered)	61	50
Amber - Red (Reduced but sustainable delivery of activities and services)	42	34.4
Red (Delivery of basic activities and services not sustainable beyond short term)	1	0.8

■ **Probate Service: Administrative Delays**

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

**[98908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help tackle the backlogs in the probate service.

**Mike Freer:**

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

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

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

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

The improvement of the online probate system remains a priority for HMCTS, to ensure more applications can be issued first time and resources can be focused on reducing waiting times.

## ■ Women's Centres

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[97767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Women in Prison's 7 October report on The Value of Women's Centres, if he will invest in community-based women's centres to reduce offending rates.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Government understands the vital role that women's centres and women's community sector organisations play in supporting women with complex needs to address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour. The Ministry of Justice is investing up to £21 million in grant funding between 2022 and 2025 in women's community sector organisations. The funding is available to meet organisations' core costs, such as rent and utility bills, as well as to fund new or additional services or interventions to test and build our evidence base. This is in addition to the £9.5m that has been invested since June 2018.

## ■ Women's Centres: Finance

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[97647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendations in the report by Women in Prison entitled The Value of Women's Centres, published on 7 October 2022, if he will provide ring-fenced funding for specialist services led by and for (a) Black women, (b) women from other ethnic minorities, (c) deaf women, (d) disabled women, (e) LBTQ+ women and (f) women with other protected characteristics.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Government understands the important role women's centres and women's community sector organisations play in supporting women to address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour and to turn their lives around. This is why the Ministry of Justice is investing up to £21 million grant funding in women's community services between 2022 and 2025. Organisations applying for grant funding are required to explain how they would deliver effective support to women with protected characteristics, particularly how they would address any barriers to engagement. Funding will be confirmed in early 2023.

In addition to the current grant funding, we have invested almost £46 million in women's Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) contracts since June 2021, which will deliver bespoke and specialist support to women in probation and is tailored to individual needs, including protected characteristics, to address their offending behaviour.

The Probation Service has also launched the CRS General Grant Scheme to provide support, including provision for people on probation or in prison with protected characteristics or shared experiences. Grants within this theme can be for a value between £8,000 - £150,000 per year for a period of up to three years per grant award. The first competition under this scheme was launched in September and was

targeted at services for people from an ethnic minority background who are on probation.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Absent Voting: Proof of Identity

**Angela Rayner:** [97615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Government's plans to introduce voter identification, whether voters that are applying for absentee ballots will be required to provide a copy of their photo identification along with their application.

**Angela Rayner:** [97616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Government not holding data on ethnic groups' possession of photographic ID on BAME voters in the event that the Government introduces voter ID.

**Lee Rowley:**

In 2021 the Cabinet Office commissioned a nationally representative survey to assess the percentage of the eligible population who hold at least one form of photo identification and this found that all ethnic minority groups combined were slightly more likely to hold any form of photo identification (99%) than those from a White ethnic background (98%). Further information on the survey and its findings can be found [here](#).

In relation to absent votes, electors who decide to vote by post will not need to provide photographic identification. If they appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf, their proxy will need to present photographic identification at the polling station.

### ■ Council Tax

**Helen Morgan:** [100030]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the increased Council Tax flexibility announced in the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022, what recent estimate he has made of the amount of extra income each council will receive.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Government will consult on proposed Council Tax Referendum Principles at the Provisional Settlement in the usual way, where it will also publish estimates of the amount of money each council could raise from Council Tax.

## ■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[97590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 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.

**Dehenna Davison:**

As has been the case under successive administrations, departmental spend over £250 is published on gov.uk as part of the department's [monthly spending report](#).

## ■ Evictions

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[97628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the number of notices issued to tenants under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 where tenants had also made a recent prior request to their Landlord to carry out repairs.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[97630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he will bring forward legislation to ban no fault evictions pursuant to Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988.

**Felicity Buchan:**

Further to the answer given in response to [Question UIN84925](#) on 17 November 2022, we do not hold centrally the information requested.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Sir Robert Buckland:**

[97543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will provide guidance to local authorities on acting as guarantors for the Homes for Ukraine scheme; and if his Department will take steps to provide additional funding to local authorities for this purpose.

**Felicity Buchan:**

We have provided funding to councils to enable them to provide support to individuals and families. This is un-ringfenced, which allows councils to use the funding as best suits the local area, including measures to support guests to access the private rental market. We are considering what further steps we can take to support guests to find accommodation after their sponsorship ends.

The Government has updated guidance for the Homes for Ukraine guests, hosts and councils setting out all the support options available to them and it can be found [here](#).

## ■ Housing: West Yorkshire

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[97510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data his Department holds on the number of private properties constructed in (a) Huddersfield constituency, (b) the wider Kirklees Council area, (c) Calderdale and (d) Wakefield in the year 2020-21.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[97511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data his Department holds on the number of housing association properties constructed in (a) Huddersfield constituency, (b) the wider Kirklees Council area, (c) Calderdale and (d) Wakefield in the year 2020-21.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Estimates of building control reported new build dwelling completions, by tenure, in each local authority district in England, are shown in Live Table 253, at the following [link](#).

These cover new build dwellings only and should be regarded as a leading indicator of overall housing supply. The department also publishes an annual release entitled '[Housing supply: net additional dwellings, England](#)', which is the primary and most comprehensive measure of housing supply.

Information on new build units by provider and geography can be derived from the affordable housing supply open data available [here](#).

The latest available data is for the financial year 2021-22.

Statistics at Huddersfield parliamentary constituency level are not centrally collected.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Northern Ireland Office: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[97601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 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.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

The total of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working for the Northern Ireland Office as performance-related bonuses in the years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20, (d) 2020-21 and (e) 2021-22 are outlined below:

YEAR	TOTAL VALUE
January 2017 - February 2018	£6,290

YEAR	TOTAL VALUE
April 2018 - March 2019	£11,250
March 2019 - February 2020	£22,310
April 2020 - February 2021	£12,355
April 2021 - March 2022	£12,710

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government. The Edenred contract came into effect in 2017 which allows department access to non-cash vouchers for staff.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Scotland Office: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[97598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, 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.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government. The total value of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working in the Scotland Office as performance related bonuses in the financial years 2017-18 to 2021-22 is provided below.

FINANCIAL YEARS	AMOUNT (£)
2017-18	2,300
2018-19	2,705
2019-20	2,000
2020-21	1,625
2021-22	2,625

### ■ Scotland Office: Redundancy

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[\[100026\]](#)

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

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Scotland Office does not employ any staff directly. All staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies, principally the Ministry of Justice and the Scottish Government, who remain the employers. There are currently no live voluntary exit schemes available to Scotland Office staff.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Department for Transport: Incentives****Emily Thornberry:**[\[97597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

**Jesse Norman:**

Issuing non-cash vouchers is a standard practice across Government and is part of DfT's recognition scheme. The Edenred contract came into effect in 2017 which allows departments access to non-cash vouchers for staff.

The amount of vouchers awarded for this are as follows:

FY	AMOUNT AWARDED
2017-18	Information not held
2018-19	£34,800.00
2019-20	£29,570.00
2020-21	£34,085.00
2021-22	£64,260.00

■ **Jet Skis****Catherine West:**[\[99931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of (a) responsible and (b) irresponsible use of Jet Skis on (i) the marine environment and (ii) people including other water users and local residents.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Most people ride personal watercraft, like jet skis, safely and responsibly and as a result serious issues are rare. There are a small minority of users who through their irresponsible actions put other people at risk.

Local and harbour authorities already have wide-ranging powers to introduce measures to respond to dangerous or anti-social behaviour. The Department is



supporting them through the introduction of new national legislation to further strengthen enforcement measures.

■ **Low Emission Zones: Greater London**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[98691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made on the potential benefits of the London Ultra Low Emission Zone; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London. There is no legal requirement for the Mayor to consult either central or local Government on the decision to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. However, we have been clear that Government grant funding, via the longer-term funding settlement, cannot be used to cover the estimated £250 million cost of implementation. Therefore, the Mayor and TfL must cover this cost through alternative sources available to them. If Members are unhappy with the decisions that the Mayor has been making, they should make this known at the next London mayoral election in 2024.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[98692]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Mayor of London on the mitigation of the financial losses incurred by constituents of affected London Boroughs who own non-compliant vehicles following the Mayor of London's expansion of the London Ultra Low Emission Zone.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London. There is no legal requirement for the Mayor to consult either central or local Government on the decision to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. However, we have been clear that Government grant funding, via the longer-term funding settlement, cannot be used to cover the estimated £250 million cost of implementation. Therefore, the Mayor and TfL must cover this cost through alternative sources available to them. If Members are unhappy with the decisions that the Mayor has been making, they should make this known at the next London mayoral election in 2024.

**Sir David Evennett:**

**[99746]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Mayor of London's 2023 ULEZ expansion.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London. There is no legal requirement for the Mayor to consult either central or local Government on the decision to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. However, we have been clear that Government grant funding, via the longer-term funding settlement, cannot be used to cover the estimated £250 million cost of implementation. Therefore, the Mayor and TfL must cover this cost through alternative sources available to them. If Members

are unhappy with the decisions that the Mayor has been making, they should make this known at the next London mayoral election in 2024.

### ■ Public Transport: Payments

**Sir Peter Bottomley:** [\[99712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will have discussions with transport operators on ensuring that their services accept cash payments.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Passengers should have access to a ticketing system which is user-friendly. As modern ticketing and payment methods are rolled out more widely, we will continue to work with the transport sector to cater for those passengers that need to use cash to buy a ticket.

### ■ Railways: Freight

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[97800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of ongoing industrial action on the rail freight industry.

**Huw Merriman:**

Rail freight services are significantly affected by RMT strikes, with approximately 20% of freight services operating on strike days and returning to around 70% on the day after a strike. The Government continues to work closely with rail freight operators and Network Rail to support them to continue to run services across the network and move as much freight as possible, particularly critical services, during industrial action.

The continuing industrial action at a time of fiscal constraints on the Government and financial pressures on the freight industry is no doubt having an adverse impact on consumers, the freight industry and taxpayers.

We are very clear that it is for employers and Trade Unions to negotiate the details of essential workforce reforms that would enable an affordable pay deal. Ministers role is to facilitate and support the ongoing discussions between the rail industry and Trade Unions regarding workforce reform and pay.

### ■ Railways: Strikes

**Julian Sturdy:** [\[99820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government is taking steps to help mitigate against (a) train and (b) tube strikes.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Government is focused on resolving this dispute so that critically needed workforce reforms can take place, supported by a fair pay deal.

We are very clear that it is for employers and Trade Unions to negotiate the details of essential workforce reforms that would enable an affordable pay deal. Ministers' role

is to facilitate and support the ongoing discussions between the rail industry and Trade Unions regarding workforce reform and pay.

During industrial action, my Department will support operators to do all they can to minimise the impact of strike action on passengers and businesses.

Transport in London is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL), this includes action to mitigate TfL strikes. However, the Secretary of State for Transport is regularly updated on impacts of industrial action on passengers of the London Underground (and other rail services).

## ■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[100887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November to Question 90730, if he will (a) publish and (b) place in the Library a copy of all responses by highway authorities to Question 5 in the last 12 months.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Most local authorities the Department allocates funding to as part of the highways maintenance incentive element funding process are in Band 3, based on their self-assessment response. Funding for authorities in receipt of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) no longer receive a separate incentive element and so are not included in the table.

The Department encourages all authorities that receive capital grant funding for highways maintenance to continually monitor those processes advised within the questionnaire to ensure best practice in highways maintenance continues to be carried out.

A breakdown of responses from the self-assessment in February 2022, from local highway authorities in England eligible for the highways maintenance incentive element, can be found in the table below:

LOCAL AUTHORITY	QUESTION 5: IS YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY UNDERTAKING LIFECYCLE PLANNING AS PART OF ITS HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT?
Bedford	Band 3
Blackburn with Darwen	Band 3
Blackpool	Band 3
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Band 2
Bracknell Forest	Band 2
Brighton and Hove	Band 2

LOCAL AUTHORITY	QUESTION 5: IS YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY UNDERTAKING LIFECYCLE PLANNING AS PART OF ITS HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT?
Buckinghamshire	Band 3
Central Bedfordshire	Band 3
Cheshire East	Band 3
Cheshire West and Chester	Band 3
Cornwall	Band 3
County Durham	Band 3
Cumbria	Band 2
Derby	Band 3
Derbyshire	Band 3
Devon	Band 3
Dorset	Band 2
East Riding of Yorkshire	Band 3
East Sussex	Band 3
Essex	Band 3
Gateshead	Band 3
Gloucestershire	Band 3
Hampshire	Band 3
Herefordshire, County of	Band 3
Hertfordshire	Band 3
Kent	Band 3
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	Band 3
Lancashire	Band 3
Leicester	Band 3
Leicestershire	Band 2
Lincolnshire	Band 3

LOCAL AUTHORITY	QUESTION 5: IS YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY UNDERTAKING LIFECYCLE PLANNING AS PART OF ITS HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT?
Medway	Band 3
Milton Keynes	Band 3
Newcastle upon Tyne	Band 3
Norfolk	Band 3
North East Lincolnshire	Band 2
North Lincolnshire	Band 3
North Northamptonshire	Band 3
North Somerset	Band 3
North Tyneside	Band 3
North Yorkshire	Band 3
Northumberland	Band 3
Nottingham	Band 3
Nottinghamshire	Band 3
Oxfordshire	Band 3
Plymouth	Band 2
Portsmouth	Band 3
Reading	Band 3
Rutland	Band 3
Shropshire	Band 3
Slough	Band 2
Somerset	Band 2
South Tyneside	Band 3
Southampton	Band 3
Southend-on-Sea	Band 3
Staffordshire	Band 3

LOCAL AUTHORITY	QUESTION 5: IS YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY UNDERTAKING LIFECYCLE PLANNING AS PART OF ITS HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT?
Stoke-on-Trent	Band 3
Suffolk	Band 3
Sunderland	Band 3
Surrey	Band 3
Swindon	Band 3
Telford and Wrekin	Band 3
Thurrock	Band 3
Torbay	Band 3
Warrington	Band 3
Warwickshire	Band 3
West Berkshire	Band 3
West Northamptonshire	Band 3
West Sussex	Band 2
Wiltshire	Band 3
Windsor and Maidenhead	Band 2
Wokingham	Band 2
Worcestershire	Band 3
York	Band 3

### ■ Transport Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill

**Apsana Begum:**

**[98916]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of his policy on the Transport Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill on the UK's obligations under (a) ILO Convention 87 and (b) the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department made a detailed assessment of the potential impact of the Bill on the UK's obligations under the ILO Convention 87 and the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement during the policy development stage.

The ILO has previously accepted that minimum service levels are in principle consistent with the right to strike, and many EU nations (such as Spain and Italy) have minimum service provisions as part of their domestic legislation.

**TREASURY**■ **Sanctions: Russia****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[100995\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications for a licence to allow an activity or transaction that would otherwise be prohibited by the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, as amended, were (a) submitted to and (b) approved by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation in (i) 2020; (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) is responsible for financial sanctions enforcement. OFSI may issue a financial sanctions licence to allow an activity that would otherwise be prohibited under UK sanctions regimes.

The Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 ("the Russia Regulations") came into force on 1 January 2021. OFSI are able to provide the requested figures for the calendar years 2021 and 2022 year to date.

In 2021, OFSI received 11 specific licence applications to allow an activity or transaction that would otherwise be prohibited by the Russia Regulations. In the same period, OFSI approved 9 new or amended licences under the Russia Regulations.

In 2022 to date, OFSI has received 1031 specific licence applications. Most recent records show that OFSI has currently issued 82 new or amended licences to allow an activity or transaction that would otherwise be prohibited by the Russia Regulations. The issuance of general licences by OFSI – licensing a broad class of activity under the Regulations - has also led to specific licence applications being withdrawn.

■ **Tax Avoidance****Dan Carden:**[\[101049\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of agreeing a UN tax convention on reform of global tax rules.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government believes that the UN has an important role to play in promoting greater participation within the international tax system and promoting better implementation of existing tax rules and standards across the world. The UK actively

engages with the UN's work on tax policy and provides expertise to the work of the various subcommittees on tax.

The Government also cares deeply about ensuring that mechanisms for formulating and implementing international tax rules and standards are effective as well as inclusive. Therefore, the UK believes that the OECD, including the Inclusive Framework (with over 130 members) and the Global Forum (with over 160 members) is best-placed to deliver consensus-based reform to international tax rules. This comes as a result of the strong expertise that sits within the OECD and the steps taken in recent years to become ever more inclusive of the needs of developing countries.

### ■ Treasury: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[97498\]](#)

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

**James Cartlidge:**

We report on our non-cash bonus data monthly within the Corporate Centre Group and this data is stored centrally for monitoring and audit purposes.

- o 2017-18 – No data available
- o 2018-19 - £45,960 including tax
- o 2019-20 - £65,820 including tax
- o 2020-21 - £83,770 including tax
- o 2021-22 - £59,500 including tax

### ■ Treasury: Protective Clothing

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[100993\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2022 to Question 61148 on Treasury: Protective Clothing, at what grade the 0.25 full time equivalent staff in his Department is employed; and since what date they have been employed.

**James Cartlidge:**

It is long-standing Government policy not to comment on individual personnel matters. The 0.25 FTE are primarily at junior grades however it includes staff across the department and at varying levels of seniority, including senior civil servants. This number has fluctuated as issues arise over the course of any period. DHSC remain the lead department on PPE storage, but resource in HMT has also been directed towards overseeing DHSC's work on Covid-19 PPE continuously since the start of the pandemic.



## ■ Treasury: Public Appointments

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[97614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what public appointments have been made by ministers in his Department since he took office.

**James Cartlidge:**

Since the Chancellor of the Exchequer took up office on 14 October 2022, Ministers have appointed three new Non-Executives to the Court of Directors at the Bank of England. They are Lord Jitesh Gadhia, Sabine Chalmers and Tom Shropshire.

## WALES

### ■ Domestic Visits: Wales

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[98777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many ministerial visits to Wales have taken place in each of the last five years.

**David T C Davies:**

Since 1 November 2018, around 184 Ministerial visits have taken place by Wales Office Ministers.

At the time of answering, I have conducted 15 Governmental engagements in Wales in my capacity as Secretary of State for Wales.

The Department does not hold information on Ministers from other Department's visits or engagements.

### ■ Foreign Investment in UK: Wales

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[98775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with representatives of international businesses on inward investment into Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**David T C Davies:**

I regularly meet a range of stakeholders to discuss investment opportunities in Wales. Most recently I met with the Qatar Investment Authority in Doha, to discuss opportunities for Wales. I have also had meetings with representatives from companies like Ciner Glass and the Eren Group about their investments in Wales.

Wales has already seen the benefit of inward investment, with 43 new foreign direct investments in the 2021-2022 financial year, creating around 1,800 new jobs. Furthermore, the Department for International Trade's dedicated Wales team has ensured Wales' investment opportunities are promoted at the UK's flagship international investment events, such as the recent Green Trade and Investment Expo in Gateshead and through opportunities for Wales as part of the GREAT campaign.

The UK Government is committed to supporting key sectors in Wales, while also creating an environment where businesses of the future can thrive, and inward investment is critical in this. Our Freeports programme has the potential to help Wales compete for global investment and trade, and further enhance Wales' ability to attract investment and new businesses. The UK's Free Trade Agreements will also bring new investment opportunities for Wales.

#### ■ Wales Office: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[97599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, 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.

**Dr James Davies:**

Bonuses paid out as non-cash vouchers are a standard practice across Government. The Edenred contract came into effect in 2017, allowing departments access to non-cash vouchers for staff.

The total value of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working in the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales as performance-related bonuses in the financial years 2017-18 to 2021-22 is provided below. The increase in value in 2021-22 was a direct result of more staff in post, particularly within a probationary period, meaning they were not eligible for cash performance bonuses at mid and end year of the performance period.

FINANCIAL YEARS	AMOUNT (£)
2017-18	210
2018-19	635
2019-20	705
2020-21	735
2021-22	2,020

#### ■ Wales Office: Redundancy

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[\[100027\]](#)

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

**David T C Davies:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales currently has no live voluntary exit schemes. Voluntary exit schemes are a commonly used workforce management process available to departments based on their specific workforce needs.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Assistance Animals: Shops and Taxis

**David Warburton:**

**[97695]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that guide dog and assistance dog owners are not denied entry to (a) taxis, (b) shops and (c) businesses.

**Stuart Andrew:**

We are clear that no one should be refused access to businesses or services, including taxis, because they have an assistance dog.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), businesses that provide goods and services to the public must not unlawfully discriminate against people who meet the Act's definition of disability. The Act places a duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to improve access to premises, buildings and services.

This duty could include allowing access to guide dogs or assistance dogs so that disabled customers have the same access to goods and services and are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled customers.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published guidance for all businesses, including service providers, on their duty towards disabled people who own assistance/guide dogs. The guidance explains that assistance dogs should be treated as auxiliary aids and not as pets. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/assistance-dogs-a-guide-for-all-businesses.pdf> and makes clear that businesses and service providers should allow assistance dogs access to buildings where dogs would normally not be permitted whenever this is reasonable.

Taxi and private hire drivers also have a duty under the Act to carry guide dogs and assistance dogs at no extra cost to the passenger. The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022, amended the Act to provide any disabled person with specific rights and protections to access and receive assistance when travelling in a taxi or private hire vehicle.

These duties and protections are ultimately enforceable through the courts, but as a first step, anybody who thinks they have been discriminated against in the services offered to them - including a failure to make reasonable adjustments - can contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) which provides free bespoke advice and in-depth support to individuals with discrimination concerns via their website - <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com>, or by telephone on 0808 800 0082 or by text phone on 0808 800 0084.

## ■ Guide Dogs: Licensed Premises and Shops

**Julian Sturdy:**

[99818]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if the Government will take steps to help ensure that guide dogs are allowed in all (a) shops and (b) venues.

**Stuart Andrew:**

We are clear that no one should be refused access to businesses or services, including shops or venues, because they legitimately have an assistance dog.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), businesses that provide goods and services to the public must not unlawfully discriminate against people who meet the Act's definition of disability. The Act places a duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to improve access to premises, buildings and services.

This duty could include allowing access to guide dogs or assistance dogs so that disabled customers have the same access to goods and services and are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled customers. Failure to comply with this duty could amount to unlawful disability discrimination.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published guidance for all businesses, including service providers, on their duty towards disabled people who own assistance/guide dogs. The guidance explains that assistance dogs should be treated as auxiliary aids and not as pets. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/assistance-dogs-a-guide-for-all-businesses.pdf> and makes clear that businesses and service providers should allow assistance dogs access to buildings where dogs would normally not be permitted whenever this is reasonable.

These duties and protections are ultimately enforceable through the courts, but as a first step, anybody who thinks they have been discriminated against in the services offered to them - including a failure to make reasonable adjustments - can contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) which provides free bespoke advice and in-depth support to individuals with discrimination concerns via their website - <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com>, or by telephone on 0808 800 0082 or by text phone on 0808 800 0084.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Access to Work Programme

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[100965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to reduce Access to Work waiting times.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Access to Work has received a significant increase in applications over the last year and have recruited new staff to meet the increased demand and reduce the time it

takes to make decisions. Customers making new applications where they are starting work within the next 4 weeks, or have a grant coming to an end that requires renewal, are prioritised to ensure customers are able to enter and remain in the labour market. We are also transforming the Access to Work service through increased digitalisation, that will make the service more efficient, will make the application process easier, and improve the time taken from application through to decision.

■ **Attendance Allowance: Older People**

**Dame Caroline Dinéage:**

[\[98725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how his Department determines Attendance Allowance rates for people of state pension age or over who have long-term medical conditions such as Parkinson's.

**Dame Caroline Dinéage:**

[\[98726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to assess the adequacy of Attendance Allowance payments in providing support to people of state pension age or over, who have long-term conditions such as Parkinson's.

**Laura Trott:**

Attendance Allowance is intended to help those with a severe disability who have long term care or supervision needs after they reach State Pension age. It provides a contribution towards the extra costs they face because of those care or supervision needs. It is also paid in addition to other support they may receive, whether that be through benefits, the NHS or Local Authorities.

Recipients will include people who have long-term health conditions, such as Parkinson's disease. Entitlement to Attendance Allowance is based upon the care needs that the person may have as a result of their disability and is not specifically linked to the disability itself. Attendance Allowance is paid at different rates, with the higher rate paid to those who need help or supervision throughout both day and night. Most awards are made for an indefinite period, recognising it is a benefit intended to help those with long term care needs. Those getting the higher rate are receiving around £5300 a year, tax free, which can be paid in addition to other support a pensioner may receive such as the State Pension and Pension Credit. Attendance Allowance is increased each April in line with inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for the previous September. The September 2022 CPI was 10.1 per cent which means that the rates of Attendance Allowance are due to be increased from April 2023 by this amount.

The lower rate of Attendance Allowance will increase from £61.85 to £68.10 and the higher rate will increase from £92.40 to £101.75. This is around an additional £1050 and £1600 a year respectively for disabled pensioners since 2010.

In addition, in 2022/23 and 2023/24 people in receipt of Attendance Allowance are entitled to a £150 disability cost of living payment, in addition to the pensioner cost of living payment of £300 per household. If they are in receipt of Pension Credit, they will also receive further cost of living payments worth up to £650 in 2022/23 and up to

£900 in 2023/24. This is in addition to other measures announced during the Autumn Statement, such as the amended Energy Price Guarantee from April 2023 which will save also the average UK household £500 in 2023-24

### ■ Carer's Allowance

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[99913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has commissioned research on people's experiences of claiming and receiving Carer's Allowance.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The department commissioned research on experiences of claiming and receiving Carer's Allowance. The department is reviewing the research results as part of our wider policy development and thinking around Carer's Allowance. We need to ensure that policy makers and Ministers are able to do so based on the evidence and without fear of premature disclosure. Therefore, we will not publish the report while this process is ongoing. If we decide to publish our findings, we will make them available to Parliament and online.

### ■ Carer's Allowance: Uprating

**Hywel Williams:** [\[100898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the impact of the decision to uprate the earnings limit of Carer's Allowance below the September 2022 rate of the consumer price index on carers' incomes.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The weekly Carer's Allowance earnings limit will be increased from £132 to £139 net from April 2023. This increase of 5.5% is in line with growth in Average Weekly Earnings for the year to May-July 2022 as published by the Office for National Statistics. The rate of Carer's Allowance will increase by 10.1% in line with the increase in the Consumer Prices Index in the year to September 2022, as will the relevant rates of Universal Credit for carers.

### ■ Children: Maintenance

**Siobhan Baillie:** [\[97742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how frequently the Child Maintenance Service has used deductions from joint accounts as an enforcement measure under the 2018 reforms.

**Mims Davies:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost to clerically review each case.

The Child Maintenance 2012 system whilst providing visibility of sole and joint account data, does not have the functionality to separate joint domestic accounts from business accounts.

**Siobhan Baillie:**

[\[97743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how frequently the Child Maintenance Service has used deduction from unlimited partnerships to enforce measures under the 2018 reforms.

**Mims Davies:**

We have interpreted this question to be in relation to deduction from 'unlimited' partnerships to mean not a limited company.

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost to clerically review each case.

The Child Maintenance 2012 system whilst providing visibility of sole and joint account data, does not have the functionality to separate joint domestic accounts from business accounts. Moreover, there can be more than one director in 'unlimited' partnerships, which within Child Maintenance is treated the same as a joint account

## ■ Cost of Living Payments: Universal Credit

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[98939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will review the eligibility criteria for the cost of living payments provided as part of the Government's cost of living support package to ensure that Universal Credit recipients who are paid every four weeks are not penalised.

**Mims Davies:**

In determining eligibility for the 2022/23 Cost of Living Payments, the eligibility periods were chosen to reflect the nature of the qualifying benefits and have remained simple to ensure these payments can be made to those who qualify quickly and at scale to support millions of people on low incomes.

We recognise that some people will flow on and off benefits, and our policy reflects that. The 2022/23 Cost of Living Payment is being made in two payments to reduce the chance of someone missing out completely.

Eligibility criteria for the 2023/24 Cost of Living Payments will be published in due course.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Incentives

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[97594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 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.

**Mims Davies:**

The table below show the total value of non-cash vouchers awarded to DWP staff in the years requested.

	<b>BONUSES - VOUCHERS £'s</b>
<b>2017 - 18</b>	3,619,070
<b>2018 - 19</b>	5,137,259
<b>2019 - 20</b>	4,031,772
<b>2020 - 21</b>	5,313,692
<b>2021 - 22</b>	5,915,116

*Source: Hyperion*

#### ■ **Driving Instruction: Costs**

**Ben Bradley:**

[\[97759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has plans to support people with the cost of driving lessons; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of supporting people with the cost of driving lessons on employment opportunities for those people.

**Guy Opperman:**

Service Leaders in Jobcentres can allocate funding for driving lessons through the Flexible Support Fund, where they feel this is an appropriate use of funds. Each request is considered on a case-by-case basis.

No specific assessment has been made of the potential merits of allocating specific funding for driving lessons.

#### ■ **Employment**

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[95979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps his Department has taken to help improve the support available for jobseekers.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for getting people into work and making work pay. We do this through our core Jobcentre offer which provides a range of options to those seeking employment, including face-to-face time with work



coaches and interview assistance. We also have support programmes targeted towards specific cohorts, such as young people or people with disabilities.

In his Autumn Statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer reaffirmed this government's commitment to raising the Administrative Earnings Threshold from January 2023. This will bring more claimants into scope for intensive work coach support, helping those who are either not in work or are working but are in low pay.

The Restart scheme gives jobseekers intensive support to find work in their local area. First referrals were in July 2021, with an initial focus on those who had been on UC in the IWS regime for between 12 and 18 months. The scheme was expanded to UC claimants who have been unemployed for 9 months (January 2022) and to claimants who are in receipt of Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance for 9 months (April 2022). By April 2022, 226,785 claimants have started on the scheme.

## ■ **Employment Services: Disability**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[98807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2022 to Question 94811 on Employment Services: Disability, what the (a) total caseload and (b) average caseload per disability employment adviser has been in each year since 2018.

**Tom Pursglove:**

This data is not available because Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) do not have caseloads. DEAs support Work Coaches by providing expert knowledge on how to support disabled customers, building the skills and capability of Work Coaches, and influencing employer engagement in local communities. DEA's can also directly support customers with a health condition or disability where additional support can benefit the customer. Direct support is determined by local need.

## ■ **Employment: Disability**

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[100967]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people left the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme as a result of entering employment in the last 12 months.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) programme provides support for disabled people with complex barriers to work. Participants receive up to fifteen months of intensive pre-employment support and six months of intensive in-work support when they start work.

When participants enter employment, they continue to receive support from their IPES provider and do not leave the programme. Support will usually end when the participant achieves a higher threshold outcome. There were 900 higher threshold outcomes in the year ending October 2022.

Data Source: The figures come from management information (MI) that is derived from the Provider Referral and Payment system (PRaP) used by DWP and providers to manage referrals. The MI is not routinely published but equivalent data has previously been released, for example as part of an FOI that was released here.

<https://www.base-uk.org/news/ip-es-performance-statistics>

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[100968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme in each of the last five calendar years.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Referrals to IPES started in December 2019. Contracted expenditure is therefore provided for the years 19/20 to 21/22.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total	200,000	1,000,000	£3,919,670	£5,722,876	£9,226,276

The total includes estimated non-recurrent set up costs of approximately £3m, which accounts for the expenditure prior to go live with referrals.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**David Linden:**

**[101041]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when his Department plans to respond to correspondence sent by email on 7 September 2022, 4 October and 1 November from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13106.

**Mims Davies:**

A reply was sent to the hon. Member for Glasgow East by the Minister for Work and Pensions (Lords), on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 2 December 2022.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment: Residency Requirements

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[100966]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons there is a residency requirement for British citizens moving back from abroad for Personal Independence Payments but not for other disability benefits.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Personal Independence Payment (PIP), in line with the other extra costs disability benefits, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, applies a habitual residence test and a past presence test whereby a claimant must have been present in Great Britain for 104 of the last 156 weeks to be entitled to payment. These rules operate to ensure that claimants, including British citizens returning from overseas, have a recent and long-standing association with Great Britain to justify receipt of a non-contributory, non means tested benefit funded by the British taxpayer.

## ■ Poverty: Children

**Richard Burgon:**

**[98885]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the impact of the two-child benefit cap on trends in the level of child poverty.

**Guy Opperman:**

No such assessment has been made of the impact of the two-child benefit cap on trends in the level of child poverty.

The Government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics up to April 2022 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2022/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2022>

The latest child poverty figures (2019/20) demonstrate that absolute poverty rates (before housing costs) have not changed since 2016/17 when the two-child benefit cap was introduced. In 2019/20, 16% of children were in absolute poverty (before housing costs), the same level as in 2016/17.

This government believe that work is the best way out of poverty, and the latest statistics (2019/20) show that children in workless households are around 6 times more likely to be in absolute poverty, before housing costs, than those where all adults work. In 2019/20, the absolute poverty rate (before housing costs) of children, where both parents work full-time was only 3%, compared to 42% where one or more parents in a couple were in part-time work.

The government feels it is proportionate to provide support through Universal Credit for a maximum of two children. A benefits structure adjusting automatically to family size is unsustainable.

On 9 July 2021, the Supreme Court handed down its judgment in the judicial review of the two-child policy. The court found the two-child policy lawful and not in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This policy ensures fairness by asking families on benefits to make the same financial decisions as families supporting themselves solely through work. We recognise that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family, which is why exceptions have been put in place to protect certain groups, including those likely to have been born as a result of non-consensual conception. This includes rape or where the claimant was in a controlling or coercive relationship with the child's other biological parent at the time of conception. In this case, before a claim is approved, claimants are asked to contact a suitable third-party professional who can confirm the claimant's circumstances, as described by them, are consistent with the criteria for the exception. The third-party professional does not judge the credibility of the claimant's statement or require any further evidence.

**■ Skilled Workers: Low Incomes****Alexander Stafford:** [\[98914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) jobseekers and (b) people on low incomes develop the skills required for local net zero delivery.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[99845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help (a) jobseekers and (b) people on low incomes develop the skills required for local net zero delivery.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP works across government and with industry to identify green job opportunities and ensure the right skills and employment support are in place to help people into them. This includes work coach interventions and targeted provision including Sector-based Work Academy Programmes, DfE Skills Bootcamps and other provision. This means jobseekers and people on low incomes can develop skills to match the needs of the labour market.

DWP sits on the BEIS-chaired Green Jobs Delivery Group with other representatives from across government and industry. This is supporting government's plans for green jobs and skills and helping to deliver a net zero economy. The latest meeting was on the 06/12/2022 led by the Minister of State, Graham Stuart MP.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Carers****Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[99915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claim Carer's Allowance in a household where someone else claims Employment and Support Allowance as of 30 November 2022; and how many people claim Income Support and Carer's Allowance but do not live in a household where someone else claims Employment and Support Allowance as of 30 November 2022.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Cynon Valley****Beth Winter:** [\[97727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of social security payments in Cynon Valley constituency are subject to deductions to payments; and for what reasons those people are subject to deductions.

**Tom Pursglove:**

In August 2022, there were 1,800 Universal Credit households in Cynon Valley with more than one deduction, this accounts for 29% of all households on Universal Credit

in Cynon Valley. Table 1, in the attachment, shows the number of Universal Credit households with deductions by deduction type.

In August 2022, there were 3,300 Universal Credit households in Cynon Valley with one or more deductions, this accounts for 52% of all households on Universal Credit in Cynon Valley. Table 1, in the attachment, shows the number of Universal Credit households with deductions by deduction type.

**Attachments:**

1. Table 1 [\[Table 1.xlsx\]](#)

**Beth Winter:**

**[97728]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of social security payments in Cynon Valley constituency are subject to more than one deduction to payments; and for what reasons those people are subject to deductions.

**Tom Pursglove:**

In August 2022, there were 1,800 Universal Credit households in Cynon Valley with more than one deduction, this accounts for 29% of all households on Universal Credit in Cynon Valley. Table 1, in the attachment, shows the number of Universal Credit households with deductions by deduction type.

In August 2022, there were 3,300 Universal Credit households in Cynon Valley with one or more deductions, this accounts for 52% of all households on Universal Credit in Cynon Valley. Table 1, in the attachment, shows the number of Universal Credit households with deductions by deduction type.

**Attachments:**

1. Table 1 [\[Table 1.xlsx\]](#)

**Beth Winter:**

**[97729]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the (a) mean and (b) median value was of deductions to social security payments for people in Cynon Valley constituency in November 2022.

**Tom Pursglove:**

In August 2022, the mean value of deductions to Universal Credit payments for households in Cynon Valley was £63 and the median value was £66.

**Notes:**

- 1) Monetary amounts have been rounded to the nearest £1.
- 2) August 2022 figures used in line with latest published statistics on Universal Credit Households Statistics.
- 3) Household level figures have been provided.
- 4) Figures are provisional and subject to retrospective change as later data becomes available.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Peter Dowd:**

[99877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he take steps to increase disability benefits in line with inflation.

**Guy Opperman:**

Disability benefits will increase by September's CPI figure of 10.1%, subject to the usual parliamentary approval. The new rates will come into force on 10 April 2023 and details of all rates can be found at:

[Benefit and pension rates 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/benefit-and-pension-rates-2023-to-2024)

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[99855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, CP 751, if he will take steps to ensure that the in-work conditionality measures will not be accompanied by sanctions.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 5 December 2022]:* In-line with the 2012 Welfare Reform Act and the Universal Credit regulations of 2013 and 2015, we will expect claimants to undertake certain reasonable activities, such as meeting with their work coach, or they could face a sanction.

As happens now, claimants will only ever be sanctioned where, without good reason, they have failed to meet these reasonable requirements and all claimants will retain the right to mandatory reconsideration or appeal a decision should they disagree.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Inflation

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[95983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of increasing the benefit cap in line with inflation on people who receive benefits.

**Guy Opperman:**

The benefit cap levels will be increased from April 2023 in line with CPI in the year to September 2022 (10.1%). This is the same uprating measure that will be applied to benefits and the State Pension and ensures that capped households will see an increase in their benefit income following annual uprating. There were around 130,000 capped households in May 2022 (the latest available statistics). Around 30,000 households will be taken out of the cap entirely and around 60,000 other households (who would have become capped in the absence of an increase in the levels) will not become capped. The average for all these households will be around £29 extra benefit a week.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Up-rating

**Stephen Farry:**

[95977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the (a) New Style Contributory Employment and Support Allowance, (b) Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance and (c) Income-related Jobseeker's Allowance will be uprated by the inflation rate announced in his Autumn 2022 Statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

Yes, they will.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[98879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what evaluation the Department has made of the potential benefits of implementing a new process to uprate benefits in line with real-time inflation rates.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[98880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reducing the time between measuring inflation and uprating benefits.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* The DWP annual up-rating of pensions and benefits is a carefully managed process across all the Department's IT systems to ensure around 400 new rates are implemented on time and correctly for approximately 20 million recipients, of whom 13 million are pensioners.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is required by law to undertake an annual review of State pensions and benefits. CPI has been the default inflation measure for the statutory review of benefit rates since 2011. The relevant index for 2022 was 10.1%. This is the latest available figure, published by the Office for National Statistics, prior to the annual review and allows sufficient time for the complex delivery process to take place, meeting a hard IT deadline at the end of November.

This is the same process that has been used by previous administrations, including the labour government.

## ■ Unemployment and Vacancies

**Chloe Smith:**

[96591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the (a) number of job vacancies currently available, (b) ratio of unemployed people to vacancies, (c) ratio of economically inactive people to vacancies in each UK constituency.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department for Work and Pensions aims to help businesses fill their vacancies by supporting people back into work from unemployment and economic inactivity and by helping people to progress in work.



Data on job vacancies across the economy, unemployment and economic inactivity are produced and published by the independent Office for National Statistics (ONS). Unfortunately, the ONS do not publish vacancy numbers at constituency level (due to the design of their vacancy data collection); and do not publish information on unemployment/inactivity in every constituency (due to insufficient sample sizes in some local areas). The DWP does not hold equivalent information on these measures. Therefore, it is not possible to make the requested assessment of ratios of unemployed/inactive people to vacancies at parliamentary constituency level.

At national level:

- Vacancies are currently at a near record high of 1.225 million (Aug-Oct '22) – up 429,000 (53.9%) on before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The unemployment to vacancy ratio at national level is currently at 1.0 (Jul-Sep '22) – near to the record low figure of 0.9 unemployed people per vacancy. This means that there is approximately 1 unemployed person per vacancy advertised by employers.
- There are approximately 7.3 working age economically inactive people per vacancy (Jul-Sep '22). This is near to the record low figure of 6.7. However, if we look at working age economically inactive people who state that they would like to work, this ratio falls to 1.4 working age economically active people per vacancy. This is near the record low figure of 1.3.

Therefore, our overall assessment is that the data suggests that the UK has a 'tight' labour market, with high labour demand and relatively low numbers of people out of work who are close to the labour market by historic standards. Therefore, the Department for Work and Pensions is reviewing what action it can take to increase labour market participation (to conclude in early 2023), alongside its successful core labour market regime, which has helped reduce the unemployment rate to a near record low of 3.6% (Jul-Sep '22).

## ■ Universal Credit

**John McDonnell:**

[\[96547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Departmental staff will be among the 600,000 workers subject to the Intensive Work Search regime.

**Guy Opperman:**

Requirements to meet with a work coach will start from September 2023. We are currently developing our approach, including how and when impacted claimants will be contacted and will set out further details in due course.

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[97760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is his policy to extend deadline for people to transition from (a) tax credits, (b) Housing Benefit and (c) other legacy benefits to Universal Credit.



**Guy Opperman:**

There are no plans to change the three-month time limit that has been agreed.

The Migration Notice informs the claimant to contact the department if they are unable to make their claim within the 3-month window; an extension may be agreed in certain circumstances.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[98876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the announcement in the Autumn Statement 2022 of a further extension of in-work conditionality, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the DWP Universal Credit In-Work Progression Randomised Control Trials that (a) the use of sanctions did not appear to positively impact on motivation to progress, (b) there was no evidence of different outcomes, hours worked or earnings between those who reported being sanctioned and those that did not and (c) there was evidence that sanctioning impacted negatively on the relationship between claimants and Work Coaches.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* We have made no specific assessment; however the trial evidence did show that sanctions were proven to be an effective tool at driving compliance and engagement with the in-work offer. It also found that the mandatory regime, with sanctions as a last resort for non-compliance, did lead to claimants increasing their earnings on average compared to Minimal Support Group.

A sanction acts not only through its imposition on a claimant but importantly also through its effect as a deterrent. Whilst we were unable to assess this, it showed that a mandatory regime that combined regular contact with JCP that allowed Work Coaches to understand the barriers faced by claimants and to tailor support accordingly could be effective at helping claimants progress in work.

**■ Universal Credit: Employment****John McDonnell:**[\[96545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, whether his Department has informed in-work claimants of Universal Credit that they will be required to meet with work coaches.

**Guy Opperman:**

Working Universal Credit claimants who wish to access support to progress to greater earnings and or more work can volunteer for our In-Work Progression offer which is currently being trialled across various parts of Great Britain.

As announced at Autumn Statement, requirements to meet with a work coach will start from September 2023. We are currently developing our approach, including how and when impacted claimants will be contacted and will set out further details in due course.

**John McDonnell:**

**[96546]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, whether his Department plans to recruit additional work coaches to deal with the increased caseload of Universal Credit claimants.

**Guy Opperman:**

We are continuously employing more staff and have plans to recruit further to enable us to meet outcomes, subject to fiscal events and departmental finances.

The Department continually impacts and assesses the service being offered to customers. Staff numbers are reviewed on an ongoing basis, in line with the latest economic and benefit forecasts. The Department has governance controls in place at all levels of forecasting and modelling to ensure the estimated numbers of staff needed to meet demand for our services are robust and affordable.

All new work announced in any Fiscal Statement will need to be built into forecasts and funding assessed by HM Treasury. Until DWP planning receives both elements, we would not be in a position to comment on whether we will have additional resources for new areas of work.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[80716]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Leave Outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR) applications for additional family members under the Afghan relocation and assistance policy (ARAP) and ex-gratia scheme (EGS), which Department makes the decision on whether to grant LOTR applications under the EGS scheme; how many such applications have been received in total under both schemes; and how many such applications under both schemes (a) have received a positive decision, (b) have received a negative decision and (c) were still pending on 7 November 2022.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 November 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**James Heappey:**

When a principal applicant submits a Leave Outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR) application for additional family members, it is initially received by the Ministry of Defence. A decision on whether this application meets the eligibility requirements of the EGS/ARAP additional family member policy is made by the Ministry of Defence or referred to the relevant sponsoring Government department (dependent upon the role performed by the principal applicant with EGS/ARAP eligibility) to make that decision.

Those found to meet the eligibility requirements are then referred to the Home Office by the Ministry of Defence, who will perform additional checks (such as biometric enrolment and security) in order to make the final decision on the grant of LOTR.

Since August 2021, a total of 1,103 applications for additional family members have been received by the Ministry of Defence.

Of the above, decisions have been made in 401 cases across HM Government.

i) ~~407~~ **167** applications have been found to be eligible, in whole or in part, and referred to the Home Office for grant of LOTR.

ii) 234 applications have been found to be ineligible by Defence and the Foreign Office.

iii) ~~70~~ **702** applications are awaiting an eligibility decision with Defence and other Government departments. These are at various stages of the decision-making process and are being worked through on a case by case basis, by the relevant Government department, as quickly as practicable.

All casework decisions are taken against a clear framework of eligibility criteria. Timelines regarding LOTR eligibility decisions can vary considerably, dependent upon the complexity of the case, the need to conduct checks with other Government

departments, or the length of time it takes for applicants to respond to follow-up queries.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Radiotherapy: Medical Treatments

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[49163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate her Department has made of the radiotherapy capacity required to reduce waiting times for cancer treatment.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 September 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Will Quince:**

In July 2022, 92.3% of cancer patients **requiring** radiotherapy **received it within 31 days of a decision to treat**. In 2022/23, NHS England will provide additional support to local systems to plan service provision, which will take into account the impact of fewer fraction treatment protocols and investment in newer, faster treatment machines.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Capital Update

**Secretary of State for Education (Gillian Keegan):**

**[\[HCWS414\]](#)**

Today, I am confirming £500 million of additional capital funding for schools, sixth form colleges and Further Education colleges to help improve energy efficiency this financial year.

This comprises £447 million for schools and sixth form colleges and £53 million for FE colleges to spend on capital improvements to buildings and facilities, prioritising works to improve energy efficiency. The department has published guidance for schools and colleges on sensible steps for reducing energy use and small-scale works to improve energy efficiency, which can be implemented quickly to make a difference through the colder months and beyond.

Schools and colleges will be allocated at least £10,000 of additional capital funding, with further funding allocated in proportion to size. Primary schools have been allocated an average of approximately £16,000 and secondary schools an average of £42,000. An average group of FE colleges will be allocated £290,000. Schools and colleges can decide how best to invest the capital funding on energy efficiency measures. Where they judge this is not appropriate based on local circumstances, they have discretion to spend this on other capital projects.

The funding will be made available to FE colleges and designated institutions, as well as schools already eligible for Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocations in financial year 2022-23. This includes eligible maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, academies and free schools, pupil referral units, non-maintained special schools, sixth form colleges and specialist post-16 institutions with eligible students.

This funding comes on top of £1.8 billion of capital funding already committed this financial year for improving the condition of school buildings. In addition, the School Rebuilding Programme will rebuild or refurbish buildings at 500 schools and sixth form colleges over the next decade. The allocations are also on top of the £1.5 billion investment in upgrading the FE college estate through the FE Capital Transformation Programme, the more than £400m of capital funding provided so far for T Levels providers, and the £150 million allocation of capital funding for colleges announced on 29 November.

The government understands that like families and businesses across the country, schools and FE colleges are facing challenges with rising prices due to inflation. Significant increases to school revenue funding will help schools to manage these higher costs, with core schools' funding (including funding for both mainstream schools and high needs) increasing by £4 billion in financial year 2022-23 compared to the previous year. The Autumn Statement 2022 confirmed that this government will protect the per pupil

funding levels committed to at Spending Review 2021 in real terms, providing an additional net increase in the core schools budget of £2.0 billion in both 2023-24 and 2024-25. 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.

Overall funding for the FE sector is increasing with an extra £1.6 billion in 16-19 education in 2024-25 compared with 2021-22. This funding has come with stretching deliverables to transform our technical education offer – including T levels, and extra provision to support education recovery to enable learners to catch up from the pandemic.

Schools, FE colleges and education providers are also benefitting from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This will reduce how much schools and other providers need to spend on their energy, and give greater certainty over budgets over the winter months.

Further details and the allocations for individual schools and college groups have been published on GOV.UK

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ An Update on Levelling Up

**Secretary of State for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove):** [\[HCWS416\]](#)

By the end of this year, the Government will undertake a technical consultation on the national planning framework for onshore wind development in England. That consultation will conclude by the end of March next year.

The Government recognises the range of views on onshore wind. We believe that decisions on onshore wind are best made by local representatives who know their areas best and underpinned by democratic accountability. To deliver this, and our commitments in the British Energy Security Strategy, we will consult on a more localist approach that provides local authorities more flexibility to respond to the views of their local communities.

Through consultation with local authorities, communities and businesses, we intend to make changes to the National Planning Policy Framework by the end of April 2023 so that:

1. Permission is predicated on demonstrating local support for the project and satisfactorily addressing the project's planning impacts as identified by local communities, learning from best practice and using new digital engagement techniques.
1. Local authorities can demonstrate their support for certain areas in their boundaries to be suitable for onshore wind to enable us to move away from the overly rigid requirement for onshore wind sites to be designated in a local plan.

In the consultation, we also want to consider how the planning framework best:

1. Supports communities to have a say on the necessary infrastructure to connect wind farms to the grid,
2. Encourages the upgrading of existing wind farm sites.

We will also consult on developing local partnerships for supportive communities who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure in return for benefits, including lower energy bills.

Legislation from the Conservative Government in 2016 ensured that all onshore wind applications are considered by local councils rather than through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. This will continue to be the case.

We recognise the concerns expressed by local communities on the appropriate siting of onshore wind farms, which is why the Conservative Government in 2015 strengthened planning protection.

We should continue to ensure our valued landscapes are protected, particularly National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt. This will continue to be the case, and the combination of robust national and local planning policies will given sufficient weight to be able to rebuff unwanted speculative 'development by appeal'.

## ■ Update on the Levelling Up Bill

**Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove):**

[\[HCWS415\]](#)

I will be making further changes to the planning system, alongside the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, to place local communities at the heart of the planning system.

I will set out more detail on the following approach in an upcoming National Planning Policy Framework prospectus, which will be put out for consultation by Christmas.

### **COMMUNITY CONTROL**

I will retain a method for calculating local housing need figures, but consult on changes. I do believe that the plan-making process for housing has to *start* with a number. This number should, however, be an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory. It will be up to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in each area - be that our precious Green Belt or national parks, the character of an area, or heritage assets. It will also be up to them to increase the proportion of affordable housing if they wish.

My changes will instruct the Planning Inspectorate that they should no longer override sensible local decision making, which is sensitive to and reflects local constraints and concerns. Overall this amounts to a rebalancing of the relationship between local councils and the Planning Inspectorate, and will give local communities a greater say in what is built in their neighbourhood.

### **LOCAL PLANS**

We will end the obligation on local authorities to maintain a rolling five-year supply of land for housing where their plans are up-to-date. Therefore for authorities with a local plan, or where authorities are benefitting from transitional arrangements, the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the 'tilted balance' will typically not apply in relation to issues affecting land supply.

I also want to consult on dropping the requirement for a 20% buffer to be added for both plan making and decision making – which otherwise effectively means that local authorities need to identify six years of supply rather than five. In addition, I want to recognise that some areas have historically overdelivered on housing - but they are not rewarded for this. My plan will therefore allow local planning authorities to take this into account when preparing a new local plan, lowering the number of houses they need to plan for.

Places with existing plans will benefit from the changes above, as they will be free of five-year land supply obligations provided that plan is up to date. However, I am aware that those with local plans at an advanced stage of preparation will not benefit from these changes so I will also put in place transitional arrangements. Where authorities are well-advanced in producing a new plan, but the constraints which I have outlined mean that the amount of land to be released needs to be reassessed, I will give those places a two year period to revise their plan against the changes we propose and to get it adopted. And while they are doing this, we will also make sure that these places are less at risk from speculative development, by reducing the amount of land which they need to show is available on a rolling basis (from the current five years to four).

I will increase community protections afforded by a neighbourhood plan against developer appeals – increasing those protections from two years to five years. The power of local and neighbourhood plans will be enhanced by the Bill; and this will be underpinned further through this commitment. Adopting a plan will be the best form of community action - and protection. Furthermore, we will clarify and consult on what areas we propose to be in scope of the new National Development Management Policies, and we will consult on each new Policy before it is brought forward by the Government. National Development Management Policies will also not constrain the ability of local areas to set policies on specific local issues.

I will consult on the detail of proposals increase planning fees, including doubling fees for retrospective application where breaches of planning have occurred, as soon as possible. I will also consult on a new planning performance framework that will monitor local performance across a broader set of measures of planning service delivery, including planning enforcement.

## **BUILD OUT**

I already have a significant package of measures in the Bill to ensure developers build out the developments for which they already have planning. I will consult on two further measures:

- i) on allowing local planning authorities to refuse planning applications from developers who have built slowly in the past; and



ii) on making sure that local authorities who permission land are not punished under the housing delivery test when it is developers who are not building.

I will also consult on our new approach to accelerating the speed at which permissions are built out, specifically on a new financial penalty.

### **CHARACTER OF A DEVELOPER**

I have heard and seen examples of how the planning system is undermined by irresponsible developers and landowners who persistently ignore planning rules and fail to deliver their legal commitments to the community. I therefore propose to consult on the best way of addressing this issue, including looking at a similar approach to tackling the slow build out of permissions, where we will give local authorities the power to stop developers getting permissions.

### **BROWNFIELD FIRST**

The new Infrastructure Levy will be set locally by local planning authorities. They will be able to set different Levy rates in different areas, for example lower rates on brownfield over greenfield to increase the potential for brownfield development. That will allow them to reflect national policy, which delivers our brownfield first pledge by giving substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land.

I will consult to see what more we can do in national policy to support development on small sites particularly with respect to affordable housing and I will launch a review into identifying further measures that would prioritise the use of brownfield land. To help make the most of empty premises, including those above shops, I am reducing the period after which a council tax premium can be charged so that we can make the most of the space we already have. I will also provide further protection in national policy for our important agricultural land for food production, making it harder for developers to build on it.

### **THE HOUSING MARKET**

I intend to deliver a new tourist accommodation registration scheme as quickly as possible, working with DCMS, starting with a further short consultation on the exact design of the scheme. I will also consult on going further still and reviewing the Use Classes Order so that it enables places such as Devon, Cornwall, and the Lake District to control changes of use to short term lets if they wish.

I have also asked the Competition and Markets Authority to consider undertaking a market study. I believe the case is clear for them to take this forward, but respect their independence as they come to a decision.

These reforms will help to deliver enough of the right homes in the right places and will do that by promoting development that is beautiful, that comes with the right infrastructure, that is done democratically with local communities rather than to them, that protects and improves our environment, and that leaves us with better neighbourhoods than before.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Transport Update

**Minister of State for Transport (Huw Merriman):**

**[[HCWS413](#)]**

I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State to make this Written Ministerial Statement. This statement confirms that it has been necessary to extend the deadline for the decision for the A1 Northumberland – Morpeth to Ellingham Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a Statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority's report on the A1 Northumberland – Morpeth to Ellingham Development Consent Order application on 5 October 2021. The current deadline for a decision is 5 December 2022, having been extended from 5 January 2022 to 5 June 2022 by way of [written ministerial statement of 15 December 2021](#) and then to 5 December 2022 by [written ministerial statement of 6 June 2022](#)

The deadline for the decision is to be further extended to 5 September 2023 (an extension of 9 months). The reason remains as that set out in the written ministerial statement of 6 June 2022.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to give development consent for the above application.