

## Daily Report

Thursday, 15 December 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 December 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:34 P.M., 15 December 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>7</b>		
ATTORNEY GENERAL	7	■ Energy Bills Rebate: Expenditure	12
■ Prosecutions: Standards	7	■ Energy Bills Rebate: Rented Housing	12
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	7	■ Energy Charter Treaty	13
■ Business: Energy	7	■ Energy Price Guarantee	13
■ Business: Kingston upon Hull North	8	■ Energy: Charities	13
■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries	8	■ Energy: Meters	14
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Departmental Responsibilities	9	■ Energy: Prices	16
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Maritime UK	9	■ Environment Protection: Job Creation	17
■ Education: Energy	10	■ Green Deal Scheme	18
■ Electronic Cigarettes: Sales	10	■ Hospitality Industry: Rural Areas	18
■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Kingston upon Hull North	10	■ Houseboats: Energy Bills Rebate	18
■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Leeds North West	11	■ Housing: Kingston upon Hull North	19
■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Post Offices	11	■ Housing: Leeds North West	19
■ Energy Bills Rebate	11	■ Housing: Stockport	19
■ Energy Bills Rebate: District Heating	11	■ Housing: Washington and Sunderland West	19
		■ Hydrogen	20
		■ Hydrogen: Investment	21
		■ Hydrogen: Production	21

■ Industry: Kingston upon Hull North	23	■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	31
■ Intellectual Property: Artificial Intelligence	23	■ Tobacco: Smuggling	32
■ Intellectual Property: Regulation	23	CABINET OFFICE	32
■ Job Creation: Kingston upon Hull North	24	■ China: National Security	32
■ Life Sciences and Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access	24	DEFENCE	33
■ Members: Correspondence	25	■ A400M Aircraft: Procurement	33
■ Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia	25	■ Afghanistan: Refugees	33
■ North Sea Oil: Shetland	25	■ Air Force: Training	33
■ Offshore Industry: Licensing	26	■ AWACS: Procurement	34
■ Palliative Care: Energy Bill Relief Scheme	27	■ Defence Equipment: Procurement	34
■ Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002	27	■ Department of Health and Social Care and Home Office: Military Aid	34
■ Post Office: Fujitsu	27	■ F-35 Aircraft: Costs	35
■ Post Offices: ICT	27	■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Shipbuilding	35
■ Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	28	■ Future Combat Air System	35
■ Renewable Energy: Community Development	29	■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review	35
■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs	29	■ Military Aid: Ambulance Services	36
■ Renewable Energy: Kingston upon Hull North	29	■ Military Aid: Industrial Disputes	36
■ Renewable Energy: Leeds North West	30	■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure	36
■ Rented Housing: Energy	30	■ Ministry of Defence: Resignations	37
■ Research: Kingston upon Hull North	30	■ Ministry of Defence: Staff	37
■ Small Businesses: Kingston upon Hull North	31	■ Ministry of Defence: Vacancies	38
		■ Ministry of Defence: Written Questions	38
		■ Taiwan: Military Aid	38
		■ Taiwan: Navy	39

■ Type 32 Frigates: Procurement	39	■ Environment Protection	53
■ Typhoon Aircraft	40	■ Nature Conservation	53
■ Typhoon Aircraft: Costs	41	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	54
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	41	■ Afghanistan: Immigration	54
■ Arts: Finance	41	■ Africa: Development Aid and Humanitarian Aid	54
■ Broadband: Easington	41	■ Africa: Monkeypox	55
■ Cricket: Ethnic Groups	43	■ Africa: Vaccination	55
■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Trade	44	■ Brazil: Human Rights	56
■ English National Opera: Finance	44	■ Cambodia: Manufacturing Industries	56
■ Gambling: Taxation	45	■ China: Foreign Relations	56
■ Leisure and Swimming Pools: Facilities	46	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	57
■ Online Safety Bill	47	■ Development Aid	57
■ Opera	48	■ Eritrea: Journalism	57
■ Royal Parks: Avian Influenza	48	■ Ethiopia: Security	58
■ Social Media: Disinformation	48	■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Bullying	58
■ Technology: Russia	49	■ Humanitarian Aid	59
EDUCATION	49	■ Indonesia: Diplomatic Service	59
■ Academies: Reviews	49	■ Iran: Baha'i Faith	60
■ Department for Education: Theft	49	■ Jimmy Lai	60
■ Education: Energy	50	■ Kosovo: Serbia	61
■ Natural History: GCSE	50	■ Myanmar: Humanitarian Aid	61
■ Schools: Energy	51	■ Sierra Leone: Electoral Systems	62
■ Sleep: Children	51	■ Somaliland: Animals	62
■ Special Educational Needs	52	■ Somaliland: Fires	63
■ State Education: Teachers	52	■ South Africa: Just Energy Transition Partnership	63
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	53	■ Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya	64
■ Environment Act 2021	53	■ Tigray: Medical Equipment	64
		■ Ukraine: Electricity Generation	64

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	65	■ Crimes of Violence: Crime Prevention	78
■ Ambulance Services: Standards	65	■ Deportation: EU Countries	78
■ Blood: Donors	65	■ Firearms: Licensing	78
■ Cancer: North West	66	■ Firearms: Seized Articles	79
■ Carers	66	■ Frontex	79
■ Cystic Fibrosis: Drugs	66	■ Home Office: Incentives	80
■ Dementia: Health Services	67	■ Home Office: Vacancies	80
■ Dementia: York	67	■ Members: Correspondence	80
■ Dental Health: Disadvantaged	67	■ Migrants: Detainees	80
■ Dental Services	68	■ Police: Finance	83
■ Dental Services: Children	68	■ Police: Misconduct	83
■ Dental Services: Contracts	69	■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel	84
■ Dentistry	69	■ Visas: Overseas Students	84
■ General Food Regulations 2004	70	■ Visas: Seasonal Workers	84
■ General Practitioners	70	■ Windrush Compensation Scheme: Birmingham	85
■ Genito-urinary Medicine	71	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	86
■ Health Services: Travellers	71	■ Trade Agreements: Parliamentary Scrutiny	86
■ Health: Females	71	JUSTICE	86
■ HIV Infection: Blackpool	72	■ Prisoners' Release: Christmas	86
■ Home Care Services: Fuels	73	■ Prisoners: Gender Recognition	87
■ Integrated Care Boards: Finance	73	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	87
■ Maternity Services: Staff	73	■ Blackpool Council: Business Rates	87
■ Medical Records: Children	74	■ Council Tax: Bailiffs	87
■ NHS: Protective Clothing	74	■ Heating: Government Assistance	88
■ Obesity	75	■ Homelessness: Veterans	88
■ Pharmacy: Closures	75	■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Homelessness	89
■ Sickle Cell Diseases	76	■ Housing: Construction	89
■ York Hospital: Paediatrics	76		
HOME OFFICE	77		
■ Asylum: Domestic Abuse	77		
■ Asylum: Northern Ireland	77		

■ Housing: Energy	89	TREASURY	99
■ Housing: Public Houses	90	■ Commodity Markets: Regulation	99
■ Landlords: Registration	90	■ Deposit Guarantee Scheme Regulations 2015	99
■ Local Government Finance: Romford	91	■ Energy: VAT	100
■ Parking: Private Sector	91	■ National Income	100
NORTHERN IRELAND	91	■ Public Houses: Business Rates	101
■ Craigavon House: Repairs and Maintenance	91	■ Public Sector: Industrial Disputes	102
■ International Fund for Ireland	91	■ Tobacco: Smuggling	102
■ Northern Ireland Office: Trade	92	WALES	103
■ Northern Ireland: Elections	92	■ Wales Office: Trade	103
■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland	92	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	104
PRIME MINISTER	93	■ Assistance Animals	104
■ Honours	93	WORK AND PENSIONS	105
■ Prime Minister: Staff	93	■ Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2022	105
TRANSPORT	93	■ Cold Weather Payments	105
■ A36: Cleveland Bridge	93	■ Cost of Living Payments: Carers	106
■ Department for Transport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	93	■ Cost of Living Payments: Disability	107
■ Electric Scooters: Safety	94	■ Employment: Disability	108
■ Horticulture: Vehicles	94	■ Employment: Menopause	108
■ Hydrogen Fuelling Stations	95	■ Food Banks	108
■ Public Transport: Hydrogen	96	■ Jobcentre Plus: Expenditure	109
■ Railways: Christmas	96	■ Jobcentres	109
■ Railways: Freight	97	■ Pension Credit: Eligibility	109
■ Railways: Snow and Ice	97	■ Restart Scheme: Disclosure of Information	110
■ Railways: Strikes	98	■ Second State Pension Age Independent Review	110
■ Road Traffic Offences: Fixed Penalties	98	■ Universal Credit	110
■ Roads: Salt	98	■ Winter Fuel Payments	111

<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>JUSTICE</b>	<b>119</b>
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	112	■ Progress report on the implementation of the Rape Review Action Plan, User-friendly guides for victims; Operation Soteria Year One report.	119
■ Gendered Intelligence: Finance	112	<b>TREASURY</b>	<b>120</b>
■ Television Licences: Non-payment	112	■ Life Insurance taxation: transfers and reinsurance of long-term business	120
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	113	■ Treasury Directions under the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022	121
■ Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust: Staff	113	<b>WORK AND PENSIONS</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>115</b>	■ Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update	122
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	115	■ UK's 2022 Follow-up Report to the 2016 Inquiry by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	123
■ Business Update	115		
CABINET OFFICE	115		
■ Government Transparency and Accountability	115		
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	117		
■ Health Update	117		

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Prosecutions: Standards

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[108386\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what data her Department holds on the average length of time between (a) a suspect admitting committing an offence to the police and (b) that suspect being prosecuted for that offence.

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[108387\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the average time is for the Crown Prosecution Service to bring charges once a suspect has confessed a crime to the police.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

THE CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE (CPS) DOES NOT HOLD DATA ON THE TIME BETWEEN A SUSPECT CONFESSING TO A CRIME AND THEM BEING CHARGED. THE CPS IS ABLE TO PROVIDE THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS BETWEEN THE FIRST REFERRAL BY THE POLICE FOR EARLY ADVICE OR A CHARGING DECISION AND THE CPS AUTHORISING CHARGE. ONCE THE CPS AUTHORISE CHARGE THE CASE IS RETURNED TO THE POLICE TO CHARGE THE DEFENDANT. IN THE 2021/2022 PERIOD, THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CALENDAR DAYS BETWEEN WHEN A REFERRAL IS MADE TO THE CPS BY THE POLICE AND WHEN THE SUSPECT IS CHARGED WAS 41.9 DAYS.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business: Energy

**Alun Cairns:**

[\[105337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department plans to provide to off-grid businesses on increased energy costs.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government has announced the Non-Domestic Alternative Fuel Payment Scheme, which will provide off-grid businesses and non-domestic consumers using alternative fuels in Great Britain and Northern Ireland with a one-off fixed payment of £150 through electricity suppliers. In addition to the £150, a top up payment will be available for large users of heating oil (kerosene) to take account of their higher usage. These top-up payments will require an application to a delivery body and will be banded based on level of usage.

## ■ **Business: Kingston upon Hull North**

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[105254]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with businesses in Kingston upon Hull North constituency on the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on those businesses.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government recognises the impact rising prices are having on businesses, including those in Kingston upon Hull North, and is engaging with businesses across the UK to understand these challenges and explore ways to mitigate them. The Government has reversed the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs £4,200 on average; cut fuel duty for 12 months; and brought in the Energy Bill Relief Scheme which is shielding businesses across the country from soaring energy prices, saving some around half of their wholesale energy costs. The Employment Allowance was increased to £5,000 from April and we have continued to provide business rate relief worth over £7bn, freezing the business rates multiplier for a further year.

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

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[105304]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of businesses that are owned by black and ethnic minority people in Kingston upon Hull North constituency.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government does not hold regional information on the proportion of BME-owned businesses in Kingston upon Hull North. Government is aware of the challenges faced by ethnic minority businesses and is taking action to support them. Ministers regularly engage with ethnic minority business leaders and networks to better understand the issues facing them.

We are 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 worth £187,043,936.

We are also delivering actions set out in the Inclusive Britain report (2022), which aim to support ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

## ■ **Clothing: Manufacturing Industries**

**Dan Carden:**

**[105542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing a garment trade adjudicator to tackle non-compliance with labour market regulation in the UK garment industry.



**Kevin Hollinrake:**

In response to the single enforcement body consultation published last year, the government reaffirmed its commitment to continue engaging with the enforcement bodies and industry partners to strengthen our understanding of the garment trade. We will continue to review this issue and consider options to drive up standards across the sector.

Since October 2020, a wide group of stakeholders comprising retailers, manufacturers and non-profit organisations have been working with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) under the Apparel and General Merchandise Public Private Protocol to address poor working, pay, and purchasing practices in the UK supply chain.

**■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Departmental Responsibilities****Chi Onwurah:****[104201]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2022 to Question 82299 on Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Departmental Responsibilities, for what reason there are differences in the roles and responsibilities between the Minister for Investment and Minister for Investment Security.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Minister for Investment Security, my noble Friend Lord Johnson of Lainston, and my roles are based in different departments and have different responsibilities in line with their departmental remits. Details of our respective portfolios can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/minister-of-state-minister-for-industry-and-investment-security> ;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/minister-of-state--103>.

**■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Maritime UK****Grahame Morris:****[108152]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many hours officials in his Department have worked to (a) attend and (b) support the policy agenda of the National Council of Maritime UK since 2019-20 to date.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

BEIS officials regularly engage with Maritime UK as a key trade body for Marine in the UK, including attending and updating on BEIS activities at the National Council – work to support the Marine agenda is a key priority across Government and as such officials spend a great deal of time working directly and indirectly on Marine policy issues which are often discussed at National Council meetings.

**■ Education: Energy****Peter Gibson:****[105470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional financial support to education providers who have had their energy contracts terminated on the basis of assessments made by suppliers of the credit worthiness of those providers.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) provides a price reduction to ensure that all education providers are protected from excessively high energy bills over the winter period. EBRS also provides additional support to those on deemed and out of contract tariffs if they meet the definition of the qualifying financially disadvantaged customers as set out in the scheme's regulations and rules.

**■ Electronic Cigarettes: Sales****Mr Virendra Sharma:****[108459]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Trading Standards' powers to regulate the sale of vaping products and tackle illicit vaping tobacco products.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Vapes are regulated through the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and the Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015. These regulations have allowed vapes to be available to support smokers quit while limiting access by children and non-smokers. The government continues to work with enforcement agencies to ensure these regulations are enforced in England.

Suspected illegal activity should be reported in the first instance to the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 ( [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) ).

**■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Kingston upon Hull North****Dame Diana Johnson:****[105300]**

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

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme is in legislation and 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 Bill Relief Scheme: Leeds North West**

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[104402\]](#)

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 Leeds North West constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme is set out clearly in legislation so 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 Bill Relief Scheme: Post Offices**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[106451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending support for Post Office branches under the Energy Bill Relief Scheme past March 2023.

**Graham Stuart:**

HM Treasury is conducting a review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme to inform decisions on future support after March 2023.

### ■ **Energy Bills Rebate**

**Shabana Mahmood:**

[\[104178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the mechanism for energy companies passing on Energy Bill Support Scheme payments to their customers.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bills Support Scheme is delivering, via suppliers, a £400 non-repayable government discount in six instalments from October to March to help with energy bills this winter. 29 million households in GB are eligible. The Government is closely monitoring the scheme's delivery and requires suppliers to report to Government monthly. Most recent data shows 97% of the payments due have gone out.

### ■ **Energy Bills Rebate: District Heating**

**Chris Law:**

[\[106495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when heat network customers in domestic households will begin to receive the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme discount.

**Graham Stuart:**

If a heat network customer has a domestic electricity meter, they should already be in receipt of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

If a customer does not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an electricity supplier, the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding will provide a £400 support for energy bills. Eligibility and timescales will be announced shortly.

**Chris Law:**[\[106498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to provide the Energy Bill Support Scheme discount to heat network customers in domestic households who use the same billing agent for both heat and electricity.

**Graham Stuart:**

If a heat network customer has a domestic electricity meter, they should already be in receipt of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

If a customer does not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an electricity supplier, the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding will provide a £400 support for energy bills. Eligibility, timescales and method of delivery will be announced shortly.

**■ Energy Bills Rebate: Expenditure****Shabana Mahmood:**[\[104177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of total spending on the Energy Bill Support Scheme in (a) England, (b) the West Midlands, (c) Birmingham.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bills Support Scheme is an £11.7bn scheme which forms part of the £37bn cost-of-living assistance package announced in May 2022. The Department will publish location data shortly.

**■ Energy Bills Rebate: Rented Housing****Beth Winter:**[\[105522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94849 on Energy Bills Rebate: Rented Housing, whether he has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of Ofgem's enforcement of its Maximum Resale Price rules on requiring landlords not to charge tenants more than they have paid a supplier for the energy.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem is not responsible for the enforcement of the Maximum Resale Price. If a tenant suspects they are being overcharged for their energy, they can either make a complaint to the trading standards office or pursue their complaint via the courts. To

ensure recent government support is reaching consumers, the Government has introduced new requirements in the Energy Prices Act, which require third-party intermediaries, such as landlords, to pass support through to end users, such as tenants

## ■ Energy Charter Treaty

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[101001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies on the Energy Charter Treaty of the opinion published by the French High Climate Council on 20 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 our engagement with the Treaty's modernisation process.

## ■ Energy Price Guarantee

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[104213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current mechanism for calculating of the energy price cap by Ofgem.

**Graham Stuart:**

As the expert independent regulator, Ofgem is responsible for operating the price cap. Ofgem remains the sole decision-maker over how it is calculated and has consulted extensively on its methodology for determining the cap level. The Government has confidence in Ofgem, as the expert independent regulator, to set the cap at a level that reflects the underlying efficient costs of supplying energy.

## ■ Energy: Charities

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[\[104082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with (a) Scouts UK and (b) other charities on increased energy costs; and what steps he is taking to support those organisations with those costs.

**Graham Stuart:**

Discussions have taken place with a number of charities regarding increased energy costs. The Government is fully aware of the impact this is having on the voluntary sector.

This is why the Energy Bill Relief Scheme has been introduced, with legislation coming into force on 1 November, shielding charities across the United Kingdom from soaring energy prices and saving some around half of their wholesale energy costs.

The scheme applies to energy usage from 1 October 2022 for an initial 6-month period.

■ **Energy: Meters**

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

**[104081]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of (a) moving people onto prepayment meters against their will and (b) cutting off energy supply (i) unilaterally and (ii) remotely on (A) elderly, (B) impoverished and (C) other vulnerable people; what recent discussions he has had with energy companies on the impact of these practices; whether his Department is taking steps to protect people from these practices; and if he will make a statement.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter on customers who are in debt, except as a last resort. Ofgem also has rules to protect consumers from the risk of disconnection, in particular preventing suppliers from directly disconnecting consumers between November and April.

On the impact of suppliers cutting off supply, between Q3 2021 and Q2 2022, suppliers directly disconnected 3 gas accounts and 19 electricity accounts according to Ofgem data. Neither the Government, nor Ofgem hold more detailed data on the recent impact of disconnections, or pre-payment installations and switches, on the groups listed.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[105325]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has sought assurances that suppliers are only installing pre-payment meters by warrant as a last resort after all other options have been exhausted.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

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

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

**Beth Winter:**

**[105518]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2022 to Question 93691 on Energy: Meters, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the (a) monitoring and (b) enforcement by Ofgem of energy suppliers' assessments of customer's ability to pay in calculating prepayment meter repayment rates.

**Graham Stuart:**

There are no plans for an assessment.

Ofgem's rules require suppliers to put customers in arrears on realistic and sustainable repayment plans. Suppliers are also required to have appropriate credit management policies and guidelines in place and to monitor arrangements for repayment after they have been set up.

Ofgem's recent Market Compliance Review found that most suppliers need to make improvements to meet their obligations. Two suppliers were served with immediate enforcement notices, and the regulator will also consider whether enforcement action is warranted for other suppliers.

**Dan Carden:**[\[107132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of trends in the number of forcible prepayment meter installations on the smart meter rollout.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* The smart meter rollout continues to make good progress, with 54% of energy meters now smart and continued strong levels of consumer demand.

The independent regulator, Ofgem, is responsible for ensuring suppliers comply with clear regulatory obligations on switching meters from credit to prepayment mode, which apply whether a meter is smart or traditional. This includes specific protections for vulnerable consumers and those in payment difficulty.

Prepayment customers see particular benefits from smart meters, which enable consumers to top-up remotely and track their balance easily, so they do not unknowingly run out of credit.

**Dan Carden:**[\[107133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of trends in the number of forcible prepayment meter installations on levels of fuel poverty.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* Data on fuel poverty and payment methods is published in the Fuel Poverty detailed tables 2022 at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-detailed-tables-2022>. The next statistics will be published in early 2023.

Ofgem rules require suppliers to ensure prepayment meters are only installed if it is 'safe and reasonably practicable' to do so, and there are strong regulatory protections in place to support prepayment meter customers.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[107134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of trends in the number of forcible prepayment meter installations on household debt levels.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* The energy regulator Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter on customers who are in debt, except as a last resort. Prepayment meters can help reduce the risk of customers entering, or exacerbating, debt. Ofgem rules require energy suppliers to only offer a prepayment service where it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[107135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with (a) Citizens Advice and (b) the End Fuel Poverty Coalition on forcible prepayment meter installations; and whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of trends in the numbers of forcible installations.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* BEIS Ministers and officials meet regularly with stakeholders to discuss a range of issues relating to the energy retail market. The energy regulator Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter on customers who are in debt, except as a last resort.

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[\[107170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December to Question 102949 on Energy: Meters, how many warrants have been issued to move non-smart meter energy customers to pre-payment meters in the UK since 1 January 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* Ofgem does not hold this data for 2022 yet. The Government expects to receive the data in Q1 2023.

## ■ Energy: Prices

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[107151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking further steps to support businesses in response to increases to the energy price cap.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) provides a price reduction to ensure that all eligible businesses are protected from excessively high energy bills over the winter period. The scheme applies to energy usage from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.



HM Treasury is conducting a review into additional support that could be made available from April 2023, following the end of the EBRs. Any support for businesses will be targeted to those most affected by high energy prices. Continuing support to those deemed eligible would begin at the end of the initial 6-month support scheme.

■ **Environment Protection: Job Creation**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[104197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of green jobs in Newcastle Central constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is providing significant investment for the offshore renewable and electric vehicle industries across North East England.

The Getting Building Fund is supporting construction of Equinor's new Operations and Maintenance base at the Port of Tyne, which will serve the world's biggest offshore wind farm at Dogger Bank. This is expected to generate over 200 direct jobs in the region.

Construction has started this week on EV 36 Zero – a new £1 billion Electric Vehicle Hub near to Nissan's Sunderland plant, with significant support coming from the Government, which will create around 1,000 jobs.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[104396]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the number of green jobs in Leeds North West constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Since the launch of the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution in November 2020, an estimated 68,000 jobs have been supported nationally. This forms part of the around 430,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country.

Leeds North West benefits from several streams of devolved funding through the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, including £38m per annum to support local priorities including Green Growth.

In addition to this locally determined investment, Government has provided £238,000 through the Community Renewal Fund, to help build the pipeline of talent and green skills in West Yorkshire.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[104400]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published on 18 November 2020, how many jobs have been created in Leeds North West constituency as a result of the implementation of that plan.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government does not collect Green Jobs data at constituency level. Since the launch of the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution in November 2020 an estimated 68,000 jobs have been supported nationally. This forms part of the around 430,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country.

Leeds North West benefits from several streams of devolved funding through the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, including £38m per annum to support local priorities including Green Growth.

In addition to this locally determined investment, Government has provided £238,000 through the Community Renewal Fund, to help build the pipeline of talent and green skills in West Yorkshire.

**Green Deal Scheme****Bill Esterson:**[\[106363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Deal projects are classified as live as of 8 December 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* Information on the cumulative number of Green Deal plans can be found in table 7.1 accompanying the latest Household Energy Efficiency Statistics, headline release.

**Hospitality Industry: Rural Areas****Alun Cairns:**[\[105339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional support his Department plans to make available for off-grid care pubs and hospitality businesses on increased energy costs.

**Graham Stuart:**

Non-domestic consumers off the gas grid will receive a one-off fixed payment of £150 through electricity suppliers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A top-up payment in addition to the £150 will be available for large users of heating oil (kerosene) in GB and NI to take account of their higher usage. These top-up payments will require an application to a delivery body and will be banded based on level of usage.

**Houseboats: Energy Bills Rebate****Munira Wilson:**[\[108400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether houseboat residents will be eligible for the £200 Alternative Fuel Payment.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Alternative Fuel Payment of £200 will provide support for those in properties using fuels such as heating oil, liquified petroleum gas, coal or biomass for heating. The Government will set out more details on the scheme soon.

**Housing: Kingston upon Hull North****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[105251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of homes that have had solar power panels installed in Kingston upon Hull North constituency as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

At the end of October 2022, there were 1,016 domestic installations of solar panels recorded in Kingston upon Hull North constituency.

**Housing: Leeds North West****Alex Sobel:**[\[104391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of how many homes in Leeds North West constituency had solar power panels installed as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

At the end of October 2022, there were 990 domestic installations of solar panels recorded in Leeds North West constituency.

**Housing: Stockport****Navendu Mishra:**[\[108436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which ward in Stockport constituency has the highest proportion of homes fitted with external wall insulation.

**Graham Stuart:**

BEIS estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) Government schemes, the ward with the highest proportion of external wall insulation measures installed in Stockport constituency is Manor.

**Housing: Washington and Sunderland West****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[106397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of homes with cavity walls that have been insulated in Washington and Sunderland West constituency as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

BEIS estimates that under the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) and [Green Homes Grant \(GHG\)](#) Government schemes, around 1,100 cavity wall insulation measures

have been installed in Washington and Sunderland West constituency as at end of September 2022.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[106398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of homes that have had heat pumps installed in Washington and Sunderland West constituency as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme Installations Database shows that as of 31 October 2022, 55 heat pump installations were registered in the Washington and Sunderland West constituency.

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

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[106401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of homes that have had solar power panels installed in Washington and Sunderland West constituency as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

At the end of October 2022, there were 4,064 domestic installations of solar panels recorded in Washington and Sunderland West constituency.

## ■ Hydrogen

**Alan Brown:** [\[105437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential overall electricity transmission grid balancing benefits of hydrogen.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government views hydrogen as an important component of our future power system to provide low carbon flexibility as we integrate more intermittent renewables. Excess renewable electricity can be used to produce hydrogen, using electrolyzers, which can be stored over time and used flexibly to generate power when there is less sun or wind to power the grid.

As set out in the British Energy Security Strategy, the Government is committed to ensuring consideration is given in our hydrogen production policies to the siting of hydrogen electrolyzers to best use surplus low carbon electricity and to reduce electricity network constraints.

## ■ Hydrogen: Investment

**Alan Brown:**

[\[105435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that all regions of the UK benefit from hydrogen investment.

**Graham Stuart:**

In the Energy Security Strategy, the Government doubled its ambition from 5GW to up to 10GW of low carbon production capacity by 2030, including a commitment to host yearly electrolytic allocation funding rounds for projects across the UK. Together with a clear policy and regulatory environment, the Government expects to mobilise over £9 billion of private investment in hydrogen production alone across all regions of the UK by 2030.

## ■ Hydrogen: Production

**Alan Brown:**

[\[105432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to help increase the production of low-carbon hydrogen in the UK.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government has doubled its ambition to up to 10GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030, subject to affordability and value for money.

The UK's increased ambition will drive significant private sector investment, delivered by a strong investable proposition through the Hydrogen Production Business Model, which will help to address the key barrier to deployment, the cost gap compared to fossil fuels. The Net Zero Hydrogen Fund will also provide up to £240 million to 2025 to support the development and construction of new low carbon hydrogen production plants.

**Alan Brown:**

[\[105433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential economic benefits of increasing the UK's production of low-carbon hydrogen.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK's hydrogen ambition – up to 10GW of production capacity by 2030 – offers significant economic opportunities across the country. Government analysis suggests the sector could be worth over £900m and support 12,000 jobs by 2030, unlocking over £9bn in private investment in production alone.

**Alan Brown:**

[\[105434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the low-carbon hydrogen production pipeline develops outside of the UK's industrial clusters.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is aware of a potential pipeline of almost 20GW of projects across the UK in every corner of the Union. The Government launched the first joint Hydrogen Production Business Model and Net Zero Hydrogen Fund allocation round to support electrolytic projects across the UK this year, with the aim to award contracts in 2023. Transport and storage (T&S) will also be essential to grow the hydrogen economy, including outside of industrial clusters. Government will publish a response to its consultation on T&S business models next year.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[107112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase the production of low-carbon hydrogen in the UK.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* The Government has doubled its ambition to up to 10GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030, subject to affordability and value for money.

The Government's increased ambition will drive significant private sector investment, delivered by a strong investable proposition through the Hydrogen Production Business Model, which will help to address the key barrier to deployment, the cost gap compared to fossil fuels. The Net Zero Hydrogen Fund will also provide up to £240 million to 2025 to support the development and construction of new low carbon hydrogen production plants.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[107113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the preparedness of the planning system for the development of green hydrogen production facilities.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* Officials are working to ensure the planning system is optimised to support the development of a rapidly expanding UK hydrogen economy. This includes through the BEIS Hydrogen Regulators Forum and bilateral engagement. The Government will continue to work with industry and regulators to identify, prioritise and implement any changes to the existing framework, including addressing any gaps, to support the growth of the hydrogen economy. BEIS recently consulted on the optimality of existing planning arrangements through a consultation on hydrogen transport and storage infrastructure business models and regulation, and is currently reviewing the submitted responses.

■ **Industry: Kingston upon Hull North**

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[105257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which industry in Kingston upon Hull North constituency receives the most Government funding as of 7 December 2022.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government does not collect data on industrial investment at constituency level. Residents in Kingston upon Hull North benefit from numerous streams of funding to support local growth including £19.5m through the Levelling Up Fund for the regeneration of Hull City Centre and £10.6m through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to focus on local priorities. To support research, development and innovation, £28 million of UK Research and Innovation funding has been invested in East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire between 2019 and 2021. Regional data is not yet available for UK Research and Innovation investment beyond this.

■ **Intellectual Property: Artificial Intelligence**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[105457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the number of instances where creative industries have failed to license their repertoire to artificial intelligence developers.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government asked specific questions about impact in the consultation on AI and IP, but very limited quantitative evidence was submitted. However, smaller users such as small businesses and start-ups, as well as many researchers, have indicated that - when seeking to analyse works from multiple sources - licences have been out of reach on the grounds of cost or complexity.

■ **Intellectual Property: Regulation**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[108197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80687, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) intellectual property practitioners are effectively regulated and (b) consumers have access to an appropriate redress mechanism against those practitioners.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to him by my Hon. Friend the Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to Question [80687](#): the Government supports appropriate regulation of intellectual property practitioners where this is necessary to ensure that applicants and rights holders are effectively represented.

The Government has not seen a need to change the current regulatory framework. However, the Government welcomes evidence from practitioners and consumers if they consider there to be deficiencies in the current system.

■ **Job Creation: Kingston upon Hull North**

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[105298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of jobs that have been created in Kingston upon Hull North constituency as a result of the implementation of the ten point plan for a green industrial revolution, published on 18 November 2020.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is providing significant investment for the offshore renewable, low-carbon, energy production and carbon capture industries across East Yorkshire and the Humber.

Zero Carbon Humber has been awarded £21m of Government funding to support its aim to turn the Humber region into a net zero cluster by 2040. Zero Carbon Humber also collaborates on the East Coast Cluster, selected as one of the first two carbon capture, usage, and storage clusters to be taken forward by the UK government.

The Humber Freeport will also support low carbon economic growth whilst creating over 1,000 high-quality employment opportunities.

■ **Life Sciences and Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access**

**Chris Green:**

[\[105414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on improving the UK's standing as a global life sciences hub and the use of the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing Access.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

As the accountable Secretaries of State for the Life Sciences Vision, the Government and life sciences sector's blueprint for ensuring the UK becomes a world leading science superpower and global life sciences leader, my Rt. Hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care are regularly engaged in discussions on how we can deliver on the ambitions of the Vision for the economy and for NHS patients.

This was the subject of discussion at the most recent Life Sciences Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, where the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing Access was also discussed.



## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[105582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to respond to the correspondence of 12 October 2022 from the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton on prepayment energy meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

The correspondence has been received by BEIS, with apologies for the delay in replying. A response will be issued to the hon. Member shortly.

## ■ **Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[99988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what process his Department followed to prepare the national security assessment prior to the Newport Wafer Fab divestment decision; and what evidence his Department received as part of that process.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

*[Holding answer 14 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. The Investment Security Unit coordinates expertise from across Government so that the Secretary of State may make decisions based on the evidence. It would not be appropriate to comment on the detail of national security assessments.

## ■ **North Sea Oil: Shetland**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[105411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of rejecting proposals to develop the Rosebank oil field in favour of investment of renewable, reliable, and affordable energy sources.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* Development proposals for oil fields are dealt with by the North Sea Transition Authority and the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning, in line with their regulatory responsibilities.

Development of oil, gas and renewables projects are not mutually exclusive. In the British Energy Security Strategy the Government highlighted the ongoing requirement for oil and gas – for heating, cooking, transport, and industries – and the need to develop affordable, renewable energy sources to ensure the UK's domestic energy security.

**Bill Esterson:**

**[108194]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of developing the Rosebank oil field with the (a) decarbonisation targets for industry in the North Sea Transition Deal, (b) UK's carbon budgets and net zero target and (c) the UK's obligations and commitments towards international climate targets.

**Graham Stuart:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Norwich South on 1st November 2022 to Question [69713](#).

**Bill Esterson:**

**[108195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the potential impact of developing the Rosebank oil field on her Department's ambitions to protect 30% of the UK's oceans by 2030.

**Graham Stuart:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Norwich South on 1st November 2022 to [Question 69714](#).

**Bill Esterson:**

**[108196]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of developing the Rosebank oil field on the UK's ambition to (a) protect 30% of its oceans by 2030 and (b) introduce a net gain approach to infrastructure and development in the marine environment.

**Graham Stuart:**

In relation to part a) of his question, I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Norwich South on 1st November 2022 to [Question 69714](#). In relation to part b) I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given by my Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 9th November 2022 to [Question 69715](#).

## ■ Offshore Industry: Licensing

**Bill Esterson:**

**[108193]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that the new oil and gas licensing round does not damage protected marine habitats.

**Graham Stuart:**

The North Sea Transition Authority holds offshore oil and gas licensing rounds. As part of the licensing round process, the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning will undertake the assessments required by the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations 2001 (Habitats Regulations assessments) to determine if the activities proposed could have an

adverse effect on the integrity of a relevant site. Licences will only be awarded after such Habitats Regulations assessments.

■ **Palliative Care: Energy Bill Relief Scheme**

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

[\[108070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to provide additional funding to (a) children's hospices and (b) palliative care charities when the non-domestic Energy Bill Relief Scheme ends in March 2023.

**Graham Stuart:**

HM Treasury is currently conducting a review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme and evidence from care providers is included in that review. The Government cannot confirm which sectors will receive further support after 31st March 2023 until the end of the review, which will report by the end of this year.

■ **Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[108204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) retain (b) replace and (c) revoke the Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

In leaving the EU we regained the ability to regulate autonomously, and the Government is therefore conducting a comprehensive review of all retained EU employment law to ensure that our regulations are tailored to the needs of the UK economy and help create the conditions for economic growth.

■ **Post Office: Fujitsu**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[105460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to make Fujitsu accountable for the monies lost to the public purse as part of the Horizon Post Office scandal.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government has set up a statutory inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal. Collective and individual accountability for the scandal can only be considered when the Inquiry has reviewed all of the evidence.

■ **Post Offices: ICT**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[105455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Horizon scandal compensation schemes at restoring affected postmasters to the financial position they would otherwise be in were it not for that scandal.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Government wants to see all postmasters affected by the Horizon scandal receive the compensation they deserve as quickly as possible. As part of normal processes, the Government regularly monitors its programmes to ensure they are effective. We provide regular updates to the BEIS Select Committee on spend on compensation.

**Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme****Bill Esterson:**[\[107106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much money has the Government spent on the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, as of 24 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme is making available £2.5 billion over the financial years 2020/21 to 2024/25 to install heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures in public sector buildings. As of 24 November 2022, the scheme had awarded grants worth £1.7 billion to fund such projects.

**Bill Esterson:**[\[107109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which constituencies have received the most funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, as of 9 December 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold a breakdown of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding by constituency. Lists of all projects funded through the scheme can be found on the scheme's GOV.UK page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme>.

**Bill Esterson:**[\[107111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which type of non-domestic public sector buildings have received the most funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, as of 9 December 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department does not hold a breakdown of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding by building type. However, the Department does hold a breakdown of funding allocated by sector.

As of 9 December 2022, Local Authorities have received the most funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to install heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures in their buildings, followed by the NHS and Further and Higher Education Institutions.

Further details on sectoral breakdowns for each phase of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme are available in the summary reports published on the

scheme's GOV.UK pages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme>.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Community Development

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[108421]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to (a) remove potential barriers to local communities from setting up new community renewable energy projects and (b) increase the number of new community renewable energy projects in the UK.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem supports community energy projects and welcomes applications from community interest groups, co-operative societies, and community benefit societies to the Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme.

The Government is enabling local areas to tackle net zero goals through UK-wide growth funding schemes. The Government encourages community energy groups to work closely with their local authority to support the development of community energy projects within these schemes.

The Government has also reintroduced the Community Energy Contact Group to strengthen its engagement with the sector.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[108420]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the potential impact of the closure of the feed-in tariff on (a) investments in new renewable energy projects, (b) investments in new community renewable energy projects and (c) the ability of low-income communities to set up their own community renewable energy projects.

**Graham Stuart:**

No post-closure assessment of the Feed-in Tariffs (FIT) scheme has been undertaken. Data available on the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) dashboard indicates that current deployment of solar at this small-scale, which accounts for 99% of all installations supported under the FIT scheme, is comparable to levels seen under the scheme prior to 2016 when reduced FIT tariffs were introduced.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Kingston upon Hull North

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[105299]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to increase funding for renewable energy sources in Kingston upon Hull North constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Grant funding for renewable innovation or community-based renewable schemes is open for both local authorities and private investors to bid. The Contract for Difference scheme, the Government's main mechanism for supporting low carbon generation, is awarded through a competitive process, ensuring that the most cost-effective projects are supported regardless of their location.

■ **Renewable Energy: Leeds North West****Alex Sobel:**[\[104401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to increase funding for renewable energy sources in Leeds North West constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Grant funding for renewable innovation or community-based renewable schemes is open for both local authorities and private investors to bid. The Contract for Difference scheme, the Government's main mechanism for supporting low carbon generation, is awarded through a competitive process, ensuring that the most cost-effective projects are supported regardless of their location.

■ **Rented Housing: Energy****Bill Esterson:**[\[106366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions has he had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up on enforcing the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards across the rented housing sector.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* BEIS Ministers regularly meet with colleagues to discuss matters that fall under their portfolios. To date, the Department has made available a total of £8.4m for compliance and the enforcement of the existing private rented sector minimum energy efficiency standard regulations. In addition, the Government has so far committed over £1bn for improving the energy performance of social rented homes and will consult on improving the energy efficiency of social housing within 6 months of the Social Housing Regulation Bill receiving Royal Assent. BEIS and DLUHC officials will work together to develop this consultation.

■ **Research: Kingston upon Hull North****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[105296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding his Department has provided for research and development in Kingston upon Hull North constituency in the 2022-23 financial year.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The University of Hull, which has a campus in the constituency received £9,792,327 for the academic year in Quality-related research (QR) funding and Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) delivered through Research England. UK Research and Innovation do not yet have full data for competitive grants in the current financial year 2022/23.

**■ Small Businesses: Kingston upon Hull North****Dame Diana Johnson:****[105253]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many small and medium-sized enterprises in Kingston upon Hull North constituency have received Government funding for support during the cost of living crisis in 2022.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government recognises the impact rising prices are having on businesses.

Businesses in Kingston upon Hull North will have benefitted from the Government's reversal of the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs approximately £4,200 on average; the cut to fuel duty for 12 months; and the Energy Bill Relief Scheme to protect SMEs from high energy costs over the winter. In addition, the Recovery Loan Scheme is available to SMEs across the UK. The Employment Allowance was increased to £5,000 from April and we have continued to provide business rate relief worth over £7bn, freezing the business rates multiplier for a further year.

The Government is also providing financial support through the Start Up loan scheme - 537 SMEs in Kingston upon Hull have received loans to the value of £ 4,042,768 as of November 2022.

**■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund****Bill Esterson:****[107102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding his Department has provided through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund as of 9 December 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The SHDF Demonstrator project, launched in 2020, awarded around £62m of grant funding in 2021. The Government launched Wave 1 of the SHDF in 2021 and it has awarded around £179m of grant funding. The Wave 2.1 competition, which closed in November 2022 will look to allocate up to £800m of grant funding.

The Autumn Statement announced a further £6bn to improve the energy efficiency of homes, including social housing from 2025 – 2028.

**Bill Esterson:****[107104]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which constituencies have received the most funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 awarded around £178m of grant funding, delivering from 2022 into 2023. Data is held on local authority-led projects rather than at a constituency level. The Local Authorities which received funding under Demonstrator and Wave 1 are listed on Gov.uk. The SHDF Wave 2.1 competition will allocate up to £800m of grant funding, with successful projects notified around March 2023.

■ **Tobacco: Smuggling****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[108458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many reports have been received by Trading Standards through the Citizens Advice consumer helpline relating to illegal tobacco in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The total number of cases referred to Trading Standards by Citizens Advice consumer service totalled 249,001 in the last financial year. Information on the main topics Citizens Advice clients seek advice on is provided via the Citizens Advice website.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **China: National Security****Jim Shannon:**[\[105350\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to tackle Chinese threats to UK security.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Our approach to China is comprehensive and coordinated across government, allowing us to robustly defend our values whilst preserving space for cooperation where our interests align.

Earlier this year, we introduced the National Security Bill to Parliament; this Bill will help us to respond to the evolving threat from hostile activity by any state targeting the UK's democracy, economy and values by making the UK an even harder target for those who seek to conduct hostile acts against the UK.

The UK has also enhanced our economic security regime and taken robust action to build our domestic resilience. We have:

- Announced the application of Military End Use Controls to China as part of our revised export control regime, in order to prevent military programmes benefiting from our advanced technology and research by UK firms and institutions.
- Strengthened visa screening of academics and researchers in sensitive areas of research through the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS).



- Stepped up engagement with and guidance to our higher education and research sectors to alert them to potential risks.
- Launched the National Security and Investment Act, giving the government new powers to address national security risks arising from investment.

The refresh of the UK's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy will ensure that our approach continues to adapt to meet new challenges.

## DEFENCE

### ■ A400M Aircraft: Procurement

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[108093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much of the funding for the A400M additional purchases is held (a) centrally and (b) by Air Command.

**Alex Chalk:**

All funding for additional purchases of A400M is currently held centrally. It would not be appropriate for the Department to release forecast funding figures at this time.

### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[108228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications for resettlement to the UK under the Ex-Gratia Scheme for Afghan former locally employed staff there were from 4 June 2013 to 30 November 2022; how many of those applications were approved; and how many remain outstanding.

**James Heappey:**

Under the Ex-Gratia Scheme (EGS), eligible locally employed staff could apply for three offers: financial, training or relocation.

Under the relocation offer, 526 principals were approved and have relocated to the UK with their family members.

There are eight EGS applications outstanding. We are actively supporting the relocation of those applicants still wishing to relocate to the UK.

### ■ Air Force: Training

**Chris Evans:**

[\[105287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential relationship between the delivery of the Military Flying Training System and the functioning of Operational Conversion Unit.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has a range of governance measures in place to assess the full flying training (UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) and

Operational Conversion Units (OCU) pipeline's ability to meet MOD needs. These include the bi-monthly Aircrew Pipeline Steering Group (APSG), chaired at 3\* level. Flying training has also been introduced as a standing agenda item for the monthly Air Executive Committee and will be reviewed annually at the Air Force Main Board, as the Senior Responsible Owner of UKMFTS.

#### ■ **AWACS: Procurement**

**Chris Evans:** [\[105289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of commissioning the three E-7 Wedgetail airborne early warning aircraft.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to question 102821 from the Rt hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford on 13 December 2022.

**Attachments:**

1. AWACS: Procurement [102821 - AWACS Procurement.docx]

#### ■ **Defence Equipment: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[108088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons his Department did not consider the OBR's inflation projections from March 2022 when drafting The Defence Equipment Plan 2022-23.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Defence Equipment Plan 2022-23 is a financial reporting document reflecting a picture in time aligned to the Annual Budgeting Cycle (ABC). This year's ABC closed at the end of March 2022 and therefore the affordability analysis of the Plan reflects the position up until that point. The Equipment Plan is a baseline from which the Department plans around challenges with inflation being one such example.

#### ■ **Department of Health and Social Care and Home Office: Military Aid**

**John Healey:** [\[108078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel will be on standby for Military Aid to Civilian Authority requests from (a) the Department of Health and Social Care and (b) the Home Office until 1 April 2023.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is readying up to 750 military personnel for ambulance driving tasks to support the Department of Health and Social Care. The MOD has agreed to meet a request from the Home Office for a total of 80 military personnel to bolster the Fire and Rescue Service's contingency plans in the event of any industrial action by staff. A further 625 military personnel will be supporting the government's ongoing contingency planning in response to strike action from Border Force staff.

### ■ **F-35 Aircraft: Costs**

**Chris Evans:**

[\[105291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the operational costs are of one flying hour for the F-35 aircraft.

**Alex Chalk:**

I am withholding the information requested as its release would prejudice commercial interests.

### ■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Shipbuilding**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[108096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the response from the Minister for Defence Procurement to hon. Member for Leyton and Wanstead of 12 December 2022, by what definition the Fleet Solid Support Ships will be built in the UK.

**Alex Chalk:**

The majority of the work will be carried out in the UK. The mid and forward sections of all three Fleet Solid Support ships will be built by Harland & Wolff shipyards in Belfast and Appledore. Following arrival of the aft blocks from Spain, the final outfitting, integration of blocks and modules and fitting of sensitive systems, as well as all testing and commissioning will take place in Belfast.

### ■ **Future Combat Air System**

**Chris Evans:**

[\[105286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence taken by the Defence Select Committee on 29 November 2022 on Aviation Procurement, HC 178, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the time it will take for Tempest aircraft to become fully operational on air combat capability gaps.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) is a collaboration between the UK, Italy and Japan to develop a next-generation fighter aircraft to enter service from 2035, before Typhoon's earliest possible out of service date of 2040. Within the UK, the aircraft under development will be known as Tempest.

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

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[108094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the percentage of GDP needed to be spent in order to fulfil the defence and security objectives of his Department set out in the Integrated Review.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Department continues to assess the threats we face, and the capabilities we need in order to address them. It is important to ensure that our plans are properly

financed and supported, and this work is not driven by striving for a percentage of GDP.

■ **Military Aid: Ambulance Services**

**John Healey:** [\[108076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December to Question 97439 on Military Aid: NHS, whether his Department has received a Military Aid to Civilian Authority request from the Department of Health and Social Care to support the Ambulance Service since 1 December 2022.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence has received and accepted a request from Department of Health and Social Care under the Military Aid to Civil Authorities process.

**John Healey:** [\[108077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel are being trained at NHS trusts to drive ambulances.

**James Heappey:**

Defence is making available 600 military personnel, who the NHS will train to drive ambulances in order to mitigate the impact of the proposed industrial action in December 2022.

■ **Military Aid: Industrial Disputes**

**Richard Foord:** [\[108382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will undertake an impact assessment on the effect of military personnel cover for workers engaged in industrial action over winter 2022-23 on the UK's armed forces' capability over that period.

**James Heappey:**

Defence considers a range of factors before approving a MACA request - including the extent to which the request can be fulfilled without disrupting core Defence activity. I and my Ministerial colleagues are clear that the primary task of the Armed Forces is the defence of the realm; we would not approve a MACA request if it put our ability to undertake priority Defence activity at inappropriate risk.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure**

**Steve Reed:** [\[95848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of the Autumn Statement 2022 on the Ministry of Defence Budget in real terms compared to 2021.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the right hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mark Francois) on 8 December 2022 to Question 93479.

**Attachments:**

1. Defence: Expenditure [UIN 93479.docx]

**■ Ministry of Defence: Resignations**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[108340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilian personnel by (a) grade, (b) job role and (c) geographic location resigned in the 12 months to 30 September 2022.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[108341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilian personnel by (a) grade, (b) job role and (c) geographic location retired in the 12 months to 30 September 2022.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[108342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilian personnel transferred out of his Department by (a) grade, (b) job role and (c) geographic location in the 12 months to 30 September 2022.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

It is taking time to collate the required information to answer the hon. Member's Question. I will write to him when the information is available, and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of The House.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Staff**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[108343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the level in civilian personnel (a) resignations, (b) retirements and (c) transfers in the 12 months ending 30 September 2022 compared with the previous 12 months.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) continuously monitors the movement of its Civil Servants and continually seeks to ensure the optimal force design (utilising civilians, Regular Armed Forces, and Reserves appropriately) to meet Defence outputs. Workforce planning is guided by the principle of the right person, with the right skills, in the right role and biannual Strategic Workforce Plans are used to determine future inflow and outflow projections. Evaluation of the availability of required skills has provided an enhanced understanding of workforce skill gaps, allowing appropriate interventions to be identified. These plans are formally submitted twice a year and work is ongoing to analyse, interpret and understand their aggregate impact at Departmental level.

MOD's monthly attrition rates combined with exit survey analysis enable us to understand how and why Civil Servants leave Defence. The latest data illustrates that there have been changes in inflow and outflow over the last year:

**MOD civilian personnel strength**

At October 2022, MOD civilian personnel strength was 59,950. This is a decrease of 460 (0.8%) compared with 1 October 2021

**MOD civilian personnel inflow**

For the 12 months to 30 September 2022, MOD civilian personnel inflow was 5,980. This is a decrease of 180 (2.9%) compared with the previous 12 months

**MOD civilian personnel outflow**

For the 12 months to 30 September 2022, MOD civilian personnel outflow was 6,600. This is an increase of 1,980 (42.8%) compared with the previous 12 months. This is mainly driven by a 48.6% increase in resignation and retirement across the organisation. At 1 April 2022, resignation and retirement across the organisation accounted for a 68% increase across the organisation over the previous 12 months.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Vacancies**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[107122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which five teams in their Department have the highest number of staffing vacancies as a proportion of total staff as of 8 December 2022; and what proportion of roles were vacant in each of those teams.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The requested data is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Written Questions**

**John Healey:** [\[108074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to respond to Question 100891 on Military Aid: Fire Services, tabled on 1 December 2022 by the Rt hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne.

**John Healey:** [\[108075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to provide an answer to Question 100891 tabled by the hon. Member for Wentworth and Deane on 1 December 2022 for answer on 6 December.

**James Heappey:**

I responded to the right hon. Member's question on 12 December 2022.

■ **Taiwan: Military Aid**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[106342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will take steps to provide training for Taiwanese soldiers.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[106370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will take steps to provide military aid to Taiwan.

**James Heappey:**

The UK's longstanding policy on Taiwan has not changed: we have no diplomatic or military relations with Taiwan but a strong, unofficial relationship, based on deep and growing ties in a wide range of areas, and underpinned by shared democratic values.

## ■ Taiwan: Navy

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[106371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to take steps to provide naval patrols around Taiwan.

**James Heappey:**

The UK is committed to asserting its rights to freedom of navigation and overflight, as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Wherever we operate in the world we do so in full compliance with international laws and norms. The last transit through the Taiwan Strait was carried out by the Royal Navy in 2021, when HMS Richmond (Type 23 Frigate) conducted a Taiwan Strait Navigation during CSG21 deployment en route to Vietnam.

## ■ Type 32 Frigates: Procurement

**John Healey:**

[\[106347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to Answer of 8 December 2022 to Question 102768, what programmes are involved in the Type 32 Frigate.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Royal Navy is evolving to become a future Maritime Force and the Type 32 Frigate programme forms part of this. Development work is also being undertaken by a number of defence organisations on programmes that are in their pre-concept/concept phase, including the Multi-Role Support Ship and Future Air Dominance Systems.

**John Healey:**

[\[106348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2022 to Question 102768, which defence organisations are involved in the Type 32 Frigate programme.

**Alex Chalk:**

In addition to the Royal Navy, Defence Equipment and Support Organisation (DE&S), Defence Science and Technology Laboratory Organisation (DSTL) and the National Shipbuilding Office (NSO) - an independent office of the Ministry of Defence - are currently involved in the concept work on the Type 32 Frigate programme.

**John Healey:**

[\[106349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2022 to Question 102771 on Type 32 Frigates: Procurement, when his Department plans to complete the concept phase of the Type 32 Frigate programme.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Type 32 Frigate programme concept phase began in September 2022. The concept phase will end once the requirements for the platform have been finalised, and once overall programme funding has been confirmed.

## ■ Typhoon Aircraft

**Chris Evans:**

[\[105280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence taken by the Defence Select Committee on 29 November 2022 on Aviation Procurement, HC 178, whether it remains his Department's policy to retire Typhoon Tranche 1 aircraft in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

**Chris Evans:**

[\[105281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of placing the 30 Tranche 1 Typhoons in a war reserve rather than retiring them in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

**Alex Chalk:**

The plans have not changed. Withdrawing the Tranche 1 aircraft enables the reinvestment required in the rest of the Typhoon fleet out to its out of service date.

On current plans, the bulk of the Typhoon Tranche 1 aircraft will go out of service on 31 March 2025, whilst four will be retained until 2027.

**Chris Evans:**

[\[105284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral evidence taken by the Defence Select Committee on 29 November 2022 on Aviation Procurement, HC 178, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the timescale in which the majority of the Typhoon Tranche 1 aircraft will go out of service on air combat capability gaps.

**Alex Chalk:**

The retirement of Typhoon Tranche 1 will enable further investment in Typhoon Tranche 2 and 3, which will incrementally develop through the Future Capability Programme. The retention of seven front line Typhoon squadrons, equipped with more modern and reliable aircraft will ensure no deterioration in combat effect.

Our future force will be based around these upgraded Typhoon and F-35 for the coming decades, before the next generation of combat air fighter jets comes into service through the Global Combat Air Programme.



## ■ Typhoon Aircraft: Costs

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[108098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Figure 11 of the NAO report on The Equipment Plan 2022-2032 published on 29 November 2022, HC 907, what the reason is for the variance in the forecast costs of Typhoon since the Cost Assurance and Analysis Service last reported its findings.

**Alex Chalk:**

The increase in forecast cost of Typhoon is due to expected commercial challenges to renegotiate key contracts supporting the programme.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Arts: Finance

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[107071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the proposed National Portfolio Programme 2023-26 on the number of (a) performers, (b) stage management staff and (c) creative team directly engaged by National Portfolio Organisations.

**Stuart Andrew:**

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

The Government will continue to work with Arts Council England to understand the impacts of its investment in arts and culture, including on performers, stage management staff, and creative teams directly engaged by National Portfolio Organisations.

### ■ Broadband: Easington

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[108149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason average download speeds in Easington constituency are below the regional and national average; what steps she is taking to improve broadband upload speeds in Easington constituency; and how much funding has been allocated to upgrading broadband infrastructure in (a) Easington constituency, (b) the North East and (c) nationally in each of the last five years.

**Grahame Morris:****[108151]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been allocated to upgrading broadband infrastructure in (a) Easington constituency, (b) the North East and (c) nationally in each of the last five years.

**Julia Lopez:**

According to the independent website thinkbroadband.com, the estimated mean download speed in the Easington constituency during the third quarter of 2022 stood at 90 Mbps. This is slightly lower than the North East regional average of 96 Mbps and the UK average of 95. These averages are derived from crowd-sourced data and it is worth noting that users may not opt for the fastest speeds available when selecting a broadband package.

Further improvements to broadband speeds in the Easington constituency will be delivered as part of our £5 billion investment in Project Gigabit, which is upgrading and future-proofing network infrastructure for decades to come. Easington is included in Project Gigabit's North East England regional procurement, which covers up to an estimated 53,000 premises and has an indicative contract value of £82 million. Building Digital UK (BDUK) plans to award a contract between April and May next year.

In addition to our Project Gigabit procurements, we are providing additional support through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher scheme to support rural communities across the UK with the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections. Through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme and its previous iterations, we have issued over 100,000 vouchers worth more than £214 million.

Projects under the previous Superfast Broadband Programme in the North East covering Durham, Northumberland and Newcastle benefitted from UK Government funding of £24 million, alongside £24 million from the local authorities, £2 million European funding and £26 million from suppliers, to upgrade over 170,000 premises to superfast speeds over the lifetime of the programme. BDUK also delivered a Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) project in the North of Tyne area, with more than £5.8 million in government funding.

At national level, spend through BDUK on broadband in each of the last five years is as follows:

£M	YEAR				
	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
NATIONALLY	38.6	29.9	9.6	10.0	12.5

**Grahame Morris:****[108150]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to improve broadband upload speeds in Easington constituency.

**Julia Lopez:**

According to the independent website thinkbroadband.com, the estimated mean upload speed in the Easington constituency during the third quarter of 2022 stood at 20 Mbps. This is slightly lower than the national average of 22 Mbps across the UK. These averages are derived from crowd-sourced data and it is worth noting that users may not opt for the fastest speeds available when selecting a broadband package.

Almost 99% of premises in the Easington constituency are able to access superfast broadband ( $\geq 30$  Mbps), which meets the vast majority of everyday requirements such as high definition streaming and video calling on multiple devices. This is higher than the national average. I am also pleased to share that 74% of premises in the Easington constituency can access a gigabit-capable connection, which is ahead of the national average of 72%.

Further improvements to broadband speeds in the Easington constituency will be delivered as part of our £5 billion investment in Project Gigabit, which is upgrading and future-proofing network infrastructure for decades to come. Easington is included in Project Gigabit's North East England regional procurement, which covers up to an estimated 53,000 premises and has an indicative contract value of £82 million. Building Digital UK (BDUK) plans to award a contract between April and May next year.

Alongside direct Government investment, we have created a competition-friendly environment in areas where deployment is commercially viable. As a result, there is now a thriving market of over 80 providers investing nearly £35 billion rolling out gigabit broadband all over the UK.

**■ Cricket: Ethnic Groups****Navendu Mishra:**[\[108440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2022 to Question 26040 on Cricket: Ethnic Groups, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the performance of the England and Wales Cricket Board to increase the number of ethnic minority cricket officials in (a) England and (b) Wales.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The national governing body for cricket, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) assesses trends in representation in the sport. This includes the level of representation of cricket officials from ethnic minorities.

The ECB have acknowledged there remains an under-representation of Black and South Asian heritage officials despite an increase in the proportion of umpires from ethnically diverse backgrounds on the National Panel last year. Following an independent Officiating Review in 2021, the ECB have committed to four ambitions focusing on equity of opportunity, inspiring the next generation, developing a diverse network that reflects society and promoting a culture of inclusivity and fairness.

The ECB continues to work on developing an officiating structure in which there is equality of opportunity for all. In the recreational game, applications will soon be invited for umpire tutors to deliver a new ECB umpiring course. The aim is to recruit and train a more diverse workforce. On 8 December 2022 the ECB also published updates to their game-wide action plan to tackle discrimination and their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion plan.

The updated Code for Sports Governance requires sports organisations that receive significant public funding, including the ECB, to agree a diversity and inclusion action plan with Sport England and/or UK Sport, which will be published and updated annually. The Government and our arm's length bodies will continue to monitor and liaise with the cricket authorities on improving diversity and inclusion at all levels.

## ■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Trade

**Gareth Thomas:**

**[106312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many staff in her Department have been allocated to deal with issues related to international trade in (a) each of the past five years and (b) the next two years; and if she will make a statement.

**Julia Lopez:**

DCMS staff allocated to trade negotiations, trade policy development, and trade analysis over the last 5 years is approximately:

2018/19 - 37.5 FTE

2019/20 - 37.5 FTE

2020/21 - 39.9 FTE

2021/22 - 36.7 FTE

2022/23 - 34.3 FTE

With regards to FYs 2023-24 and 2024-25, future staffing is subject to ongoing Departmental Business Planning, therefore we are not able to comment on it at this time.

Additionally, there is an international trade dimension relevant to many aspects of DCMS's work and so it is not possible to fully disaggregate staff time on international trade aspects versus other policy work.

## ■ English National Opera: Finance

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

**[104083]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much public funding the English National Opera received in each of the last 15 years; and what discussions his Department had with Arts Council England on funding that organisation (a) over the next three years and (b) in the long term; and if she will make a statement.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Records of the level of public funding for English National Opera are available in its annual accounts, which are published online on the Companies House website.

Following Arts Council England's decisions relating to English National Opera and its 2023–26 Investment Portfolio, which are taken at arm's length from the Government, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is helping to convene relevant parties and support them to find a way forward. I am keen that Arts Council England and English National Opera work together on the future of the organisation.

All decisions on which organisations to fund through the 2023–26 Investment Programme, and by how much, have been taken by Arts Council England in line with the long-standing principle that Arts Council England makes such decisions at arm's length from the Government. The Chief Executive of Arts Council England, Darren Henley, answered questions from the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on these issues on 8 December 2022.

**Layla Moran:**[\[105486\]](#)

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

**Stuart Andrew:**

Decisions regarding what programmes an organisation delivers are made independently of the Government. As part of its decisions relating to its 2023–26 Investment Programme, Arts Council England – which operates at arm's length from the Government – has proposed a package of support for English National Opera. The Department is keen that Arts Council England and English National Opera work together on possibilities for the future of the organisation.

**■ Gambling: Taxation****Kim Leadbeater:**[\[104382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a general levy on sports betting and redistributing it to grassroots sport across the UK.

**Kim Leadbeater:**[\[104383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reintroducing a sports gambling levy.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government levies duties on gambling operators based on their profits, including from sports betting. The Government also invests millions into grassroots sport facilities, with the majority of support coming through Sport England, which receives over £100m in Exchequer funding each year. A further £205m has been committed to grassroots facilities between 2022 and 2025. While the horserace betting levy

recognises the unique relationship between horse racing and betting, other sports have far broader appeal. We currently have no plans to introduce a sports betting levy.

## ■ Leisure and Swimming Pools: Facilities

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[108264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional support she is making available to support swimming pools and leisure centres in response to increases in energy costs.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[108265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the contribution that swimming pools and leisure centres make to physical and mental wellbeing and consequent reductions in NHS costs in the long term as a result of better health outcomes.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[108266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the financial viability of swimming pools and leisure centres.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[108267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she will take to prevent swimming pools from closing as a result of increased running costs over the next 12 months.

**Stuart Andrew:**

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

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

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

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

## ■ Online Safety Bill

**Rachel Maclean:** [\[107142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to include specific provisions to tackle violence against women and girls in the Online Safety Bill.

**Rachel Maclean:** [\[107143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether controlling and coercive behaviour will be listed as one of the priority offences under Schedule 7 of the Online Safety Bill.

**Rachel Maclean:** [\[107144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how domestic abuse victims will be adequately protected through the Online Safety Bill.

**Paul Scully:**

The Online Safety Bill includes stringent provisions to tackle online violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse.

All in-scope services will need to proactively tackle priority illegal content. This includes a number of offences that disproportionately target women and girls, such as offences relating to sexual images, such as revenge and extreme pornography, harassment and cyberstalking. The Government has also announced its intention to add controlling or coercive behaviour as a priority offence during passage through the Lords.

All services will need to ensure that they have effective systems and processes in place to quickly take down other illegal content directed at women and girls once it has been reported or they become aware of its presence.

The Government has also announced its intention to use the Bill to criminalise the sharing of people's intimate images without their consent. This, in combination with the measures already in the Bill to make cyberflashing a criminal offence, will significantly strengthen protections for women.

The strongest protections in the Bill will be for children, ensuring that they are protected from content that is harmful to them. Additionally, major platforms will have a duty to ensure that all adult users, including women, will be able to exercise greater control over the content and other users they engage with. Women and girls will also benefit from better mechanisms to report abuse online.

We also announced our intention to name the Victims' Commissioner and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner as Statutory Consultees for the codes of practice. These bodies will be consulted by Ofcom ahead of drafting and amending the codes of practice, ensuring the voices of those affected by these issues are reflected in the way this legislation works in practice.



■ **Opera**

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[107085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reviewing opera (a) funding and (b) geographical provision in England.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[107086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of Arts Council England's decision to reduce funding for the English National Opera on (a) permanent and (b) freelance employment in that sector.

**Stuart Andrew:**

I refer the Hon Member for Worsley and Eccles South to my previous answers on these matters, [UIN 97389](#), tabled on 28 November 2022 by the Rt Hon Member for Camberwell and Peckham.

■ **Royal Parks: Avian Influenza**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[106402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is taking steps to help reduce the risk of avian flu transmission to birds that are permanently resident in Royal Parks.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Managing the risk of avian influenza transmission is an operational matter for The Royal Parks, which is following instructions issued by the Animal Plant and Health Agency.

The captive bird collection of pelicans in St James's Park has been moved indoors and The Royal Parks' staff and wildlife officers are carrying out enhanced monitoring of the park waterbodies to check for signs of illness and to ensure that, should there be any, carcasses are removed immediately.

Additional signs have been installed in all the parks in areas where public feeding of birds is popular, instructing visitors not to feed the birds as this causes populations of waterfowl to group together and increases the risk of transmission.

■ **Social Media: Disinformation**

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[105511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that social media companies prevent misinformation on their platforms.

**Paul Scully:**

Under the Online Safety Bill, all social media companies subject to the safety duties will be forced to take measures to remove illegal content online that is in scope of the



Bill, including illegal misinformation and disinformation once they become aware of it. In addition, if a social media platform is likely to be accessed by children, they will have to protect them from a wide range of harmful content including misinformation and disinformation.

We are already working closely with the major social media platforms to encourage them to cooperate at speed to swiftly remove disinformation and coordinated inauthentic or manipulated behaviour, as per their Terms of Service.

## ■ Technology: Russia

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[106337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will hold discussions with technology companies to help ensure that their platforms are not being used to disseminate Russian propaganda.

**Paul Scully:**

The government takes the issue of disinformation seriously. The DCMS-led Counter Disinformation Unit (CDU) works to identify and counter Russian state-backed disinformation, working closely with cross Whitehall partners and the major social media platforms. The CDU encourages platforms to swiftly remove disinformation and coordinated inauthentic or manipulated behaviour, as per their Terms of Service. It also engages regularly with social media companies and technology companies to understand policy changes and other countermeasures related to Russian information activities, and the effectiveness of these actions.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Academies: Reviews

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[108184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to publish the Academies regulation and commissioning review; and if she will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

The report of the Academies Regulation and Commissioning Review will be published in 2023.

### ■ Department for Education: Theft

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[104236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many of her Department's (a) laptops, (b) mobile phones, (c) memory sticks and (d) external hard drives have been lost or stolen in each of the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

The following table includes the number of lost and/or stolen devices in the Department in the last five years.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Laptops	66	42	25	16	24
Mobile phones	105	83	51	38	39
Memory sticks	0	3	1	5	1
External hard drives	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

All Department corporate IT is security encrypted.

Any mobile device reported as lost is immediately and remotely deactivated and the contents deleted. The user account on any laptop reported as lost is immediately and remotely disabled.

There has been no known data loss or compromise as a result of these losses.

#### ■ Education: Energy

**Peter Gibson:**

**[105469]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the early termination of energy contracts for education providers on the basis of assessments made by suppliers of the credit worthiness of those providers.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department does not hold information centrally about the status of each education provider's energy contracts. Schools are autonomous and have the freedom to make their own buying decisions based on individual need and circumstances. Schools should conduct their own risk assessment against the specifics of their own contract with their energy supplier.

If a school needs help securing an energy contract, more information on buying guidance and procedures for schools is available online at:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-buying-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-buying-for-schools).

#### ■ Natural History: GCSE

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[105315]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made on (a) plans to develop a GCSE in Natural History and (b) that GCSE being taught in schools from 2025.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department plans to introduce a GCSE in Natural History, provided that it meets the requirements that apply to all GCSEs. Officials are currently working with the four exam boards, Ofqual, and two independent advisors, to deliver the new Natural History GCSE subject content.

The Department intends to consult publicly on the draft subject content in 2023, and for first teaching to be available in schools from September 2025.

## ■ **Schools: Energy**

**Bridget Phillipson:**

**[108185]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from which capital programmes the £500 million of repurposed capital funding for energy efficiency announced on 6 December 2022 comes.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department manages its capital budget throughout each financial year, so that any underspends that arise can be reprioritised to get the best value for money from available funding. The nature of large capital programmes means that programmes spend at different rates through any given year.

The Department has chosen to prioritise capital underspends for the 2022/23 financial year on £500 million for schools and colleges to help improve energy efficiency. This is in addition to the £1.8 billion of condition funding already allocated this financial year to improve and maintain the school estate. This is also additional to the £1.5 billion funding in upgrading the further education (FE) college estate through the FE capital transformation programme, and the £150 million of capital funding following the announcement about the reclassification of the FE sector.

This announcement does not mean that any programmes have had required funding removed, and existing programmes will continue as planned. The Department updates its annual budget via Parliament twice a year through the Main and Supplementary estimates process, which sets out the expected budget by area of spend.

## ■ **Sleep: Children**

**Mick Whitley:**

**[105529]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department has made any assessment of the potential merits of introducing a National Sleep Strategy including recommendations to help ensure all children have their own bed to sleep in.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department does not have policy responsibility for this area. Therefore, it has not carried out an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a National Sleep Strategy.

The government provided a written response to a petition on the creation of a sleep strategy on 23 March 2022. The response can be found here:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/604509>.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[105536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that the forthcoming National SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan will consider the whole journey of young people with SEND through a 0 to 25 system; what assessment she has made of the different needs and challenges of schools and FE colleges in supporting young people with SEND; and what steps is she taking to ensure these differing needs and challenges are reflected in that Plan.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, published in March 2022, set out proposals for a single national SEND and AP system, from early years to adulthood. These proposals offer children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives.

Throughout the 16-week consultation period, the department attended 175 events to listen to and engage with several thousand people, including children and young people of different ages. These conversations covered a broad range of sectors, including schools and further education colleges, to understand the challenges facing the system and to hear feedback on our proposals.

The green paper consultation closed on 22 July 2022. The department is using the feedback received, along with continued engagement with the whole system, to inform the next stage of delivering improvements for children, young people and their families.

The department is committed to publishing a full response to the green paper in an improvement plan early in 2023.

## ■ State Education: Teachers

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[108189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers in state schools in England did not have qualified teacher status in each year between 2010 and 2021.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[108190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of teachers in state schools did not have qualified teacher status in each English local authority in each year between 2010 and 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

Qualified teacher status (QTS) is considered desirable for teachers in the majority of schools in England. In some schools, including academies, free schools and independent schools, QTS is not a legal requirement. Academies have a fundamental freedom to employ people who do not have QTS.

The majority of teachers in all schools, including academies, have QTS and have undertaken initial teacher training. In the 2021/22 academic year, the latest data available, 12,551 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers did not have QTS, equivalent to 2.7% of teachers. This has fallen from 14,028 FTE teachers, equivalent to 3.2%, in the 2010/11 academic year. Teachers may be undertaking further qualifications during their employment to gain QTS.

Information on the school workforce in England is published in the annual 'School Workforce in England' national statistics release at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

The number and proportion of teachers that did and did not have QTS in each English Local Authority in each year between 2010 and 2021 is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/ff30c318-6321-4173-8669-08dad51ca1cc>.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Environment Act 2021

**Ruth Jones:**

**[106470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department obtained legal advice on its planned timetable for the publication of targets under the Environment Act 2021.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Policy and legal officials have worked closely together to advise on the publication of targets under the Environment Act 2021.

### ■ Environment Protection

**Ruth Jones:**

**[106472]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, why the publication of the final Environmental Principles Policy Statement has been delayed; and when that Statement will be published.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We have been considering feedback from Parliamentary scrutiny and from the Office for Environmental Protection on the draft environmental principles policy statement. We hope to agree the final policy statement in the coming weeks, and to publish it in early 2023.

### ■ Nature Conservation

**Jim Shannon:**

**[94753]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of rewilding moorland through lack of management

on (a) the amount of carbon sequestered in deep peat and (b) populations of ground-nesting bird species.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Wilding or re-wilding is the restoration of ecosystems to the point where they are more regulated by natural processes.

Degrading peatlands release carbon into the atmosphere. It is estimated that peatlands in England emit approximately 10 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per year. Restoring peat to its natural wet state is likely to save significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. That is why the government has committed to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland – an area roughly the size of the Isle of Wight - by 2025 through our Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme, and a total of 280,000 hectares by 2050.

While no specific assessment has been made, restoration of moorland on peat soils that supports improved habitat function is likely to mitigate effects of climate change and support ground nesting bird populations.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Afghanistan: Immigration

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[105258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Afghan citizens who (a) worked for and (b) were affiliated with the UK government are (i) accepted for settlement in the UK and (ii) evacuated from Afghanistan in a timely manner.

**Leo Docherty:**

Under Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), up to 1500 eligible at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni will be offered resettlement in the first year. FCDO received over 11,400 Expressions of Interest; we are processing these and notifying eligible people with advice on next steps. We are doing everything we can to bring the first Pathway 3 arrivals to the UK as soon as possible. Over 6,300 people have already been relocated under the ACRS, in addition to those brought to safety under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme, led by the UK's Ministry of Defence.

### ■ Africa: Development Aid and Humanitarian Aid

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[105357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much (a) humanitarian funding and (b) development funding has the UK government given to (i) Somalia, (ii) South Sudan, (iii) Ethiopia, and (iv) Kenya in the financial year 2022-23.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK is a sizeable humanitarian donor to East Africa. Since 2019 the UK has allocated more than £1 billion towards humanitarian operations, including across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan, helping to reach tens of millions of people with life-saving aid. The FCDO is committed to transparency with the public and we intend to update on planned Official Development Assistance allocations for FY 22/23 in due course.

**■ Africa: Monkeypox****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[105259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support African countries experiencing outbreaks of monkeypox.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

FCDO is leading coordination of the cross-government international response to Mpox. Through our support to CEPI (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations), the UK is supporting early action including Research & Development funding to support the development of potential vaccines. The UK committed £160 million to CEPI in February 2022. To help strengthen testing, the UK is funding partners such as the Wellcome Trust to support a network of UK and international institutions on research into Mpox antiviral testing and treatments in selected countries, including in West and Central Africa. We continue to share UK surveillance data to inform the global response.

**■ Africa: Vaccination****Gareth Thomas:**[\[105227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the Partnership for Vaccine Manufacturing initiative to increase African vaccine manufacturing.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Vaccine availability has improved across Africa since late 2021. Increased and diversified manufacturing will strengthen health services and improve preparedness for future pandemics. We are supporting the Africa Centres for Disease Control's "Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing" by providing market analysis on priority vaccines for the region, to inform manufacturers' and investors' planning. We have provided technical support to develop business cases for production in South Africa, Senegal and Morocco. Our approach contributes to sustainable manufacturing in the medium and longer term across Africa through commercially viable businesses operating within an ecosystem of skilled workers, innovative technology, and effective regulation.

## ■ Brazil: Human Rights

**Patrick Grady:**

**[107139]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Brazilian counterpart on the protection of human rights defenders in that country.

**David Rutley:**

The UK is committed to promoting and defending the human rights of all individuals and regularly engages with government and civil society in Brazil on that basis. In October the Foreign Secretary spoke to Brazilian Foreign Minister França and shared with him our hope for peaceful elections in Brazil. At COP27, Lord Goldsmith met newly elected Lower House Representatives Sônia Guajajara and Joênia Wapichana, prominent indigenous rights leaders, with whom he discussed the effect of environmental crime on these communities. In Advanced Questions submitted to the Universal Periodic Review in November, the UK referenced the murders of Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira and asked how Brazil intends to strengthen protections of human rights including for environmental and human rights defenders, as well as women at risk of trafficking and the LGBT+ community. We will continue to engage with relevant partners to raise these issues following President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's inauguration on 1 January 2023.

## ■ Cambodia: Manufacturing Industries

**Catherine West:**

**[104310]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Cambodian counterpart on the (a) working conditions and (b) rights of garment workers in that country.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK regularly raises human rights and labour rights issues with the Cambodian Government, including when the former Minister for Asia met the Cambodian Foreign Minister in January 2022. We have also discussed the issue at UK - Cambodia Human Rights Dialogues. We will continue to monitor developments relating to the labour rights of garment workers and will engage the Cambodian Government on the issue.

## ■ China: Foreign Relations

**Jim Shannon:**

**[105349]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of China abiding to the terms of the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We have declared four breaches of the Sino-British Joint Declaration to date, three of which have occurred since 2020. These breaches include China's imposition of the National Security Law and changes to Hong Kong's electoral rules and system.



Reflecting the size and scale of developments in Hong Kong, on 13 March the UK declared China to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration - a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[105219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government will take to support the World Health Organisation's mRNA Technology Transfer Hubs in light of commitments within the G20 Leaders' Declaration.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

We are working with industry, Gavi and other international partners on practical efforts to scale up capacity and engage on planning to accelerate vaccination programmes globally. In March 2022, the UK hosted the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit, which raised over US\$1.5 billion, including a UK pledge of £160 million to Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), to help develop vaccines against new health threats in 100 days and rapidly scale-up manufacturing. We continue our engagement to identify opportunities for the UK to collaborate with initiatives and implementing partners, including with the G20 as it takes forward work in this area.

## ■ **Development Aid**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[106325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support the United Nation's appeal for \$51.5 billion in aid funds for 2023.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The FCDO remains committed to prioritising and protecting funding for humanitarian crises, at a time when global need is escalating rapidly. This includes ongoing support for the United Nations and its global appeals. For example in 2022-23, we were one of the biggest donors to UN global appeals in Afghanistan and Somalia and made a significant contribution to the Yemen appeal. Beyond funding, the FCDO recently published its Humanitarian Framework which sets out how we will work to address and reduce humanitarian need, including by building partnerships to protect those most vulnerable, ensure those most in need receive assistance, and act early to anticipate and prevent crises.

## ■ **Eritrea: Journalism**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[106334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the welfare of Dawit Isaak and other journalists who were arrested in Eritrea in 2001.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

We are aware of the missing journalists, including the dual Swedish-Eritrean national Dawit Isaak, who disappeared in September 2001. Although there are no recent updates as to their current status and welfare, we frequently raise concerns about human rights with the Government of Eritrea. Eritrea consistently ranks towards the bottom of the World Press Freedom Index, with internal media operated by the state. Through our Embassy in Asmara and with international partners, we continue to call upon the Government of Eritrea to release all those who have been arbitrarily incarcerated for their freedom of expression, religious or political beliefs.

**Ethiopia: Security****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[105336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of (a) trends in the level of security in the Oromia region of Ethiopia and (b) the risk of increased insecurity in that region.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Violence in Oromia, and elsewhere in Ethiopia is killing and displacing civilians and contributing to instability. Violence against civilians is unacceptable and perpetrators from all parties must be held to account. Following the reports of civilian killings in Oromia and Gambella earlier this year we endorsed the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's call for the protection of civilians. The UK's Human Rights and Peacebuilding programme is providing support to build the capacity of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, including enhanced investigative capacity, and to establish a national conflict research facility through Conciliation Resources and the Rift Valley Institute.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Bullying****Sarah Olney:**[\[105375\]](#)

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

**David Rutley:**

The Cabinet Office publishes results from the Civil Service People Survey on GOV.UK on behalf of all participating organisations in the survey. The findings include the proportion of staff responding to the survey who indicated to have been bullied and or harassed at work in the past 12 months (b) and, among those, whether they have been subject to sexual harassment (a). This would include sexual comments or jokes, unwelcome sexual advances, touching or assault.

The figures from the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Civil Service People Surveys can be found at:

2021 results: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2021-results>

2020 results: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2020-results>

2019 results: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2019-results>

2018 results: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2018-results>

The Civil Service has a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination. Those found to be bullying, and/or harassing and/or discriminating against employees or customers can face disciplinary procedures including charges of gross misconduct leading to dismissal. Bullying, harassment and discrimination are in direct conflict with the Civil Service values of honesty, objectivity, impartiality and integrity. It is important that all employees feel respected and treated fairly within the workplace. Departments have their own HR policies and processes for reporting and resolving cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

## ■ Humanitarian Aid

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[105358]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department contributed to the G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact was agreed during the UK's G7 Presidency, and we have provided our share of the \$7 billion in humanitarian assistance to the countries one step from famine in 2021. We continue to deliver on our policy commitments in the Compact. For example, in October we partnered with G7 President Germany and the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership to co-host a donor event on Financing for Early and Anticipatory Action.

## ■ Indonesia: Diplomatic Service

**Catherine West:**

**[108300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK-based staff from his Department have been deployed to the (a) Embassy and (b) relevant Consulates in Indonesia in each year since 2010.

**David Rutley:**

Number of staff in Embassy and relevant Consulates in Indonesia

TIME PERIOD	BANDED NUMBER
Mar-14	20-29
Mar-15	20-29
Mar-16	20-29

TIME PERIOD	BANDED NUMBER
Mar-17	20-29
Mar-18	20-29
Mar-19	20-29
Mar-20	20-29
Mar-21	20-29
Mar-22	20-29

### ■ Iran: Baha'i Faith

**Ruth Edwards:**

[\[104338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the trends in the level of the risk of persecution of the Baha'i people in Iran by authorities in that country.

**David Rutley:**

The Baha'i community in Iran is systematically persecuted by the Iranian regime. Reports indicate that the regime has redoubled its repression over the last year with increasing expropriation of land, destruction of homes and detention of Baha'is.

The persecution of religious minorities in Iran cannot be tolerated. The Minister for the Middle East and Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, made this clear in his statement of 5 August. The former Minister for Africa reiterated our commitment to holding Iran to account for its treatment of the Baha'i at the Westminster Hall debate of 11 October. The UK raised the Baha'i at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Third Committee on 26 October and pressed for the inclusion of the Baha'i in the UNGA Resolution which passed on 16 November.

### ■ Jimmy Lai

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[105348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure British citizen, Jimmy Lai, has received regular consular access in Hong Kong.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We remain concerned about the targeting of pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases carefully. For data protection reasons I cannot share information about a person without their permission.

Officials from the British Consulate-General in Hong Kong attend local court hearings related to a number of rights and freedoms issues and will continue to do so.

We continue to make clear to mainland Chinese and Hong Kong authorities our strong opposition to the National Security Law, which is being used to curtail freedoms, punish dissent and shrink the space for opposition, free press and civil society.

■ **Kosovo: Serbia**

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[108226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Kosovan government on tensions in the northern part of Kosovo and with Serbia.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK is in close contact with the governments of both Kosovo and Serbia, making clear alongside partners the need to dismantle roadblocks, avoid inflammatory rhetoric and de-escalate latest tensions. The Foreign Secretary is in touch with Kosovo's Prime Minister Kurti and raised recent tensions with the Serbian Ambassador. During my (the Minister for Europe) visits to Serbia on 14 December and Kosovo on 16 December, I underlined that the EU-facilitated Dialogue was key to achieving the long-term goal of normalised relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

■ **Myanmar: Humanitarian Aid**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[104296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what humanitarian assistance the Government is providing to people in Myanmar who have been displaced by airstrikes.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We remain very concerned by the horrific tactics used by the Myanmar military, including indiscriminate airstrikes against civilians. The UK frequently raises these issues in international statements, including at the UN Security Council (UNSC) and Human Rights Council. The UK secured a UNSC Statement on 27 July, which expressed concern at the escalating conflict and called for full and unhindered access for humanitarian aid.

In financial year 2021/22 the UK provided £49.5 million in aid to Myanmar; 70% of this was for humanitarian needs and healthcare. This financial year, the UK has so far provided £36 million in humanitarian assistance, reaching over 500,000 people with life-saving assistance including healthcare, food, water and sanitation.

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[104297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department requires any (a) international non-governmental or (b) Burmese civil society organisations to have memorandums of understanding with the Burmese Government in order to receive UK aid.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The FCDO does not require international non-governmental or civil society organisations to be registered with the Myanmar regime to receive UK aid. We are working closely with our partners to assess the impact and minimise the risk of the military regime's law of 28 October, which requires all non-governmental and civil society organisations to register with them.

**■ Sierra Leone: Electoral Systems****Neil Coyle:**[\[106408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he discussed voter (a) registration, (b) exhibition and (c) verification during his meeting with the President of Sierra Leone in November 2022.

**Neil Coyle:**[\[106409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the President of Sierra Leone on people shot in a protesting in Freetown.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

As a close friend of Sierra Leone, the UK holds regular, frank discussions with senior government interlocutors and other key stakeholders, on good governance, the rule of law and stability, and the importance of a free, fair election in 2023. We condemn acts of political violence and we work closely with civil society organisations in Sierra Leone to champion universal human rights, including freedom of speech and expression, and to advocate for their protection by the authorities.

The Foreign Secretary spoke with the President of Sierra Leone in London on 22 November 2022 about the importance of the upcoming election and Sierra Leone's democratic process. I reiterated this message in a meeting with the Minister of Basic and Senior Education at the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative conference on 28 November.

The British High Commission Freetown has recently observed the national voter registration process. The UK did not fund or provide assistance for the Mid-Term Census and we have made our views on its limitations known to the Government of Sierra Leone.

**■ Somaliland: Animals****Jim Shannon:**[\[105345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department will take steps to support Somaliland with tackling animal (a) poaching and (b) trafficking in that region.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK is committed to protecting endangered animals and plants from poaching and illegal trade to benefit wildlife, local communities and the economy, and protect global

security. We are investing over £46 million globally between 2014 and 2022 to counter illegal trade by reducing demand, strengthening enforcement, ensuring effective legal frameworks and developing sustainable livelihoods. Through the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund the UK has committed over £900,000 to the Legal Intelligence for Cheetah Illicit Trade (LICIT) Fund to enhance national and regional capacity in the Horn of Africa, including in Somaliland, to fight wildlife crime by strengthening national and regional level legal capacity and increasing community capacity and ownership of wildlife resources.

## ■ **Somaliland: Fires**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[105346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the Somaliland Government following the recent fire in Hargeisa Market.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[105347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of granting Somaliland diplomatic recognition.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Following the devastating fire in Hargeisa market on 1-2 April, the UK has led diplomatic and development response efforts on the ground, chairing an international coordination group and supporting a baseline fire safety assessment of marketplaces in Hargeisa, which has been shared with Hargeisa Municipality and the Somaliland fire department.

The UK, consistent with the entire international community, does not recognise Somaliland's unilateral declaration of independence. It is for Somaliland and Somalia to come to an agreement about their future relationship. Any new arrangements would need to be recognised by the African Union and neighbours in the region. The African Union is the pre-eminent regional body mandated to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States, of which Somalia is one. The UK encourages dialogue between Mogadishu and Hargeisa on this issue.

## ■ **South Africa: Just Energy Transition Partnership**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[105355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to help support the implementation of the Just Energy Transition Partnership for South Africa.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Significant progress has been made to deliver the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) for South Africa since it launched at COP26. The UK, as chair of the International Partners Group (IPG), has worked closely with the South African Government to support development of their JET Investment Plan which was



released at COP27. The Investment Plan signals the start of the implementation phase of this ambitious partnership, and the process of crowding in additional public and private finance, beyond the \$8.5 billion already mobilised by the IPG. We are now working to ensure that UK support for the JETP is in place.

#### ■ **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[106331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has met with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya since his appointment.

**Leo Docherty:**

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya last visited the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on 9 March 2022, where she met the Rt. Hon. James Cleverly, then Minister for Europe. Although there are currently no firm plans in place for a future visit, the UK remains in regular contact with Mrs Tsikhanouskaya and other prominent Belarusian civil society figures.

The UK Government continues to urge the Belarusian authorities to end their repression of their own citizens, enter into an inclusive dialogue with the democratic opposition and civil society, and offer the Belarusian people the genuine choice of government that they both want and deserve.

#### ■ **Tigray: Medical Equipment**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[105354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to (a) mobilise and (b) deliver medical supplies to Tigray.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

We welcome the commitment made in the 2 November peace agreement by both the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to unfettered humanitarian access to all parts of Tigray.

In the last nineteen months the UK has provided nearly £90 million of life-saving aid to communities across Ethiopia affected by crises. This support has provided emergency health supplies for 1 million people across Ethiopia. Through the recently announced package of £14 million humanitarian support, funding is expected to reach up to 150,000 people with comprehensive health, water sanitation, hygiene and nutrition services across Ethiopia including Tigray.

#### ■ **Ukraine: Electricity Generation**

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[108223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many step-up and step-down transformers and related equipment have been (a) provided



to assist the resilience and repair of Ukrainian energy grids to date and (b) ordered to be supplied in the future.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK is responding to urgent Ukraine requests to help repair damage to energy infrastructure caused by Russian bombardment. We have committed £10 million to the Energy Community Ukraine Support Fund to procure high-priority specialised energy equipment to help Ukraine with critical repairs. Through the Ukraine Electricity Network Support Taskforce, BEIS has delivered 856 mobile generators. The UK is engaging closely with G7 and other international partners to respond to a range of request from Ukraine that include transformers.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Ambulance Services: Standards

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[106492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ambulance services were at Level Four in the Resource Escalation Action Plan in England as of 8 December 2022.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[106493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of only having four levels in the Resource Escalation Action Plan.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 13 December 2022]:* As of 8 December 2022, 10 out of the 11 Ambulance Trusts in England were at level four in the Resources Escalation Action Plan (REAP).

No assessment has been made. REAP is a National Health Service operational framework, and the four REAP levels correspond to OPEL (Operational Pressures Escalation Levels) used by other NHS organisations. They provide a framework to maintain an effective and safe operational and clinical response for patients.

### ■ Blood: Donors

**Janet Daby:**

[\[105561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the NHS Blood and Transplant's campaign Not Family, But Blood campaign in encouraging more blood donors of black heritage.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Since the launch of the 'Not family, but blood' campaign on 6 October 2022, 6,658 new donors of Black heritage have registered to give blood. This represents a 178% increase in new registrations from donors of Black heritage when comparing daily registrations, 106, with the prior 63 days, 38.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[106306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether blood donations from people who have not been vaccinated against covid-19 are separately identified; and whether people who require such blood are able to access it.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 13 December 2022]:* In the United Kingdom, blood donations are not identified based on the donor's COVID-19 vaccination status.

The Joint United Kingdom Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation Services Professional Advisory Committee (JPAC) provide guidelines for the UK Blood Transfusion Services. JPAC published a position statement in July 2021, which was updated in November 2022, outlining that UK Blood Services cannot provide information about the COVID-19 vaccine status of donors to recipients and that this is not necessary from a safety or efficacy perspective.

■ **Cancer: North West****Derek Twigg:**[\[105274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the waiting time is for cancer patients to see a cancer specialist in the Cheshire and Merseyside ICS area after referral by a GP.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 December 2022]:* This information is not collected in the format requested. However, in October 2022, 10,064 of the 13,459 patients had their first consultant appointment within 14 days following an urgent general practitioner referral in the Cheshire and Merseyside integrated care board.

■ **Carers****Dan Carden:**[\[108331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2022 to Question 105539, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing training for NHS frontline staff to (a) identify, (b) signpost and (c) support unpaid carers.

**Will Quince:**

We have no current plans to make a specific assessment.

■ **Cystic Fibrosis: Drugs****Feryal Clark:**[\[105493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an estimate of the number of people who require medication for cystic fibrosis who are not able to afford it.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[105538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the scope of the prescription charge exemption list in the context of the cost of living; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil O'Brien:**

There are no plans to make a specific assessment. Approximately 89% of prescription items are currently dispensed free of charge and there are a range of exemptions from prescription charges which those with cystic fibrosis may be eligible for and be in receipt of free prescriptions. In 2022/23, prescription charges have been frozen, which applies to the single prescription charge and prescription pre-payment certificates.

#### ■ **Dementia: Health Services**

**Justin Madders:**

[\[108250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the publication of the 10-year plan for dementia.

**Helen Whately:**

We are reviewing plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:**

[\[108379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the 10-year plan for dementia will increase dementia diagnosis rates in (a) England and (b) Birmingham, Erdington constituency.

**Helen Whately:**

We are reviewing plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

#### ■ **Dementia: York**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[106538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of access to brain scans to assist in the diagnosis of dementia in York.

**Helen Whately:**

We have no current plans to make a specific assessment.

#### ■ **Dental Health: Disadvantaged**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[103005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce oral health inequality.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Department of Health and Social Care is taking a number of steps to reduce oral health inequalities. We announced that we will consult on water fluoridation expansion across the North East which would extend water fluoridation to up to 1.6 million additional individuals.

We also announced a package of improvements to the NHS dental system in July 2022 and set out further detail on this in 'Our plan for patients', to improve access and better target care for patients with higher oral health needs and we are taking measures to reduce sugar consumption, such as the sugar levy.

The Department has published a number of resources to support local authorities in assessing and improving the oral health of children and vulnerable older people and is working locally with local authorities on this. These can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/oral-health>

**■ Dental Services****Rachael Maskell:****[105405]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to enable people who are ordinarily resident in England to have access to an NHS dental check-up and relevant treatment by the end of March 2024.

**Neil O'Brien:**

In September, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care. 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. We have also enabled greater flexibility in commissioning NHS dentistry and ensuring patients can access current information on NHS dental services through NHS.UK and NHS 111.

These changes have been implemented through regulations which came into effect on 25 November. NHS England has published additional guidance for dentists and commissioners on these measures. NHS England is continuing discussions on further improvements involving the British Dental Association and other stakeholders and additional reforms are planned in 2023.

**■ Dental Services: Children****Sir John Hayes:****[98653]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the review of research on Orthodontic treatment for crowded teeth in children by Sarah Turner and others, published in December 2021; and how much his Department has spent on NHS orthodontic treatments to (a) prevent and (b) correct crowded teeth in children in the last year.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Emerging clinical findings are reviewed by the Chief Dental Officer for England supported by specialty consultant and National Health Service clinical advisors. Where evidence indicates that amendments to NHS clinical standards are required, advice is provided by the Chief Dental Officer with guidance to NHS England on implementation and compliance with any changes in clinical procedure. In 2021/22, NHS England spent approximately £250 million on NHS orthodontic activity, including assessments and treatments.

**Dental Services: Contracts****Feryal Clark:**[\[103002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he expects negotiations on a new NHS dental contract to conclude.

**Feryal Clark:**[\[103003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to roll out a reformed NHS dental contract.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Initial negotiations on improvements to the National Health Service dental contract concluded in June 2022. On 25 November 2022, three sub-bands to Band 2 NHS dental treatment were created, which more fairly remunerates NHS dentists for more complex dental treatment without affecting patient charges. We are also ensuring that NHS dentists update practice profiles on NHS.UK at least every 90 days. Further changes to the contract as a result of these negotiations will come into force in the coming months.

We are working with NHS England and the dental sector on further improvements to NHS dentistry, considering new payment models and encouraging dentists to work in areas of need. Further improvements will be announced in 2023.

**Dentistry****Rachael Maskell:**[\[105401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a dentistry workforce strategy.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term plan for key workforce groups and professions across the NHS for the next 15 years, including dental care professionals. The conclusions of this work will be shared in due course.

With the changes announced to the National Health Service Dental Contract Reform in July, we are making improvements to the NHS dental system for patients to get the care they need. This includes new legislation that came into force in November, which more fairly remunerates dentists caring for patients with complex needs and makes the NHS dental contract more attractive to dentists.

We are also working with NHS England and the sector on longer-term improvements. Health Education England have undertaken a three-year Advancing Dental Care Review of education and training which they are now implementing through their Dental Education Reform Programme to improve recruitment and retention.

#### ■ General Food Regulations 2004

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[108201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans has to (a) retain, (b) replace and (c) revoke the General Food Regulations 2004.

**Neil O'Brien:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 December 2022 to Question 102910.

#### ■ General Practitioners

**Philip Davies:**

[\[99785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of general practice appointments were carried out by (a) GPs in face-to-face consultations and (b) non-GPs in each of the last five years.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The following table shows the available data from January to October 2022 and August to December 2021 on the number and proportion of appointments conducted face-to-face by general practitioners (GPs), excluding COVID-19 vaccinations.

JANUARY TO OCTOBER 2022	AUGUST TO DECEMBER 2021
Number of face-to-face appointments with GPs	72,510,020 33,609,864
Percentage of face-to-face appointments with GPs	54.5% 49.0%

The following table shows the number and proportion of appointments undertaken by non-GP staff in general practices in England, excluding COVID-19 vaccinations since 2018.

	JANUARY TO OCTOBER 2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Number of appointments	128.87 million	141.27 million	125.31 million	138.03 million	131.46 million
Proportion of appointments	47.5%	45.4%	45.3%	45.4%	45.6%

## ■ Genito-urinary Medicine

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[105535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Women's Health Strategy for England published on 30 August 2022, when he plans to publish the sexual and reproductive health plan; and if the plan will include a timetable for delivery of its recommendations.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We will set out plans to improve sexual and reproductive health in England in due course.

## ■ Health Services: Travellers

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[104474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to ensure that his Department's data collection records the experiences of people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller backgrounds.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 9 December 2022]:* The NHS Data Model and Dictionary reflects the latest approved Information Standard for the data submission of ethnicity categories in the National Health Service. This is derived from the Office for National Statistics' categories in 2001, which do not include Gypsy/Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groupings.

The annual GP Patient Survey assesses patients' experience of general practice and dentistry in England. It collects ethnicity information, including coding for 'Roma' and 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' respondents. In the 2022 survey, NHS England received 719,137 responses and of those, 596 were from Roma and 279 were from Gypsy or Irish Traveller respondents.

## ■ Health: Females

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[106549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 66 of the Women's Health Strategy for England published on 30 August 2022, what steps has his Department taken to encourage research on the relationship between menstruation and (a) Covid-19 and (b) long Covid.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[106550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 66 of the Women's Health Strategy for England, published on 30 August 2022, what steps his Department has taken to encourage research on links between mental health symptoms and outcomes and (a) menstruation and (b) gynaecological conditions.

**Feryal Clark:**[\[106551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 66 of the Women's Health Strategy for England, published in August 2022, what steps has his Department taken to encourage research on the links between polycystic ovary syndrome and metabolic syndrome.

**Feryal Clark:**[\[106552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 66 of the Women's Health Strategy for England, published in August 2022, what steps his Department has taken to encourage research on the causes of fibroids.

**Will Quince:**

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). Subject to receiving high quality applications, the NIHR expects to commission a new policy research unit dedicated to reproductive health. The new unit will undertake research to inform policy in areas such as menstruation and gynaecological conditions. Applications are currently being reviewed and the unit is expected to operate from January 2024. While the NIHR has funded research on menstruation, gynaecological conditions, COVID-19, the long term effects of COVID-19 infection, mental health and the treatment of fibroids, no specific research on the relationship between these conditions has been commissioned. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards made based on the importance to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. It is not usual practice for the NIHR to ring-fence a proportion of its budget for research into particular topics or conditions.

## ■ HIV Infection: Blackpool

**Scott Benton:**[\[105552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has provided to Blackpool to help (a) reduce and (b) detect HIV infections, including on a new opt-out testing programme at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

**Neil O'Brien:**

NHS England will invest £20 million over the next three years to expand opt-out testing in emergency departments in the highest prevalence local authority areas, including Blackpool.

Since 2013 the Government has mandated local authorities in England to commission comprehensive open access to most sexual and reproductive health services, including free and confidential HIV testing through the Public Health Grant. In 2021/22, the Public Health Grant was adjusted to include the cost of financing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), which reduces the risk of acquiring HIV infection. Blackpool received £18,705,648, of which £69,525 was allocated to PrEP provision. Funding for PrEP is now included within the Public Health Grant and embedded within its baseline for 2022/23. In 2022/23 Blackpool has been allocated £19,231,130.



## ■ Home Care Services: Fuels

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[108080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to support home care workers using their own vehicles to visit clients with fuel costs.

**Will Quince:**

Home care workers may be eligible to benefit from Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs), which are used by employers to reimburse an employee's expenses for business mileage in their private vehicle. These rates aim to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation.

Employers do not have to use AMAP rates and can instead choose to reimburse more or less, subject to certain tax conditions. Employees who receive less than the advisory rate can claim tax relief on the difference.

## ■ Integrated Care Boards: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[104287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that Integrated care boards are adequately funded to fulfil their responsibility for reducing health inequalities.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We are investing an additional £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the National Health Service in England, with £2.8 billion and £4.7 billion for adult social care over the next two years. Integrated care boards (ICBs) will determine how these resources will be distributed to address local priorities. To support transition to the new ICBs from the predecessor clinical commissioning group (CCG) structure, NHS England has disaggregated allocations to CCG level, in line with the share of the weighted population of the ICB.

## ■ Maternity Services: Staff

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[99843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) comprehensiveness and (b) adequacy of the figures he holds on the number of maternity support workers in the NHS in England.

**Will Quince:**

No specific assessment on the comprehensiveness of data for maternity support workers has been made.

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics for England. These include staff working in hospital trusts and integrated care. This data is drawn from the Electronic Staff Record, the HR system for National Health Services (NHS) providers. Responsibility for data accuracy lies with organisations providing the data.

The data held and published are an accurate summary of the validated data extracted from the NHS HR and Payroll system. Data quality is monitored by NHS Digital, NHS Business Services Authority and NHS trusts themselves. NHS Digital seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data but responsibility for data accuracy lies with organisations providing the data.

NHS England have provided funding to maternity services to support the recruitment of Maternity Support Workers (MSW) and to offer enhanced education support to align them with the Health Education England MSW competency, education, and career development framework.

To increase the maternity workforce, from 2022, an additional £127 million is being invested by NHS England which will go towards the maternity NHS workforce and improving neonatal care. This is on top of the £95 million invested in 2021, to fund the establishment of posts for 1,200 more midwives and 100 more consultant obstetricians.

#### ■ **Medical Records: Children**

**Andrea Leadsom:** [\[104180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress his Department and the NHS have made on plans to produce a digital version of the red book as outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 12 December 2022]:* We are working with NHS England to ensure that plans for digitising the red book align with plans for patient records. Further information will be available in due course.

#### ■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

**Angela Rayner:** [\[104244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November to Question 59768 on Protective Clothing: Storage, what is the (a) weekly and (b) daily cost of storing personal protective equipment in the containers.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[104245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2022 to Question 77440 on NHS: Protective Clothing, what the (a) weekly and (b) daily cost was of the storage of personal protective equipment in these warehouses in the latest period for which data is available.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[104247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of the Government's supply of personal protective equipment is stored in (a) warehouses and (b) shipping containers as of 6 December 2022.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 9 December 2022]:* Since this unprecedented global pandemic began our absolute priority has been saving lives. Our estimates of demand for essential personal protective equipment (PPE) relied on reasonable worst-case scenario planning, information about the prevailing Infection Prevention Control guidance and the likely number of patient interactions in every healthcare setting. In this reasonable worst case, we needed to purchase significant amounts of PPE and there was significant pressure on Government to act quickly and decisively.

As a result, from April to October 2022, the estimated weekly cost of storage in containers was £1.8 million and the estimated daily cost was £253,000. In the same period, the estimated weekly cost of storage in warehouses in the United Kingdom was £2.6 million and the estimated daily cost was £371,000.

On 31 October 2022, there were 7.9 billion items of PPE or 60.1% stored in warehouses. There were 4.4 billion items of PPE or 33.7% stored in containers and 810 million items or 6.2% stored in supplier storage. Supplier storage includes the use of warehouses and containers.

We are currently reducing excess stock, including the cost of storage in all settings and further information will be available in due course.

**■ Obesity****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[99762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November to Question 87788 on Obesity, why no such meetings have taken place.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 5 December 2022]:* Ministers hold meetings on a range of issues relating to health and social care, including health prevention.

**■ Pharmacy: Closures****Feryal Clark:**[\[101077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of community pharmacy closures on patients.

**Neil O'Brien:**

With NHS England, we are monitoring the market and the impact on patient access to pharmaceutical services. An estimated 80% of the population lives within 20 minutes' walk of a community pharmacy and there are double the number of pharmacies in more deprived areas. There are over 11,000 community pharmacies in England and the Pharmacy Access Scheme provides additional funding for areas where there are fewer pharmacies.

## ■ Sickle Cell Diseases

**Janet Daby:** [\[105557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to ensure that sickle cell patients receive their first dose of pain relief within 30 minutes of being treated.

**Janet Daby:** [\[105558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of simplifying the administration of pain relief for sickle cell patients.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made.

Specialist haemoglobinopathy teams (SHTs) and haemoglobinopathy co-ordinating centres (HCCs) are required to submit data via the Specialised Services Quality Dashboard on the percentage of patients given pain relief within 30 minutes of presentation with a sickle cell crisis, as per the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines. The data does not include patients attending non-specialist haemoglobinopathy providers and further work is required to improve the accuracy of the data submission before it can be used to assess compliance.

**Janet Daby:** [\[105559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason nutrition is not included in Sickle Cell health care protocols.

**Neil O'Brien:**

There is little evidence in support of any specific nutritional intervention that ameliorates Sickle Cell symptoms. It is recommended that generic good nutritional advice is given to all patients with Sickle Cell Disease, including vitamin D supplementation.

## ■ York Hospital: Paediatrics

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[105406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Children's Assessment and Treatment Unit at York Hospital on supporting children presenting with respiratory disease, including Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[105408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of York's Paediatric respiratory unit's approach in tackling health emergencies in winter 2022-23.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No assessment has been made.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Asylum: Domestic Abuse****Stephen Farry:****[105563]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department takes to provide financial support to an asylum seeker who has been subjected to domestic violence where the abusive partner is the main applicant on an asylum claim and where the couple are separated.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We are committed to ensuring that no domestic violence victim is reliant on their abuser either in respect of their application for asylum or their asylum support needs.

We have existing policy guidance on how we support victims of domestic violence in the asylum support system:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1049475/Asylum\\_support\\_domestic\\_abuse.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1049475/Asylum_support_domestic_abuse.pdf).

The Home Office works alongside other agencies who can support victims with financial support and advice. Victims of domestic violence can claim asylum in their own right if they were previously the dependant of an abusive partner and that any information they provide will be treated in confidence (subject to safeguarding duties).

No destitute asylum seeker will be left without asylum support or accommodation in the event of separation following a domestic violence incident. We have established processes in place to disaggregate financial support to ensure that victims can promptly receive their share of the financial support independently of their abuser.

**■ Asylum: Northern Ireland****Claire Hanna:****[108396]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions her Department has had with local authorities in Northern Ireland on the use of contingency accommodation for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement.

**Robert Jenrick:**

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

As is the case across the UK, the Home Office notify local authorities when new contingency accommodation is stood up in a local authority area. Additionally, there are bi-weekly council engagement meetings chaired by The Executive Office (TEO), at which councils can raise any issues that they are experiencing. These meetings are regularly attended by representatives hosting contingency accommodation.

## ■ Crimes of Violence: Crime Prevention

**Dan Carden:** [\[105544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of ad-hoc funding in preparation for the Serious Violence Duty.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office will fund costs incurred through the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty.

This funding will support the specified authorities in a local government area to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.

Grant funding for the specified authorities will be administered, on behalf of the Home Office, by local policing bodies.

## ■ Deportation: EU Countries

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[108230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the joint statement on migration issues by Ministers from the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium on 8 December 2022, what specific discussions she had with representatives of those governments on a potential returns agreement between the UK and (a) France and (b) the EU as a whole; and what the outcome was of those discussions.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Migrant crossings across the Channel are illegal, dangerous and unnecessary. This Government is determined to work with European partners to put the evil people smuggling gangs out of business and save lives.

In the joint statement agreed at the 8 December 2022 meeting of Interior Ministers, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium expressed their willingness to work towards an EU-UK cooperation agreement on migration.

## ■ Firearms: Licensing

**Carla Lockhart:** [\[106545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for a firearms license have been made in England and Wales in each of the last ten years.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office publishes data on firearm and shotgun certificates in England and Wales, including the number of firearm licence applications made in the last ten

years. The latest data cover the period April 2021 to March 2022, and are available here: [Firearm certificates in England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/firearm-certificates-in-england-and-wales-statistics)

Data on the number of firearm licence applications by year are published in table 1 of the accompanying [data tables](#).

## ■ Firearms: Seized Articles

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[106373]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many firearms were seized by the police in each the last five years.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not routinely collect data on the number of firearms seized by police forces as part of their operations to tackle illegally held weapons and associated crime. However, figures provided by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service for numbers of firearms seized in each of the last five years are as follows:

2017/18 – 1,458;

2018/19 – 1,321;

2019/20 – 1,190;

2020/21 – 1,187;

2021/22 – 1070.

The UK has some of the toughest firearms controls in the world which include tackling the threat posed by the trafficking and misuse of illicit firearms.

## ■ Frontex

**Stephen Kinnock:**

**[108229]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the joint statement on migration issues by Ministers from the UK, France, the Netherlands and Belgium on 8 December 2022, when discussions on a formal working arrangement between the UK and Frontex will take place; what her priorities are for those discussions; and what the timetable is for a working arrangement to be agreed.

**Robert Jenrick:**

As set out in the joint statement issued on 8 December, those in attendance agreed discussions on a Working Arrangement between the United Kingdom and Frontex should start promptly. These discussions will explore how the United Kingdom and Frontex can best share expertise, information and resources, or otherwise cooperate, to address the growing issue of irregular migration into and across Europe. The timetable for reaching an agreement will depend on all parties involved.

**■ Home Office: Incentives****Emily Thornberry:**[\[105323\]](#)

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

**Chris Philp:**

The value of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working for Home Office is as follows:

- (a) 2017-18: £641,895
- (b) 2018-19: £1,180,580
- (c) 2019-20: £1,770,945
- (d) 2020-21: £2,792,935
- (e) 2021-22: £6,622,055

**■ Home Office: Vacancies****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[106525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if they will list the five teams in their Department with the highest number of staffing vacancies as a percentage of staff as of 8 December 2022; and what is the percentage of roles vacant in each of those teams.

**Chris Philp:**

The number of vacancies is not held centrally and would require significant manual collation and manipulation of data, so could only be retrieved with disproportionate effort.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Dan Carden:**[\[105579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the correspondence of 14 November 2022 from the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton on tackling seasonal worker exploitation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office will reply shortly.

**■ Migrants: Detainees****Layla Moran:**[\[105473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made in



implementing recommendation 20 on investigating the development of alternatives to detention.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 21 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 22 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 23 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 24 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 25 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 26 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 27 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 28 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 29 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 30 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 31 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 32 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 33 of that review.

**Layla Moran:** [\[105492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's independent report entitled Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, published 14 January 2016, what recent progress she has made on implementing recommendation 34 of that review.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Stephen Shaw's reports (of 2016 and 2018) led to a comprehensive and systematic programme of work to improve and reform immigration detention. It informed both our strategic and tactical approach to reform and the treatment of people who are

detained. This work has strengthened our decision-making and safeguards for the vulnerable, ensuring those who are detained are treated with dignity and respect in an estate that is fit for purpose.

Progress has been made on all accepted recommendations and I will write to the MP for Oxford West and Abingdon with more detail. A copy of this letter has been placed in the House library for all.

## ■ **Police: Finance**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[105543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of inflation on the police precept; and whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of alternative methods towards providing funding for local police services.

**Chris Philp:**

Around two thirds of police funding comes from central Government grants, as well as additional funding for specific purposes like crime reduction programmes. The remaining funding is drawn from a share of council tax known as “precept”. In total for 2022-23, the Government will provide around £10bn of grant funding to PCCs, with up to £4.9bn drawn from police precept.

Setting precept levels is a decision for elected Police and Crime Commissioners, taking into account local priorities. Central Government set upper limits on the amount that precept may be increased each year in England. Any proposed increase above that limit is subject to a local referendum. Council tax policy in Wales is a matter for the devolved Government.

## ■ **Police: Misconduct**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhési:**

[\[106422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that claims of misconduct against police officers are fully investigated in a timely manner.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government introduced legislative reforms in February 2020 to strengthen the police complaints and discipline systems, including measures to improve timelines.

This imposed a requirement on both the police and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) to provide a written explanation if any such investigation is not completed within 12 months - setting out what progress it has made, why it hasn't completed the investigation and the steps it will take to bring the investigation to a conclusion.

The IOPC publishes data on police complaints, including the timeliness of complaints handling and investigations by police forces, and the time taken to complete its own investigations. The Home Office has amended its own data collection with the aim of

providing more comprehensive data on timeliness. The next tranche of data is due to be published on 12 January 2023.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Beth Winter:** [105514]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her foreword to the report by the Centre for Policy Studies entitled Stopping the Crossings, published in November 2022, whether she has had recent discussions with the UNHCR Representative to the UK on the recommendations of the report.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Secretary has not discussed the recommendations with the UNHCR Representative. The latest transparency returns for the Home Office can be found here: [Home Office: ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings, April to June 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-april-to-june-2022).

## ■ Visas: Overseas Students

**Tommy Sheppard:** [108260]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of capping the number of graduate visas on the UK's economy.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Graduate route provides an opportunity for international students who have been awarded their degree to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, at any skill level for 2 years, or 3 years for doctoral students.

An Impact Assessment was prepared to accompany the launch of the Graduate route. This can be found at the following link: [Impact Assessment template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/graduate-route-impact-assessment)

The public rightly expects us to control immigration and ensure we have a system that works in the UK's best interests. We keep our immigration policies under constant review to ensure they reflect our priorities.

## ■ Visas: Seasonal Workers

**Daniel Zeichner:** [105353]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the seasonal worker visas made available for workers for the poultry sector have been issued as of 7 December 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office publishes data on visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release \(opens in a new tab\)](#)'. Data on the number of 'Seasonal Worker' visas granted are published in table Vis\_D02 of the [Entry clearance visas applications and outcomes \(opens in a new tab\)](#) dataset.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022.

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

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[105495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what requirements are placed on Sponsoring Agencies under the Seasonal Workers Scheme to ensure that work will be available for the duration of the visa.

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[105505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies that operators recruiting workers under the Seasonal Workers Scheme are potentially terminating workers contracts early without putting in place alternative work placements.

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[105507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential benefits of allowing workers in the UK on the agricultural seasonal worker scheme to move between (a) scheme operators and (b) horticulture and poultry.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Seasonal Worker scheme is an 'operator led' immigration route, with four scheme operators selected to manage the placement of workers on UK farms and to ensure their welfare in the UK.

The Seasonal Worker scheme operators are responsible for managing all aspects of the recruitment and placement of workers on UK farms and ensuring their welfare in the UK. It is therefore important that they do not recruit more workers than they can effectively support.

Scheme operators are expected to maximise the employment of all workers in the UK on a Seasonal Work visa. Operators rotate their work placements and are required to move workers between farms where the worker requests this. Allowing workers to move between operators would not be appropriate as it removes key welfare safeguards in the scheme. The current approach also ensures that each sector can fully benefit from the numbers of workers specifically allocated to them.

## ■ Windrush Compensation Scheme: Birmingham

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[108369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the Windrush Compensation Scheme have been received from (a) Birmingham and (b) Birmingham, Erdington constituency.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The nationality and country of residence of Windrush Compensation Scheme claimants is published as part of the regular transparency data release which can be found here: [Windrush Compensation Scheme data: October 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-releases/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-october-2022).

The Windrush Compensation Scheme does not record data in a way which allows us to report on the location of claimants in the UK.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Trade Agreements: Parliamentary Scrutiny****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[106465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of strengthening existing requirements under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 for parliamentary (a) scrutiny and (b) debate on international trade deals.

**Greg Hands:**

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRAg) provides an effective and robust framework for scrutiny of treaties that require ratification, including free trade agreements.

Nevertheless, the Government has also in place a suite of enhanced transparency and scrutiny arrangements that go well beyond the statutory obligations of CRAg.

The Government recognises the importance of Parliament being able to consider new free trade agreements, therefore a debate was held in Government time on 14 November to consider the Australia and New Zealand deals.

**JUSTICE****■ Prisoners' Release: Christmas****Steve Reed:**[\[108227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2022 to Question 101737 on Prisoners' Release: Christmas, if he will provide a breakdown of the 145 prisoners who were released on Friday 24 December 2021 by offence.

**Damian Hinds:**

The attached table gives the main offence category for the 145 prisoners with a conditional release date of 25th or 26th December 2021 who were instead released on 24th December 2021 due to the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1961.

Where a prisoner is serving a sentence of 5 days' imprisonment or more and their automatic release date falls on a weekend or bank holiday, the Criminal Justice Act

1961 requires their release on the preceding working day so that there are appropriate services and support available when they are released.

**Attachments:**

1. Table\_108227 [2022-12-15 108227 Table.xlsx]

■ **Prisoners: Gender Recognition**

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[108375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2022 to Question 96653 on Prisoners: Gender Recognition, how many transgender prisoners without a Gender Recognition Certificate in each offence category reported are of (a) male sex (transwomen) and (b) female sex (transmen).

**Damian Hinds:**

Please find the information in the attached data table, noting that this does not cover transgender prisoners with a gender recognition certificate.

**Attachments:**

1. Table\_108375 [2022-12-15 PQ 108375\_FINAL.xlsx]

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**

■ **Blackpool Council: Business Rates**

**Scott Benton:**

[\[105567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what business rate relief Blackpool Council received during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Department does not collect information on the amount of relief by property occupier and is not able to answer questions about individual entities. Public sector bodies should be able to offer proportionate responses to data requests as per their Freedom of Information obligations.

■ **Council Tax: Bailiffs**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[108439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many local authorities have stopped using bailiffs to collect unpaid council tax.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Department does not collect data on the enforcement methods used by local authorities to collect unpaid council tax.

## ■ Heating: Government Assistance

**Beth Winter:** [105523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will take steps to (a) establish a register of warm banks provided by local authorities and (b) record the number of people who use warm banks.

**Beth Winter:** [105524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data he holds on the number of cold weather shelters to be opened in each (a) region and (b) local authority area during a cold weather alert.

**Beth Winter:** [105525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether additional financial support (a) is and (b) will be made available to local authorities to fund the provision of warm banks (i) outside office working hours and (ii) overnight.

**Beth Winter:** [105526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether additional financial support (a) is and (b) will be made available to local authorities to fund the provision of (i) warm banks and (ii) cold weather shelters during cold weather alerts.

**Lee Rowley:**

Further to my answer to Question UIN [107098](#), answered on 14 December, the department does not hold data on cold weather shelters.

Local authorities in Wales are in the first instance a matter for the Welsh Government. The devolved administrations are funded to deliver their devolved responsibilities, including local government.

## ■ Homelessness: Veterans

**Richard Foord:** [108380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the number of homeless veterans in winter 2022-23.

**Felicity Buchan:**

As set out previously in [response to Question UIN77402](#) on 11 November, our veterans play a vital role in keeping our country safe and we are committed to providing them with the support they need. Homelessness statistics for England are collected on a quarterly basis and consistently show levels of veteran homelessness are low - less than 1% of homeless households. For Winter 2021 (Oct-December) the proportion of households owed a homelessness duty with a support need due to service in the Armed Forces was 0.7%. The latest statutory homelessness statistics for England, covering the period April-June 2022, show the figure remaining at the same level and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>



## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Homelessness

**Damien Moore:**

**[104444]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to provide support for people who entered the UK under the Ukrainian sponsorship scheme and are now homeless.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The overarching homelessness prevention grant amounts £366 million for 2022/23. This encompasses all cohorts. Local councils have a responsibility to support Ukrainians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including providing temporary accommodation where required to ensure no family is without a roof over their head.

Up to date data on arrivals through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be accessed [here](#). Details on funding for the scheme are available [here](#). We are continuing to work with local authorities and sponsors to support them with their hosting arrangements.

## ■ Housing: Construction

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

**[105363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the average cost to build a house including the purchase of land in (a) North East Hampshire constituency, (b) the North East and (c) the North West.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Department does not hold data on the average cost of building a house, including the purchase of land. The Department has published 'Land Value Estimates for policy appraisal 2019'. These show at local level the value of agricultural land before development. They also show the residual land value after development (broken down by residential, commercial and industrial). These tables, as well as guidance for their use, can be found online at gov.uk [here](#).

## ■ Housing: Energy

**Helen Morgan:**

**[107212]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent steps he has taken to progress the review of the planning barriers that households face when installing energy efficiency measures, due at the end of 2022.

**Lucy Frazer:**

In the Government's British Energy Security Strategy, published earlier this year, we committed to reviewing the practical planning barriers that households can face when installing energy efficiency measures, including in conservation areas and listed buildings. My department has been working on the review jointly with the Department

for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and will make an announcement on the outcomes in due course.

■ **Housing: Public Houses**

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [\[108316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of having a Council Tax exemption for flats or accommodation above public houses when the public house is empty and the building is due undergo refurbishment.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Government has no plans to introduce a mandatory council tax exemption for accommodation above a public house undergoing renovation. Councils have discretion, under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to provide their own council tax discounts and exemptions where they consider it appropriate.

■ **Landlords: Registration**

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[108370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a national landlord registration scheme.

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[108371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing councils to introduce stronger financial penalties for rogue landlords.

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[108374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to encourage greater standardisation in the operation of landlord licensing schemes across the country.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Government is bringing forward a series of actions in this direction as set out in the White Paper 'Fairer Private Rented Sector', published in June. This includes proposals to introduce a national framework for setting fines, based on clear culpability and harm considerations, which will ensure a more consistent approach to fine setting across the country. We are keen to bolster national oversight of local councils' enforcement, and our intention is to look at the ways councils can share their successes and challenges from their licensing schemes. We are currently conducting user research with landlords, tenants, agents and local authorities to explore the potential merits of a Privately Rented Property Portal.

## ■ Local Government Finance: Romford

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[106336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will publish a breakdown of the local government funding Romford constituency has received in the past five years.

**Lee Rowley:**

Detailed information on Core Spending Power for the London Borough of Havering (Romford Constituency) for each year since 2015-16 can be viewed [here](#) .

## ■ Parking: Private Sector

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[106562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with local authorities on tackling the misuse of private car parking facilities.

**Dehenna Davison:**

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published regularly.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Craigavon House: Repairs and Maintenance

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[108365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps the Government is taking to help support the restoration of Craigavon House.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

Under the UK Government commitments to promote Northern Ireland's Culture, Heritage and Society we committed to explore projects including the restoration of Craigavon House. The government remain committed to support conversations on the future of Craigavon House should a suitable plan be forthcoming on its future and restoration.

### ■ International Fund for Ireland

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[108364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much financial support the Government has provided to the International Fund for Ireland in each of the last three years.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

The Northern Ireland Office and the International Fund for Ireland separately publish Annual Reports and Accounts, including audited financial statements. I would refer the honourable Lady to those resources for the information she requires.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Trade****Gareth Thomas:****[106309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many staff in his Department have been allocated to deal with issues related to international trade in (a) each of the past five years and (b) the next two years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

Matters related to international trade policy and Free Trade Agreements are dealt with within the Protocol and Free Trade Agreement team in my Department, which currently numbers 5 posts. Others within the department also provide support on Northern Ireland trade-related matters. The resource dedicated to this activity is expected to continue at current levels for the next financial year.

**■ Northern Ireland: Elections****Peter Kyle:****[105412]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to his oral contribution of 9 November 2022, Official Report, column 281, on Northern Ireland Elections, what plans he has to convene all-party talks with Northern Ireland party leaders to discuss (a) restoring the Executive and (b) progress on Northern Ireland Protocol negotiations.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

*[Holding answer 13 December 2022]:* This Government remains absolutely committed to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The Minister of State and I continue to meet regularly with the Northern Ireland political parties to deliver its vision. All-party talks took place on 15 December.

**■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland****Stephen Farry:****[105547]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of allocating the £250m that the Executive is permitted to borrow over the short-term for cash-management purposes to manage in year pressures within the Northern Ireland Budget for 2022-23.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

I have worked closely with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to explore the available funding options in setting the Northern Ireland Budget for 2022-23, including Executive borrowing.

The budget set in my statement on 24 November is an appropriate settlement that reflects the key pressures in Northern Ireland but it does not remove the pressing need to have locally accountable political leaders in place to take the fundamental decisions which will secure a more sustainable future for the people of Northern Ireland.

**PRIME MINISTER****■ Honours**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[108215\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing minimum qualifying criteria for a Prime Minister's tenure in office regarding resignation honours lists.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[108216\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what recent assessment he has made for the implications of his Department's policies of the effectiveness of the (a) the protocol and (b) the precedence of resignation honours lists.

**Rishi Sunak:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 26 October 2022, Official Report, House of Lords, HL2839.

**■ Prime Minister: Staff**

**Patrick Grady:** [\[108257\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if he will publish a list of post-holders and the dates of service of the Military Assistants to the Prime Minister since 2010.

**Rishi Sunak:**

Military assistants are serving members of the Armed Forces, seconded to Downing Street. The release of their details is a matter for the Ministry of Defence.

**TRANSPORT****■ A36: Cleveland Bridge**

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[106518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Cleveland Bridge in Bath is on the A36 Primary Route.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The bridge is on a local road, linked to but not on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The A36 is a Primary Route but the SRN comprising the A46 and A36 from the M4 to the Dorset coast is not continuous through Bath.

**■ Department for Transport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[109492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for October 2021, for what purpose were payments of £3,510.69 made to City Fleet Networks on 14 October 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

This was for taxi bookings for a range of different government departments when the Government Car Service didn't have sufficient drivers available.

**■ Electric Scooters: Safety**

**Liam Byrne:** [\[105245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to strengthen the safety regulations on the use of e-scooters.

**Liam Byrne:** [\[105246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many fatalities his Department has recorded relating to the use of e-scooters.

**Jesse Norman:**

When parliamentary time allows, the Government intends to create a Low-speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category that is independent of the cycle and motor vehicle categories. The first focus of this new system will be e-scooters, which we are looking to legalise for private and rental use through secondary legislation. This will require setting robust technical requirements and clear expectations on users. No decisions have been made on the details of the regulations for e-scooters, and we will consult before any new arrangements come into force.

From the start of 2020 to end June 2022, there have been a total of 17 fatalities in collisions involving e-scooters reported to the Department by police. Of these, 16 deaths were e-scooter users themselves. The STATS19 collection covers only collisions on the public highway.

**■ Horticulture: Vehicles**

**Drew Hendry:** [\[108262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of information provided to horticultural businesses on the installation of tachographs in horticultural vehicles which operate within 100 kilometres of their home base and also deliver third party goods.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Whether or not a vehicle needs a tachograph depends on whether the vehicle falls under scope of Regulation (EC) 561/2006 ("the EU drivers' hours rules") as retained in UK Law. The EU drivers' hours rules, which require the use of tachographs and prescribe maximum limits on driving time and minimum requirements for breaks and rest periods, apply to drivers of most vehicles used for the carriage of goods, where the maximum permissible weight of the vehicle (or combinations of vehicle and trailer) exceeds 3.5 tonnes. In this context goods is defined as goods or burden of any description.

There are a number of specific exemptions and national derogations, including for: "Vehicles used or hired without a driver by agricultural, horticultural, forestry, farming

or fishery undertakings for carrying goods as part of their own entrepreneurial activity within a radius of 100 km from the base of the undertaking.”.

If the vehicle is used for the delivery of third party goods, this national derogation would not apply and the vehicle would need to have a tachograph fitted. The driver would need to comply with the retained EU drivers’ hours rules.

This national derogation has been in place since 2007 and should be well known to the horticultural industry. There is detailed information on the gov.uk website on drivers’ hours, including advice on exemptions and national derogations. The Government has not made any assessment on the adequacy of information provided.

## ■ **Hydrogen Fuelling Stations**

**Alan Brown:** [\[105440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to address challenges with hydrogen refuelling infrastructure and availability.

**Alan Brown:** [\[105441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support hydrogen use in public transport ecosystems.

**Alan Brown:** [\[105442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support hydrogen use in private sector car fleets.

**Alan Brown:** [\[105443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support larger vehicles utilising hydrogen across the transport network.

**Alan Brown:** [\[105444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on using hydrogen as a fuel for road vehicles as an alternative to electrification while serving as an early market for low-carbon hydrogen projects.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department for Transport’s (DfT) pioneering R&D programmes, such as its £200m zero emission HGV demonstrator and the £23m Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub, are co-locating transport supply with demand in order to address some of the early challenges seen with refuelling infrastructure.

The Government’s Hydrogen Strategy states that transport is a ‘crucial’ early market for hydrogen, which will drive some of the earliest low carbon production in the UK. DfT is working closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to meet this challenge.

Thus, in March 2022 the Government announced £30 million for the West Midlands Combined Authority to deploy 124 hydrogen fuel cell buses and accompanying

refuelling infrastructure through its Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme. The Government has also provided £750,000 towards the UK's first hydrogen train, Hydroflex, through the First of a Kind scheme.

The Government expects there to be cascade benefits for light duty vehicles from its R&D support programmes for heavier modes, for example through the expansion of publicly accessible refuelling infrastructure, available to all road transport.

The Department's dedicated R&D funding for hydrogen is focussed on heavier applications, such as in maritime, aviation and road freight. Recent investments include £206 million for the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK-SHORE) and £200 million for the Department's zero emission HGV demonstrator programme.

### ■ **Public Transport: Hydrogen**

**Ian Paisley:**

[\[106405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support hydrogen use in public transport ecosystems.

**Jesse Norman:**

In March 2022, the Government announced £30 million for the West Midlands Combined Authority to deploy 124 hydrogen fuel cell buses and accompanying refuelling infrastructure through its Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme. The Government has also provided £750,000 towards the UK's first hydrogen train, Hydroflex through the First of a Kind scheme.

### ■ **Railways: Christmas**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[108327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to minimise disruption of the rail network over the Christmas and New Year period.

**Huw Merriman:**

We expect approximately 20 per cent of planned services to run on strike days announced for the Christmas and New Year periods, with considerable regional variation. While generally few rail services run during bank holidays, passengers' travel will be affected.

Network Rail has planned an ambitious £120 million engineering works programme for the Christmas period, aimed at maintaining and renewing track assets. Although the industrial action will impact planned works, Network Rail is working to ensure as many projects as possible can be completed. Passengers may see lower levels of service on non-strike days between Christmas and New Year, to ensure critical works can progress as planned.



## ■ Railways: Freight

**Andrea Leadsom:**

**[108207]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's process is for granting a change to a Development Consent Order for a strategic rail freight interchange.

**Huw Merriman:**

There are different processes for making changes to Development Consent Orders, including Development Consent Orders for Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges, depending on whether the changes are considered to be material or non-material. The Secretary of State for Transport will be the decision-maker on applications for changes to Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges for both material and non-material changes. Details of the processes are set in the Planning Act 2008: Changes to Development Consent Orders guidance published by the former Department for Communities and Local Government and which can be found on

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-development-consent-orders>

## ■ Railways: Snow and Ice

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[108325]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders in (a) Network Rail, (b) Train Operating Companies and (c) the wider rail industry on resilience of the rail network this winter.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department maintains regular contact with Network Rail, train operating companies and the wider rail industry to ensure their seasonal preparedness plans are in place with clear mitigations outlined to minimise disruption throughout the winter.

Network Rail and train operators have well-established operational measures to manage services safely during any incidents that affect railway operations, including extreme weather events.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[108326]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the principal risks to the rail network in winter 2022-23 are; and what steps he is taking to mitigate those risks.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department works closely with the rail industry on its planning for risks facing the rail network. This winter these risks include the impacts of ongoing industrial action, sickness and staff absence, and severe weather.

Network Rail and the wider industry are responsible for managing the effects of any risks affecting railway operations, and in anticipation of incidents such as extreme weather conditions, industry works together to implement the necessary mitigations to ensure safety and minimise disruption.

**■ Railways: Strikes**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[108328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much public money has been paid to train operating companies on days where their services have not been able to run to due strike action since 1 January 2022.

**Huw Merriman:**

Operators are compensated for all reasonable costs incurred that are accumulated in accordance with the terms of the contract; these are paid on a rail period basis with no distinction made for costs incurred on a strike day versus those incurred on non-strike days.

**■ Road Traffic Offences: Fixed Penalties**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[106420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of the support available to motorists to appeal against Penalty Charge Notices that they believe have been issued in error.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Local authorities are responsible for issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and the administration process, including appeals. In the event of a PCN being issued, there is a clear appeals structure set out in legislation which allows a driver to challenge whether this was issued fairly or not. Motorist have a statutory right to appeal a PCN issued, if they believe there are mitigating circumstances or that the contravention did not occur. If a motorist is not content with the outcome of an appeal to the local authority, they may appeal to the independent tribunal.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[106421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing payment plans for Penalty Charge Notices in the context of the cost of living crisis.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Local authorities are responsible for the administration of Penalty Charge Notice payments. It is a matter for individual local authorities to decide how the penalty charges owed are paid, including a potential payment instalment plan.

**■ Roads: Salt**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[108109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many tonnes of salt were held in the national emergency salt reserve managed by National Highways on behalf of his Department as of 1 December 2022.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

For this winter season (2022/23), the Department has retained an emergency salt stockpile of approximately 254,078 tonnes with a further 92,554 tonnes being held by National Highways for use on the Strategic Network.

**TREASURY****■ Commodity Markets: Regulation****Patrick Grady:****[108256]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to strengthen the regulation of commodity markets to promote (a) stability and (b) transparency.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Government believes effective commodities markets regulation is key to ensure economic stability. This is the lesson we have learned from the 2000s food and financial crises and the Government remains committed to the G20 recommendations that sought to uphold that.

Through the Financial Services and Markets Bill, the Government is making changes to the regime which we have inherited from the EU, which is overly complicated and poorly designed. For example, to ensure that the regime is calibrated effectively, the Bill delegates the setting of position limits from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to trading venues, who are well placed to ensure that it only applies to contracts that are subject to high volatility. The FCA will also retain its ability to directly intervene if need be. This will ensure that speculation in agricultural and physically settled contracts such as oil and gas does not lead to economic harm.

The Government is also using the Financial Services and Markets Bill to improve the transparency regime for commodity derivatives. The regime that we have inherited from the EU was designed for equity markets and as such does not take into account the inherent differences between these two markets. The FCA will be given responsibility for creating a more tailored regime that improves transparency and recognises the diverse nature of our markets.

**■ Deposit Guarantee Scheme Regulations 2015****Stella Creasy:****[108203]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) retain, (b) replace and (c) revoke the Deposit Guarantee Scheme Regulations 2015.

**Andrew Griffith:**

Retained EU law in financial services is not repealed automatically by the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill. Instead, the Financial Services and Markets Bill repeals retained EU law in financial services so that it can be replaced with an

approach to regulation designed for the UK. This includes the Deposit Guarantee Scheme Regulations 2015, which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Bill.

As part of the Edinburgh Reforms, the government published “Building a Smarter Financial Services Framework for the UK”, which sets out its approach to repealing and replacing retained EU law in financial services using the powers in the Financial Services and Markets Bill. This includes identifying the first two “tranches” of reforms.

The Deposit Guarantee Scheme Regulations 2015 will not form part of the first two tranches of reforms, and the government will set out plans regarding these regulations in due course.

Much of the UK’s deposit protection framework is already delegated to the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), and sits in PRA rules. These rules are not repealed by the Financial Services and Markets Bill. The rules include, among other things, the depositor coverage limit, which is currently set at £85,000 per eligible person, per bank.

## ■ Energy: VAT

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[108289\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the VAT on domestic energy to 2.5 per cent.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Energy Price Guarantee is a scheme that caps the unit price households pay for electricity and gas, which means that a typical household will have to pay bills equivalent to no more than £2500 a year on their energy bills this winter. This is expected to save consumers who use both gas and electricity around £900 this winter. The scheme as currently designed will last until 31 March 2023. As announced during the 2022 Autumn Statement, the EPG will increase to £3000 from April 2023 until April 2024. This new approach is expected to save around £14 billion to April 2024, ensuring fiscal sustainability, whilst targeting support to those most in need.

The Government recognises that families should not have to bear all of the VAT costs they incur to meet their needs, with domestic fuels such as gas, electricity and heating oil already subject to the reduced VAT rate (at 5 per cent of VAT). The Government’s package of support to help households with their energy bills is more generous than an additional VAT cut on domestic fuel and power, and there would be no guarantee that suppliers would pass on the discounts from this relief to all customers.

## ■ National Income

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[108419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the (a) potential limitations of GDP growth as a measurement of the development of the UK economy and (b) potential merits of using alternative measurements such as the (i)

Genuine Progress Indicator, (ii) Green Gross Domestic Product and (iii) Human Development Index.

**Andrew Griffith:**

GDP measures the total value of all of the goods made, and services provided, during a specific period of time. GDP is important because the higher a country's GDP is, the more resources are available to people in the country – goods and services, wages and profits. Growing GDP sustainably means the government is better equipped to invest in public services such as the police, NHS and schools.

Whilst it remains one of our most important economic indicators, the Government recognises that GDP has its limitations and should not be seen as an all-encompassing measure of welfare. The ONS produce separate measures of subjective well-being, introduced as part of the 2010 National Well-being Programme, to start measuring our progress as a country, not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving. This programme encompasses a broad range of measures including, happiness, health, the environment and personal finance.

The Government has provided the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with an additional £25 million to help implement the recommendations of Sir Charles Bean's 2016 Review of Economics Statistics, including through an initiative called 'Beyond GDP' that aims to address the limitations in GDP by developing broader measures of welfare and activity.

As a result of this work, the UK became one of the first countries to publish natural capital accounts as part of its National Accounts (The Blue Book). The ONS is continuing to develop these accounts and also published human capital estimates for 2004-2018 as part of their wellbeing measures. The Dasgupta Review considers that a broader measure of 'inclusive wealth', comprising Natural, human and produced capital, can provide insights into a nation's sustainable economic progress over time. In response to the recommendations of the Dasgupta review, HM Treasury provided further funding to the ONS to continue improving its natural capital estimates. This will improve their relevance for policy making, and ensure continued consideration of a broader measure of economic activity than just GDP.

■ **Public Houses: Business Rates**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[106345]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a reformed business rate for pubs that is equitable to other small businesses.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Valuation Office Agency determines the rateable value of public houses using the Fair Maintainable Turnover (FMT) basis, as agreed with representative trade bodies.

At Autumn Statement 2022, the government announced a package of support worth £13.6 billion to businesses over the next five years. This includes an extended and increased 75 per cent relief for retail, hospitality, and leisure properties, up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business for 2023-24. This is a tax cut worth over £2 billion for around 230,000 businesses, which will support the businesses that make our high streets and town centres successful.

This support builds on the previous temporary 50 per cent retail, hospitality and leisure scheme announced at Autumn Budget 2021, as well as the unprecedented £16 billion of business rates relief provided to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors throughout the pandemic.

### ■ **Public Sector: Industrial Disputes**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[108330\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the calculations for the Prime Minister's statement that public sector pay demands would cost each household £1,000.

**John Glen:**

The £1000 per household figure is derived from dividing the total cost of an 11% increase in pay for all public sector workers in the UK in 2023/24 (£28bn) by the ONS' latest estimate of the number of households in the UK (28.1m).

The use of an 11.1% increase in pay for all public sector workers as a total cost figure is in line with the calls of many unions for inflation-matching awards (the Consumer Prices Index in the 12 months to October 2022 was 11.1%. This was the most recent data point for CPI inflation at the time the calculation was made).

The total cost estimate of £28bn is derived using a costings model which takes outturn data on the total public sector pay bill for 2021/22, applies awards from 2022/23 (the impacts of which on pay bill per head were in the region of 5%) and then adds an 11.1% award in 2023/24. The model also applies standard assumptions on pay drift and workforce growth.

### ■ **Tobacco: Smuggling**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[108140\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many reports have been received through CrimeStoppers and referred to (a) HM Revenue and Customs and (b) Trading Standards relating to illegal tobacco in each of the last five years.

**James Cartlidge:**

The figures for tobacco-related Crimestoppers reports received by HM Revenue and Customs are:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF TOBACCO-RELATED CRIMESTOPPERS REPORTS
2018/2019	644
2019/2020	867
2020/2021	579
2021/2022	342
2022/Present	293

The figures for tobacco-related Crimestoppers reports received by Trading Standards are:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF TOBACCO-RELATED CRIMESTOPPERS REPORTS
2017/2018	185
2018/2019	53
2019/2020	160
2020/2021	667
2021/2022	454

## WALES

### ■ Wales Office: Trade

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[106311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff in his Department have been allocated to deal with issues related to international trade in (a) each of the past five years and (b) the next two years; and if he will make a statement.

**David T C Davies:**

The number of staff allocated to deal with issues related to international trade at the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales in each of the last five years is set out below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NO. OF STAFF ALLOCATED
2017/18	2
2018/19	3

FINANCIAL YEAR	NO. OF STAFF ALLOCATED
2019/20	2
2020/21	2
2021/22	2

The Department currently has 2 members of staff allocated to deal with issues related to international trade and has no plans to change this allocation in the next two years.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Assistance Animals

**Tracey Crouch:**

[\[108148\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will take steps to tackle access refusal of people with assistance dogs by businesses.

**Stuart Andrew:**

No one should be refused access to businesses or services because they legitimately have an assistance dog.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on businesses and service providers to make reasonable adjustments to improve disabled people's access to goods and services so they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. This reasonable adjustment duty is an anticipatory duty, meaning that those who provide goods, facilities and services to members of the public are expected to anticipate the reasonable adjustments that disabled customers may require, including auxiliary aids.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is the public body responsible for enforcing the Equality Act. In 2017, the Commission published two pieces of guidance – a guide to help businesses understand what they can do to meet their legal duties to assistance dog owners, and a guide to help tourism businesses welcome people with access requirements. The EHRC supports disabled individuals who have experienced discrimination to take their cases to court.

In recent years, case law has strengthened the equalities law for people with assistance dogs. There have been a number of significant cases brought under the Equality Act involving assistance dogs, which have been successfully litigated, for example, *Bloch v Kassim* (assistance dogs in taxis); *Clutton and Williams v Pen-y-Bryn Group* (assistance dogs in restaurants); and *McCafferty v Miah* (assistance dogs in shops). The Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS), the equalities and human rights helpline, receives about 35,000 customer contacts a year, more than 60% of which concern disability issues. The EASS can intervene directly with or



assist the complainant to take the case up with the relevant service provider in many cases, including those involving assistance dogs.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2022

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[108200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report published on 6 December 2022 by the Joint Committee on Human Rights into the draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of (a) the Committee's disappointment that it does not take effect from the date of the original High Court decision from 2016 in the case of Siobhan McLaughlin and (b) the Committee's recommendation that the Government consider offering payments to cover claimants who will not receive benefits as a result of the cut-off date in the remedial order.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department welcomes the JCHR report on the draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2022 and the Committee's recommendation that the draft Order be approved. The draft Remedial Order proposes 30 August 2018 as the start date because that was when the incompatibility for Widowed Parents Allowance was accepted as final in the Supreme Court. It is not routine for Social Security changes to be made retrospectively, and to use an earlier date, or make additional payments via a new scheme, would bring extra administrative complexity and costs to the taxpayer.

### ■ Cold Weather Payments

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[107178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the Cold Weather Payment in line with inflation.

**Laura Trott:**

The current Cold Weather Payment scheme represents a contribution towards additional heating costs, paid at the time of need.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken further decisive action to support people with their energy bills. The government's Energy Price Guarantee will save a typical British household around £900 this winter, based on what energy price would have been under the current price cap – reducing bills by roughly a third. This is in addition to the over £37bn of cost of living support announced earlier this year which includes the £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

**Jonathan Edwards:**

**[108147]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the level of cold weather payments to reflect the increase in energy prices.

**Laura Trott:**

The current Cold Weather Payment scheme represents a contribution towards additional heating costs, paid at the time of need.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken further decisive action to support people with their energy bills. In 2022-23, the government's Energy Price Guarantee will save a typical British household around £900 this winter, based on what energy price would have been under the current price cap – reducing bills by roughly a third. This is in addition to the over £37bn of cost of living support announced earlier this year which includes the £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

## ■ **Cost of Living Payments: Carers**

**Justin Madders:**

**[108244]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing a Cost of Living Payment to unpaid carers.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Government recognises and values the vital contribution made by carers every day in providing significant care and continuity of support to family and friends, including pensioners and those with disabilities.

Depending on personal circumstances, carers may be eligible for means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Pension Credit. Means-tested benefits can be paid to carers at a higher rate than those without caring responsibilities through the Carer Element in Universal Credit and the additional amounts for carers in other benefits respectively.

We would encourage anyone who is providing unpaid care, and who is not already in receipt of a means-tested benefit, to check on GOV.UK to confirm whether there are other benefits they may be entitled to. Advice can also be sought from organisations such as Carers UK and Citizens Advice. Means-tested benefits can provide extra weekly income and trigger extra support with the cost of living.

Nearly 60% of carers on low incomes, who are of working age and on Carer's Allowance, claim a means-tested benefit, through which they may be entitled to receive up to £650 in Cost of Living Payments in 2022/23. These payments are targeted at low income households in receipt of an eligible means-tested benefit, including pensioners who are in receipt of Pension Credit.

Six million people in receipt of an eligible disability benefit should have received the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment, and eight million pensioner households are receiving a £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment as a top-up to their Winter Fuel Payment.

All Carer's Allowance recipients in England who pay Council Tax in bands A to D should have received a £150 rebate.

The Secretary of State announced on 17 November that State Pensions and benefits will be up-rated from April 2023 by 10.1%, in line with the increase in the Consumer Prices Index in the year to September 2022.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, in the Autumn Statement, the Government announced £26 billion in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable households, an additional £1 billion to help with the cost of household essentials next year and the amended Energy Price Guarantee, which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England, this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund, backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

## ■ Cost of Living Payments: Disability

**Sir George Howarth:**

[\[108082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Cost of Living Payments for disabled people not on means-tested benefits and who have higher energy usage.

**Stuart C McDonald:**

[\[108237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Cost of Living Payment for disabled people not on means-tested benefits and who have higher energy usage.

**Christina Rees:**

[\[108302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he been made of the adequacy of the Cost of Living Payments for disabled people not on means tested benefits who have higher energy usage.

**Tom Pursglove:**

I refer the Hon and Rt Hon Members to the answer I gave on 13 December 2022 to Question [UIN 106507](#).

## ■ Employment: Disability

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[108217]**

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 each of the last five calendar years.

**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.

Referrals to the IPES programme started in December 2019. There were 50 higher threshold employment outcomes in the year ending December 2020, 580 higher threshold employment outcomes in the year ending December 2021, and 820 higher threshold, employment outcomes up until November 2022.

## ■ Employment: Menopause

**Feryal Clark:**

**[108410]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department has taken since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy to encourage employers to implement evidence based workplace support for the menopause including introducing workplace menopause policies.

**Mims Davies:**

The previous Minister for Employment commissioned the roundtable on older workers to look at the menopause and employment. A subsequent independent [menopause and the workplace report](#) was published, to which the [Government's response](#) was outlined in July: [Menopause and the Workplace: How to enable fulfilling working lives: government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), both documents covering actions and responsibilities of employers.

Alongside this, and separately, the Women's Health Strategy sets out a range of commitments including encouraging employers to implement evidence-based workplace support and introduce workplace menopause policies.

## ■ Food Banks

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[108309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many occasions staff in his Department have suggested that UK residents could make use of foodbanks in response to issues they are having in accessing benefits.

**Mims Davies:**

Jobcentre Plus staff can, and do, signpost people in need to foodbanks, and other sources of help, while ensuring all sources of state support are explored. The number of claimants that have been signposted to foodbanks by the department is not captured.

Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation.

**■ Jobcentre Plus: Expenditure****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[108219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on Jobcentre Plus on (a) resource and (b) capital expenditure in each of the last five financial years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**■ Jobcentres****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[108220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average number of work coaches in post was at a jobcentre in each month in the last 12 months for which data is available.

**Guy Opperman:**

The average number of work coaches varies to meet customer need.

There are 670 Jobcentres in the network, with sites ranging from a minimal caseload of 250 customers, to in excess of 5,000 customers.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[108221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the average caseload of a work coach in each of the last five financial years for which data is available.

**Guy Opperman:**

Cases are seen on their specific requirements determined by factors including which conditionality regime they are in, so there is no single measure of Cases per Work Coach.

**■ Pension Credit: Eligibility****Martyn Day:**[\[105371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will review the threshold to qualify for Pension Credit in the context of the increase in the level of inflation.

**Laura Trott:**

Following the conclusion of the Secretary of State's annual up-rating review, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Standard Minimum Guarantee in Pension Credit will increase by 10.1% from April 2023. This is in line with the increase in prices in the year to September 2022 and it will also extend CPI protection to those who rely on the Standard Minimum Guarantee in Pension Credit at a cost of £700 million above the statutory minimum requirement.

Other elements of Pension Credit will also increase by 10.1%, including the additional amounts for disabled people and carers, and the threshold for access to the Savings Credit for those who reached State Pension age before April 2016.

**Restart Scheme: Disclosure of Information****Alison McGovern:**[\[105317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2022 on Question 86672 on Restart Scheme: Disclosure of Information, when he expects the Department to complete its plan to publish official statistics on the Restart Scheme.

**Guy Opperman:**

The department plans to release an ad hoc publication of official statistics for the Restart Scheme today.

**Second State Pension Age Independent Review****Alex Sobel:**[\[105553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish the independent report on the Second State Pension age review.

**Laura Trott:**

The independent report is currently being considered as part of a wide range of evidence that will inform the second Government Review of State Pension age. The Government Review will be published in early 2023, as announced at the Autumn Statement 2022. The independent report will be published alongside it.

**Universal Credit****Alison McGovern:**[\[108198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 58983 on Universal Credit, if he will provide that information for the period to 12 December 2022.

**Guy Opperman:**

Figures for the period to 12 December 2022 are not yet available.

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[108199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people claiming Universal Credit are subject to third party deductions as of 12 December 2022; and what the median deduction was.

**Guy Opperman:**

Figures for the period to 12 December 2022 are not yet available.

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[108263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 11 October 2022 to Question 54580, on Universal Credit, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of facilitating temporary Universal Credit capital allowance extensions in cases where they would prevent the suspension of an individual's Universal Credit award in the period between the sale of one Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle and the purchase of another one, and where the purchase of that new vehicle absorbs all the additional income generated by the sale.

**Guy Opperman:**

Universal Credit is assessed in monthly assessment periods. Ordinarily capital is considered at the end of an assessment period. Therefore, the effect of capital on entitlement would depend on whether or not it was available to the claimant at the relevant time. Using the example given, if a wheelchair accessible vehicle was sold near the beginning of the assessment period and a replacement vehicle purchased before the end of that assessment period, then it is unlikely the proceeds would have any impact on the Universal Credit award, unless it increased the value of capital above the limits described above at the end of the assessment period.

The level at which capital starts to be claimed is above £6000. Entitlement to UC ends where capital is above £16000.

## ■ Winter Fuel Payments

**Martyn Day:**

[\[105374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that Winter Fuel Payments are made in a timely manner.

**Laura Trott:**

The final batch of Winter Fuel Payments were processed by DWP on 7 December with payments credited to customers' bank accounts on 12 December 2022. Payment adjustments resulting from customers' change of circumstances and death arrears will continue to be made over the coming weeks, this includes any new claims for this year's Winter Fuel Payment exercise.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ Gendered Intelligence: Finance

**Miriam Cates:**

[\[90903\]](#)

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 November 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Stuart Andrew:**

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

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

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

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

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

**Funding as part of the Big Night In campaign was administered by Children in Need on behalf of DCMS as part of the financial support for voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to respond to coronavirus (COVID-19).**

#### ■ Television Licences: Non-payment

**Lee Anderson:**

[\[101060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many pensioners have been prosecuted for non-payment of the TV Licence fee in each of the last three years.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 December 2022. The correct answer should have been:**



**Julia Lopez:**

The requirement to hold, and pay for, a TV Licence is set out in the Communications Act 2003 and the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004.

The Ministry of Justice currently publishes the number of prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes for the non-payment of TV licence fees annually as part of their criminal justice statistics quarterly publications, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly>

Figures for each year since 2005 up to 2022 are available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool, and can be found in the following dataset:

- 2018-2022:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1118314/outcomes-by-offence-june-2022.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1118314/outcomes-by-offence-june-2022.xlsx)

To view the relevant figures in these tables, select '191A Television licence evasion' in the Offence filter. These figures can be refined further by age to identify an age range of 70+, it is impossible to provide the data for 'pensioners' as that is a diverse group that cannot be filtered purely by age.

The data for individuals aged 70+ are the following:

- 2022 - 260 proceeded against & 217 sentenced
- 2021 - 238 proceeded against & 207 sentenced
- ~~2022~~ **2020** - 329 proceeded against & 288 sentenced

Alternative data does also show no Over 75s have been prosecuted and that none of the prosecutions have resulted in custodial sentences.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust: Staff

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[106487]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels within Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 December 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Will Quince:**

~~While Structured Medication Reviews (SMRs) are not commissioned from pharmacies, from November 2021 to October 2022, 2,221,117 SMR appointments were booked in general practice.~~

**No specific assessment has been made. Staffing levels are determined locally and are informed by national guidance for safe staffing.**

~~SMRs optimise patient care in a number of ways, including by reducing medicine wastage. However, no specific assessment has been made of this impact, as it is~~

among a number of benefits. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has assessed the evidence for interventions to optimise the use of medicines in developing its guideline 'Medicines optimisation: the safe and effective use of medicines to enable the best possible outcomes', which has informed NHS England's commissioning policy.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business Update

##### **Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Grant Shapps):** **[[HCWS450](#)]**

This statement concerns the Government's decision to close the Help to Grow: Digital programme. Help to Grow: Digital will close to new business applications for discounts on 2 February 2023. Discounts issued for eligible software must be redeemed within 30 days from issue date.

The scheme has supported businesses to grow, but with take-up lower than expected, the Government cannot justify the continued cost of the schemes to the taxpayer. The decision has been taken to refocus efforts towards other support mechanisms for small businesses, ensuring businesses get the backing they need in the most efficient and productive way possible. The Help to Grow: Management scheme remains in place.

The Government continues to support small businesses, such as through the Government-backed British Business Bank's Start Up Loans, which are available to help aspiring entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses. The Government has taken action to protect all eligible UK businesses, including small businesses, from rising energy costs through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Government Transparency and Accountability

##### **Parliamentary Secretary (Alex Burghart):** **[[HCWS449](#)]**

My noble friend the Minister of State (Baroness Neville-Rolfe) has today made the following written statement:

Since 2010, the Government has been at the forefront of opening up data to allow Parliament, the public and the media to hold public bodies to account. Such online transparency is crucial to delivering value for money, cutting waste and inefficiency, and ensuring every pound of taxpayers' money is spent in the best possible way.

The Government will continue to look at how the range of information published by the government can be improved and made as useful as possible to the public, press and Parliament. The following subject areas include documents and information that the government is due to publish.

##### ***Routine transparency data on Ministers, Special Advisers and Senior Officials***

Departments will today be publishing routine transparency data on Ministers', Special Advisers' and Senior Officials' gifts, hospitality, travel and external meetings, for the period of July to September 2022. This data covers the returns for the Prime Minister,

Government Chief Whip and Leader of the House of Commons and the Lords, as well as the Cabinet Office.

Departments will also be publishing the business appointment rules advice summary for the same period.

***List of Ministerial Responsibilities***

The Government will today be publishing the List of Ministerial Responsibilities on GOV.UK. Copies will also be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses in Parliament. The list includes details of ministerial departments, the Ministers within each department, their portfolio responsibilities and private offices and the executive agencies within each department.

***Salaries of Members of His Majesty's Government***

The Government will today be updating the Salaries of Members of His Majesty's Government with information for the financial year 2022-2023 on GOV.UK. This indicates the salaries to which Ministers are entitled and the actual salaries that they claim, along with supplementary information on ministerial salaries, allowances and payments on leaving office.

***Cabinet Office Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22***

This Annual Report and Accounts will also be laid before Parliament today. The publication includes the Cabinet Office's audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 and a review of performance and governance arrangements. The Annual Report will be published on GOV.UK.

***Cabinet Office Accounting Officer System Statement 2022***

This publication is a single statement setting out all of the accountability relationships and processes within the department. This update takes into account change since the previous version was published in 2020. I have requested that a copy of the Accounting Officer System Statement be deposited in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament. The publication will also be published on GOV.UK.

***Cabinet Office: Spend Control Data for July to September 2022***

Along with all government departments, in 2010 the Cabinet Office committed to publish quarterly data on its planned spending that has been subject to the Cabinet Office spend controls. The spend controls covered are Digital and Technology, Commercial, Property, Advertising, Marketing and Communications, and contingent labour (as for equivalent figures published by other departments). For the quarter covered, 12 separate items of Cabinet Office's own spending (with a total value of £734 million) were approved under the cross-government Cabinet Office spending control.

***Monthly Workforce Management Information (September and October 2022)***

As standard, the Government is today publishing our monthly breakdown of workforce headcount and pay costs. This is a routine publication and will be published on GOV.UK.

***Public Procurement Review Service - Progress Report 2021/22***

The Government will today publish its Annual Progress Report, detailing trends in issues raised to the Public Procurement Review Service. In this publication, we look to consider such trends and make recommendations on how to improve the Service moving forwards. The report will be published, as usual, on GOV.UK.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Health Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy) (Maria Caulfield):** [\[HCWS455\]](#)

On 16 December 2021, the government published its response to the findings of the inquiry into the issues raised by disgraced surgeon, Ian Paterson. We reiterated the apologies of the government to the patients affected and those close to them and committed to ensuring we did more to protect patients in the future.

In line with this commitment, the government accepted the overwhelming majority of the recommendations made by the inquiry and set out an implementation plan of 40 actions to put those recommendations into effect. Finally, we committed to providing a further update on the progress of this implementation plan in 12-months' time. I am happy to be able to publish this report fulfilling that commitment today.

All the relevant bodies within the health sector have been united in understanding that these changes are essential. We all agree that patients cannot be failed in the same way again. On behalf of the government, I want to thank every organisation which has engaged in this process for their commitment to making improvements. I would especially like to thank the representatives of patient groups impacted by Ian Paterson, who have campaigned tirelessly to ensure their experiences do not go unheeded. They have continued to be a source of inspiration and expertise throughout the implementation period.

I am pleased to report that good progress has been made across the implementation plan which we set out in December 2021. The report published today provides full details of this progress against the four themes of the government's response as laid out in the implementation plan. In this statement, I will highlight some of the most important developments under each of these themes.

#### **Patient-centred information**

Patients now have more access to information relevant to their treatment than they did during Ian Paterson's time practising. This includes access to information about the performance of consultants working for independent sector healthcare providers, and specialties in the NHS. These continue to be added to, so patients will have more, and better, access to independent information before choosing a consultant. NHS England (NHSE) will work with the professions so that meaningful consultant-level information on the numbers and types of procedures performed should be made publicly available. If patients choose to be treated in the independent sector, there is now more information about what to expect, with further information to be made available over the coming year.

Patients now have the right to access their treatment records and clinicians are aware of the need to write to patients directly following a consultation or treatment, rather than only writing to their GP. This information gives patients a record of their condition, and test results to reflect on, or to seek a second opinion if required. This is reinforced by ensuring patients get the time they need to consider treatment options and have access to a range of new resources to help them consider their options; options that patients will also be able to discuss with medical professionals who are equipped to handle these conversations.

### **Making challenge heard**

Doctors across more specialties now have independent data on their practice available and will be required to use this as part of their appraisal and revalidation processes. This will help to identify issues and fix them. Staff in the health system also have more opportunities to make their voices heard about a patient's care, including through clarified guidance and assessment of multidisciplinary team use as a forum.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) updated its guidance on complaints processes in early 2022. It is now easier for patients to raise concerns about treatment they receive and access independent resolution of their complaint if they are unsatisfied with the provider's handling. As part of the implementation of the NHS patient safety strategy, NHSE has introduced measures to advance safety and the response to harm. The government has appointed the first ever Patient Safety Commissioner for England, Dr Henrietta Hughes OBE.

### **Ensuring accountability**

CQC published the new single assessment framework in July 2022, which sets out what good care looks like, and National Quality Board published national guidance on System Quality Groups, setting out the requirements for quality governance in integrated care systems. Alongside this, we have seen significant culture change in the independent sector, now leaving no doubt that independent providers must take responsibility for maintaining high standards of care in their facilities, irrespective of how the medical professionals involved are engaged by them (through employment or practising privileges). This has been supported by Independent Healthcare Providers Network's refresh of the Medical Practitioners Assurance Framework in September 2022. NHS Resolution launched new exclusion guidance in April 2022.

### **Putting things right**

Patients who are impacted by potential issues with their care will be reviewed through recall processes which are now better informed of how to put patients at the centre of their focus. The new national recall framework was published in June 2022 to facilitate this.

Patients will continue to receive apologies from healthcare professionals and providers for potential issues with their care when appropriate. Enhanced training and resources are now available to clinicians to ensure these apologies are delivered effectively and meaningfully.

The government is working to ensure that any future changes to indemnity and insurance arrangements will be made using the best evidence base available. This includes a thorough assessment of the impact on patients, healthcare professionals, providers, and the wider market; with the aim of improving the position for patients when receiving treatment from any regulated healthcare professional, regardless of the setting. The government's ambition is that when this work concludes, patients have confidence that they can access appropriate compensation if harmed while receiving care, including when harm arises from criminal/intentional acts or omissions. The summary of responses to the consultation on appropriate clinical negligence cover for regulated healthcare professionals will be published alongside this implementation update on 15 December 2022.

The government will be continuing to ensure this work is built upon, as part of our wider commitment to ensuring patient safety and high standards of care across the health system. We understand that there is no room for complacency when it comes to patient safety and, together with the patient safety commissioner, will make sure this is one building block towards a health system which patients and those close to them can have the maximum possible confidence.

Copies of the government's full implementation update will be available at:

<https://www.gov.uk>.

## JUSTICE

### ■ **Progress report on the implementation of the Rape Review Action Plan, User-friendly guides for victims; Operation Soteria Year One report.**

**Deputy Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor (Dominic Raab):**

**[[HCWS448](#)]**

The Government is today publishing a progress report eighteen months on from the publication of the End-to-End Rape Review Action Plan. This is the third six-monthly progress report on implementation of the Rape Review Action Plan and demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to be transparent and accountable to the public on our progress in delivering the ambitions of the Rape Review.

The latest progress report sets out that we are on track to meet our ambitions in the Review, to more than double the number of adult rape cases reaching court by the end of this parliament. In Q2 2022, compared to the 2019 quarterly average, adult rape police referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service were up 95%, CPS adult rape charges were up 65% and the number of adult rape cases reaching Crown Court were up 91%.

The Government has also today published an independently authored report on the policing aspects of Operation Soteria, a policing and CPS programme to develop new operating models for the investigation and prosecution of rape in England and Wales by June 2023. The report outlines the key findings from research in five police forces and provides an initial draft of the National Operating Model for the investigation of rape which will be available to all police forces from June 2023.



The Rape Review Progress Report sets out that:

- We are also publishing today a series of user-friendly guides on gov.uk for victims of rape and sexual assault, to enable victims to better understand what they can expect as their case progresses through the criminal justice system.
- We have launched the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line which will provide all victims and survivors access to dedicated support whenever and wherever they need it.
- We have also completed the expansion of Operation Soteria to a further 14 police forces and three further CPS areas. The aims of this ambitious joint police and CPS programme of work include:
  - o Improve relationships between police and CPS and prioritise early collaboration so strong cases can be built as early as possible;
  - o Improve victim communication including a pledge for more frequent contact and a clear guide to explain the justice process;
  - o Strengthen the partnership between Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, CPS and Police to better coordinate support for victims.
- We successfully rolled out pre-recorded cross-examination for victims of sexual offences, a vital measure now available in all Crown Courts across England and Wales. This will spare survivors and victims' the trauma of giving evidence in the glare of a courtroom.
- We introduced new powers through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act will stop unnecessary and intrusive requests for victims' phones and we are continuing to work with police forces to ensure they have the capability to return victims devices within 24 hours.

These actions form part of the Government's ambition to create meaningful cross-system change, improve the experience of victims and bring more perpetrators to justice.

## TREASURY

### ■ Life Insurance taxation: transfers and reinsurance of long-term business

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Andrew Griffith):**

[\[HCWS453\]](#)

The Government is announcing the following measure – of which there are two components – which will take immediate effect from today.

The first part of the measure applies to re-insurers of a specific type of long-term insurance business known as basic life assurance and general annuity business (BLAGAB). It addresses a possible tax mismatch in the life insurance rules where re-insurance precedes a transfer of BLAGAB. In this situation the measure eliminates the possibility of a mismatch by classifying the re-insured business as BLAGAB in the hands of the re-insurer. This will protect Exchequer revenues needed to fund vital public services.



The second part of the measure addresses an industry concern that the current scope of section 92 Finance Act 2012 may be unnecessarily wide and is blocking commercial transactions. It amends that section so that it does not apply where substantially all the insurance risks of a book of BLAGAB are assumed by a re-insurer.

The draft legislation will be published today on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/re-insurance-in-the-course-of-transfers-of-long-term-business>. It will be accompanied by a Tax Information and Impact Note and an Explanatory Note. A copy of the legislation will also be deposited in the library of both Houses.

## ■ Treasury Directions under the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022

**The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

**[[HCWS452](#)]**

The Government is committed to public service pensions which are fair to public sector workers. In 2015 (2014 for local government workers in England and Wales), reforms were made to Public Service Pension Schemes in England and Wales to provide workers with fairer pensions arrangements and to make the pension schemes more sustainable and affordable for the longer term. These reforms followed the recommendations of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission. The Government believes the 2015 changes to public service pensions balanced the interests of public service workers, employers and taxpayers fairly.

However, when the reforms were introduced, they provided ‘transitional protections’ which allowed members who were close to retirement to remain in the previous scheme (the legacy scheme). In December 2018, the Court of Appeal found that these transitional protections in the judicial and firefighters’ pension schemes gave rise to unlawful discrimination (the McCloud and Sargeant case).

The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 was enacted to remedy the discrimination identified by the courts. The Act provides a retrospective remedy, such that affected members are treated as if they had always been in the legacy scheme for their period of remediable service, as well as providing affected members a choice of which pension benefits they wish to receive for that period when those benefits are put into payment. The detail of the retrospective remedy for affected members will be set out in scheme regulations made under the Act for each affected pension scheme. The retrospective remedy is due to come into force by 1 October 2023.

The Act provides for HM Treasury to make directions to set out how schemes must exercise the powers provided in the Act in making scheme regulations. The government has made and published Treasury Directions today and they are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-service-pensions-and-judicial-offices-act-2022-treasury-directions>

The Directions ensure that scheme regulations for the public service schemes can implement a comprehensive remedy for affected members. The Directions provide for consistent treatment across the public service pension schemes to enable schemes to

return members to the position they would have been had the discrimination not arisen. The publication of the Treasury Directions today enables the responsible authorities (Secretaries of State with responsibility for the public service schemes and the Welsh and Scottish ministers for the devolved schemes) to proceed to develop and consult their stakeholders on scheme regulations to deliver the remedy in each of the public service schemes. Following consultation, the Secretaries of State responsible for the pension schemes for the NHS, Teachers, local government workers and Police in England and Wales, Firefighters in England, the UK Armed Forces and the Civil Service in Great Britain, will then make and lay secondary legislation in Parliament. Scheme regulations must come into force by 1 October 2023.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update

**Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work. (Tom Pursglove):**  
**[[HCWS451](#)]**

Today the department will publish the latest update on progress on making backdated payments to Personal Independence Payment claimants who are affected by the MH and RJ decisions of the Upper Tribunal (UT). The release will be published at: [PIP administrative exercise: progress on cases cleared - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The MH decision changed how overwhelming psychological distress is considered when assessing someone's ability to plan and follow a journey. The RJ decision changed how we decide whether someone can carry out an activity safely and if they need supervision.

As at the end of November 2022, we have reviewed around 990,000 cases against the MH decision. This includes cases where claimants have previously been assessed as having 'overwhelming psychological distress' or who have a 'psychiatric disorder' as one of their health conditions. We have also reviewed around 1,100,000 cases against the RJ decision. This includes cases where claimants have a 'neurological disease' as one of their health conditions. All reviews will have been carried out by a Case Manager within the department.

Around 8,400 arrears payments, totalling around £44 million, have been made. No one should have seen their PIP reduced because of this exercise.

In addition, we will continue to review any case for any claimant who asks us to.

This has been a complex and substantial exercise, involving over 2,090,000 reviews against two UT decisions. Our approach demonstrates that we have prioritised claimants who are most likely to benefit, to make backdated payments as quickly as possible.

We have set out further background to this release in an updated 'Frequently Asked Questions'. I will deposit a copy of this document and the statistical release in the House Library.

## ■ UK's 2022 Follow-up Report to the 2016 Inquiry by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Tom Pursglove):**

[\[HCWS454\]](#)

Today, I will place in the House Library a copy of the UK's 2022 follow-up report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, following the 2016 inquiry.

This Government is committed to eliminating barriers faced by disabled people, in order to realise their full participation and inclusion in society. The follow-up report demonstrates how we are implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and showcases positive action taking place across the UK to support disabled people.

The UK Government has implemented numerous policies and programmes to tackle the barriers faced by disabled people relevant to the articles examined by the inquiry, as highlighted in our latest report to the UN Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We have seen 1.3 million more disabled people in work than in 2017 - delivering a Government commitment five years early. We are investing £1.3 billion over three years in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions.

The Government is providing households with cost of living support totalling over £37 billion this year. This includes a £650 Cost of Living Payment for people on means-tested benefits. In addition to this, 6 million eligible disabled people have received a one-off, Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 to help with additional costs.

We are reforming social care support to improve disabled people's access to care services and ensure integrated health and care support. Increased funding for adult social care will also ensure a fairer cost of care for both carers and patients. Improvements in the accessibility of homes and transport are helping disabled people to live independently and have a better standard of living.

We supported the passage of the British Sign Language (BSL) Act (2022) which recognises BSL as a language of England, Wales and Scotland in its own right. A BSL Advisory Board is being established to guide implementation of the Act from the perspective of people who use BSL.

Recognising the need for wider societal change across all industries, our 19 Disability and Access Ambassadors are using their expertise and influence in business to help drive and support changes in access for disabled consumers and employees.

Alongside this, we recognise the importance of co-ordinated action across Government, reflecting the full range of services and opportunities that deliver full participation. Our Ministerial Disability Champions have been supporting and driving forward work on disability in their respective departments.

We continue to engage with disabled people and stakeholders through Disabled People's Organisations, networks and relevant organisations. This is to ensure that lived

experience underpins regular and coordinated action across Government. We remain committed to improving the lives of disabled people and making our society a more inclusive and accessible place for all disabled people.