



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 December 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:35 P.M., 16 December 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ **Business: EU Law**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[106477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential risk to (a) businesses and (b) investors of the revocation or amendment of retained EU law under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

We have published an impact assessment for the Bill which is available on GOV.UK.

Going forwards, departments will identify how they will reform their REUL using the powers in the Bill. In doing so they will conduct proportionate analysis of any impacts on business and investors (where relevant) as well as other stakeholders, and produce impact assessments in the usual way.

The Government remains committed to engaging with stakeholders to ensure policy decisions are well informed and result in benefits for our people and our businesses.

#### ■ **Civil Society: Fuel Poverty**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[106509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to provide additional funding to (a) social enterprises and (b) charitable organisations for the energy bills of venues used to provide warm hubs during the cost of living crisis.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) provides a price reduction to ensure that all eligible non-domestic customers including social enterprises and charitable organisations are protected from excessively high energy bills over the winter period.

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

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[106297\]](#)

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

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

It is impossible to provide an accurate number of staff allocated to deal with issues related to international trade within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), as this number has and will continue to flex in line with

government and departmental priorities at any given time. BEIS' interests in international trade span trade with the EU, trade with the rest of the world, and domestic policy and consequently officials may be working on international trade issues alongside their core roles. There is a team in BEIS who are solely dedicated to international trade and who act as a central point of co-ordination across the range of these workstreams. Over the past five years the headcount figures of full time employees for this team are 37.5 for 2018, 28.2 for 2019, 18.4 for 2020, 17.7 for 2021 and 16.8 for 2022.

## ■ Employment Tribunals Service: Costs

**Justin Madders:** [\[106429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2022 to Question 54579 on Employment Tribunal Service: Costs, if he will publish the data he used to estimate the median cost.

**Justin Madders:** [\[106438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2022 to Question 54579 on Employment Tribunal Service: Costs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the median cost of seeking advice or representation for an employment tribunal claim on access to justice for people earning below the Lower Earnings Level.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

With reference to my answer of 17 October to question 54579 the data used to estimate the median cost is already published and can be found in the Survey of employment tribunal applications 2018 survey at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-employment-tribunal-applications-2018>.

The Government is committed to supporting people to resolve their disputes without the need for costly litigation. Before an individual makes a claim to an Employment Tribunal they need to contact Acas first where they will be offered the option of free early conciliation to attempt to resolve disputes without needing a judicial determination. The Government also continues to invest in state enforcement and has more than doubled the National Minimum wage budget for compliance and enforcement to £27.8 million for 2022/23, up from £13.2 million in 2015/16.

## ■ Energy: Billing

**Beth Winter:** [\[106504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what data his department holds on the number of energy supply customers whose direct debit was increased by 100 per cent or more between 1 February and 30 April 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department does not collect this data. Suppliers should ensure that their billing and payment arrangements are effective and fair. The regulator, Ofgem, monitors and enforces compliance with the licence obligations on suppliers.

Customers can challenge an increased direct debit amount and their supplier must justify how they calculated the new amount and the meter readings they have used.

**Beth Winter:**[\[106505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of energy supply customers (a) whose direct debit was increased by 100 per cent or more in the period between 1 February and 30 April 2022 and (b) were awarded a goodwill payment; and what the (i) mean and (ii) median goodwill payment was.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department does not collect this data. Suppliers should ensure that their billing and payment arrangements are effective and fair. The regulator, Ofgem, monitors and enforces compliance with the licence obligations on suppliers.

**Energy: Prices****Catherine West:**[\[106508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he (a) has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of implementing and (b) plans to take steps to publish a consultation on a social tariff for energy.

**Graham Stuart:**

As set out in the Autumn Statement, the Government will develop a new approach to consumer protection in energy markets, which will apply from April 2024 onwards.

The Government has committed to work with consumer groups and industry to consider the best approach, including options such as social tariffs, as part of wider retail market reforms.

**Housing: Washington and Sunderland West****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[106399\]](#)

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

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[106400\]](#)

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 under floor insulation installed in Washington and Sunderland West constituency as of 31 October 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department estimates that under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Green Homes Grant (GHG) Government schemes, around 1,000 loft insulation measures and around 100 under floor insulation measures have been installed in Washington and Sunderland West constituency as at end of September 2022.

[Household Energy Efficiency Statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-statistics)

[Green Homes Grant and Home Upgrade Grant statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/green-homes-grant-and-home-upgrade-grant-statistics)

**Hydrogen: Renewable Energy****Ian Paisley:****[106404]**

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

**Graham Stuart:**

Officials are collaborating closely 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.

**Power Failures: York Central****Rachael Maskell:****[106501]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to prevent energy black outs in York Central constituency; and what contingency measures are in place should blackouts occur.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is confident in its plans to protect households and businesses in the full range of scenarios this winter. We continue to work closely with Ofgem, National Grid and other key industry organisations to monitor the energy supply horizon and prepare for the winter. Customers who are vulnerable during a power cut can sign up for the Priority Services Register and all customers can call 105 for emergency help and advice.

**Utilities: Billing****Beth Winter:****[106502]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department made of the effectiveness of the enforcement of compliance measures by Ofgem to limit incorrect direct debit overpayments by utility providers.

**Graham Stuart:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently wrote to energy suppliers and Ofgem asking them to do more to ensure the direct debits are being set at appropriate levels.

BEIS Ministers continue to have regular discussions with Ofgem on this and range of other issues.

Ofgem is the independent energy regulator and is directly accountable to Parliament for the performance of its functions.

**Beth Winter:**[\[106503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what record is maintained by (a) his Department or (b) Ofgem of significant incorrect direct debit overpayments by utility providers.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department does not have access to customer or supplier data.

As part of its Market Compliance Reviews, Ofgem collects information to assess whether suppliers are complying with their licence obligations, with the accurate setting of direct debit levels being a key focus of such activity by Ofgem.

**■ Zero Hours Contracts****Justin Madders:**[\[106430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to strengthen protections for workers on zero-hour contracts to ensure that they have the ability to decline offered shifts without incurring a risk that they will not be offered suitable shifts in future.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Zero hours contracts are an important part of the UK's flexible labour market, for both employers to manage changing demand and for individuals who may need to balance work around other commitments such as childcare and study.

The Government has made good progress in bringing forward measures that add flexibility for workers while ensuring the protection of employment rights including banning exclusivity clauses in Zero Hours Contracts in 2015. In 2020, the Government introduced the right for all workers to receive a day one written statement of rights, setting out leave entitlements and pay. This ensures all workers have transparent information about their employment relationship.

**Justin Madders:**[\[106431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to communicate the changes implemented by the Exclusivity Terms for Zero Hours Workers (Unenforceability and Redress) Regulations 2022 to (a) employers and (b) employees.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The changes implemented by the above Regulations came into force on Monday 5 December and were accompanied by social media posts and a Government press release which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-of-britons-to-be-able-to-request-flexible-working-on-day-one-of-employment>.

We also provided an update on the Regulations to all those who had responded to our consultation on this reform and all stakeholders who we engage with regularly on employment rights issues.

Employers and employees will be able to find guidance on the new Regulations on the Acas website. Acas provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.

**Justin Madders:****[106432]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of cases which have been brought to the employment tribunal service for people seeking redress under the Exclusivity Terms in Zero Hours Contracts (Redress) Regulations 2015 in the period since those regulations came into force.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The post-implementation review for these regulations states that there had been very few claims based on HM Courts & Tribunal Service data. Based on the information collected for the review, it was considered reasonable to assume that there was a maximum of between 5 and 10 employment tribunal claims a year related to the regulations.

The review concluded that the objective of the regulations - to provide redress for individuals affected by employer non-compliance with the ban on exclusivity clauses - had been achieved, with stakeholders viewing the regulations as an important deterrent and effective and proportionate means of realising the policy objective.

**Justin Madders:****[106433]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number people on zero-hour contracts who have taken up second jobs since the introduction of the Exclusivity Terms in Zero Hours Contracts (Redress) Regulations 2015.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

BEIS published a post-implementation review for the regulations. The review includes analysis of the Labour Force Survey of people on zero-hour contracts in their main job who have a second job.

The review concluded that the objective of the regulations - to provide redress for individuals affected by employer non-compliance with the ban on exclusivity clauses - had been achieved, with stakeholders viewing the regulations as an important deterrent and effective and proportionate means of realising the policy objective.

**Justin Madders:**[\[106434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a comparative assessment of the potential impact of the cost-of-living crisis on workers employed on (a) zero-hour and (b) other contracts.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government has supported UK households through cost of living challenges by ensuring households on the lowest incomes have proportionally benefited the most from support packages.

The Government has announced further funding for 2023-24 that will ensure over 8 million of the most vulnerable households across the UK will continue to be supported through next winter via additional Cost of Living Payments. This is on top the 10.1% increase in benefits from April 2023, and support provided to all households from the Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Cabinet Office: Carbon Emissions****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[108321\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, by what date they expect their Department to be carbon neutral in its day to day operations.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The department is actively engaged in contributing fully to the government's overall objective, for the UK, to reach Net Zero by 2050. Central Government has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% in 2019-20, compared to a 2009-10 baseline, exceeding its target of 43%. The Greening Government Commitments framework provides a comprehensive, coherent and quality assured dataset on central government emissions and allows consistent comparisons to be made.

■ **Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:**[\[106388\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of September 2022, for what purpose was Murray Chauffeur Services Ltd. paid £4,218 on 27 September.

**Jeremy Quin:**

This transaction was for a series of group transport journeys to and from airports, relating to official overseas travel.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[106389\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the months of July and August

2022, what items were purchased from (a) Hotline.co.uk on 29 July and (b) Big Bear Promo on 18 August; and for what purpose those items were used.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The transaction on 29 July was the purchase of 500 Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) branded notebooks, for its launch in August.

The transaction on 18 August was for 500 Government Property Agency branded fidget cubes, which were used as part of a Civil Service Live activity.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106390\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department spent in 2021 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Cabinet Office used Government Procurement Cards to buy £675,243.02 worth of goods and services with a value of less than £500 during 2021.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[107062\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his department's publication of spending over £500 by government procurement card for the month of November 2021, for what purpose his department paid £746.39 to Windsor Wellness Centre on 8 November 2021.

**Jeremy Quin:**

This transaction was for PCR testing for six staff members during an overseas ministerial visit.

■ **Cabinet Office: Trade**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[106296\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There are currently 13 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff working on trade in the Cabinet Secretariat and 6 FTE working on international government procurement, which includes procurement policy within trade negotiations. That number has fluctuated over the past five years, including when staff were redeployed on a temporary basis in support of the Government's response to the war in Ukraine and to tackle the Covid pandemic. We are in the process of planning workforce arrangements for the next two years.

## ■ Civil Servants: Gender Recognition Certificates

**Dawn Butler:** [\[108104\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason the UK Civil Service People Survey 2022 requires trans individuals to provide details of their gender recognition certificate.

**Dawn Butler:** [\[108105\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, who will have access to the details of gender recognition certificates that trans individuals provide as part of the UK Civil Service People Survey 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK Civil Service People Survey 2022 did not ask trans individuals to provide details of their gender recognition certificate, and so those details are not recorded and nobody has access to them.

## ■ Ministerial Responsibility

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[106500\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to update the List of Ministerial Responsibilities.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The List of Ministerial Responsibilities has been published and placed in the Libraries of both Houses. It can also be found on GOV.UK at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-ministers-and-responsibilities>.

## ■ Queen Elizabeth II

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[106335\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has further plans to commemorate the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Government is working with the Royal Household on the approach to commemorating Her Late Majesty. Further information will be shared in due course.

## ■ Veterans: Carers

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[102964\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues and with veterans' charities to improve care pathways for veterans with complex rehabilitation needs.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Veterans in England are able to receive specialised treatment on the NHS via the Veterans' Trauma Network for physical health conditions, and Op COURAGE for

mental health support. The Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework (IPC4V) also offers a personalised care approach for the small number of Armed Forces personnel who have complex and enduring physical, neurological and mental health conditions that are attributable to injury whilst in Service. We will continue to work with colleagues across government, and the charity sector, to ensure that veterans are able to access the best healthcare possible, including via the commitments made in the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan.

## DEFENCE

### ■ **Military Aid: Industrial Disputes**

**Richard Foord:**

[\[108381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many military personnel have been seconded to cover for workers engaged in industrial action in (a) December 2022 and (b) January 2023.

**James Heapey:**

No military personnel are being seconded to cover for workers engaged in industrial action. Service personnel will provide support only in response to specific agreed MACA requests for specific tasks, but this will not equate to secondments.

### ■ **Ministry of Defence: Bullying**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[105376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The annual Civil Service People Survey looks at civil servants' attitudes to, and experience of working in government departments. Staff are asked about their experiences of harassment or bullying at work over the previous 12-months. Due to how the data is captured, it is not possible to separate out bullying from harassment.

Within the People Survey, staff reporting experiencing harassment or bullying at work over the previous 12-months:

2018: 11%

2019: 12%

2020: 8%

2021: 10%

2022: results are not yet available.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:**[\[106391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what their Department spent in 2021 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card.

**Alex Chalk:**

In 2021, the total net expenditure on purchasing goods and services, with a value of less than £500, using a physically held Electronic Purchasing Card (previously known as a Government Procurement Card) was £13,990,198.11.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Trade****Gareth Thomas:**[\[106307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

**Alex Chalk:**

As at 14 December 2022, 28 Civil Servants and military officers are directly engaged in work on international trade. Figures for the past five years are not recorded and there are no forecasts for the next two years.

It should be noted that significant numbers of other officials and military personnel across the Ministry of Defence have roles that contribute to international trade, and a large proportion of this work is channelled through the Department for International Trade's Defence and Security Exports team.

**EDUCATION****■ Out-of-school Education****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[106488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the regulation of independent tuition centres.

**Nick Gibb:**

Independent tuition centres would generally be considered to be out-of-school settings. Out-of-school settings are currently defined by the Department as “any institution providing tuition, training, instruction or activities to children in England, without their parents’ or carers’ supervision, that is not a school, college, 16-19 academy or providers caring for children that are registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency”. This definition covers a wide range of settings, which includes settings offering part-time or supplementary education to support mainstream or home education, extra-curricular clubs and activities (such as dance classes, sports tuition, instrumental music tuition), and uniformed youth organisations (such as Scouts and Brownies).

In many cases, these settings are already eligible to register with Ofsted on the General Childcare Register and can be subject to inspection. There are many existing powers in place to protect children in out-of-school settings, and the Department knows that they provide enriching education in a safe environment.

While the Department has not ruled out further regulation, it is important that the Department ensures any future system appropriately targets those settings exposing children to harmful practices, without causing undue burdens on the sector as a whole. Any future system introduced should also build on, and complement, the existing legal powers already in place, making the current system more effective.

The Department has provided over £3 million of targeted funding to selected Local Authorities to examine ways to boost local capacity to identify and intervene in settings of concern, and test the utility of existing powers. The Department is working closely with key safeguarding partners and stakeholders to consider the findings in the report and set out the Department's next steps on the policy, with the aim of launching a consultation next year on how to best ensure these settings are as safe as possible.

The Department has also published a code of practice for out-of-school settings. This can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>.

## ■ Primary Education: Mental Health Services

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[106340]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the number of Primary Schools in England that currently employ a play or creative arts therapist.

**Nick Gibb:**

The roles of staff employed by schools are collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. This includes the wider role of therapists, but does not specify roles of play or creative art therapists. The census report can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

The 2022 Schools White Paper outlines the Government's plan for all schools to provide safe, calm and supportive environments, with targeted academic, pastoral and specialist support, helping children and young people to fulfil their potential. More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-white-paper-delivers-real-action-to-level-up-education>. It is for schools to decide the support they provide, while considering the needs of their pupils.

## ■ Schools: Physical Education and Sports

**Dan Carden:**

**[107141]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 December 2022 to Question 104371, whether he plans to continuing funding after September 2023.

**Nick Gibb:**

As set out in the response to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton to Question [104371](#), Ministers are considering arrangements for the Primary PE and Sport Premium and other funding for school sport for the 2023/24 academic year and beyond. This funding will be announced as soon as possible.

**Sex and Relationship Education****Feryal Clark:**[\[106555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken since the Women's Health Strategy to ensure that girls and boys receive high quality, evidence based education from an early age on (a) fertility, (b) contraception and (c) pregnancy planning, maternity care and pregnancy loss.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department of Health and Social Care published the first ever government-led Women's Health Strategy for England in Summer 2022. This sets out a 10 year ambition for boosting the health and wellbeing of women and girls.

To support women's health, in September 2020 the Government made relationships education compulsory for primary school pupils, relationships and sex education compulsory for secondary school pupils, and health education compulsory for all pupils in state funded schools.

The relationships, sex and health education statutory guidance states that pupils should be taught factual knowledge around sex, sexual health, and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships. This statutory guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

Within the topic 'intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health', pupils should learn about human fertility and reproduction, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and contraception and sexual health advice. Schools have the flexibility to teach about a wide range of topical subjects, including maternity care and pregnancy loss.

To support teachers to deliver these topics safely and with confidence, the Department has produced relationships, sex and health education teacher training modules that are free to download. These are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>. The content of the intimate and sexual relationships module was informed by subject experts, including the National Children's Bureau and Public Health England, now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

**Social Services: Children****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[106418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the funding available for children's social care services.

**Claire Coutinho:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and the department discuss and work with other government departments on a regular basis, including HM Treasury, on a range of issues.

Local government fund their children's social care services from their core spending power. This is principally made up of council tax, retained business rates and central government grants. This year, as agreed in the 2021 Spending Review, councils have access to £54.1 billion core spending power for their services – an increase of £3.7 billion on 2021/22.

The government announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement that £1.3 billion in 2023/24 and £1.9 billion in 2024/25 will be distributed to local authorities through the Social Care Grant for adult and children's social care. This is in addition to the funding agreed in the the 2021 Spending Review.

Further details of the total funding available to local authorities in 2023/24 will be provided in the provisional local government finance settlement as soon as is reasonably possible this winter.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Nature Conservation: Urban Areas****Rachael Maskell:**[\[93571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to secure nature corridors in urban areas.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial strategies for nature introduced under the Environment Act, which will help map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environment goals. LNRs will cover the whole of England with preparation locally-led enabling each strategy to reflect local circumstances. Spatial connectivity between existing and proposed wildlife-rich habitat will be an important consideration in urban and more rural areas. These strategies will provide the framework for our Nature Recovery Network, which is our vision to create a nationwide, functional and resilient ecological network and where appropriate this network will include nature corridors in urban areas.

As part of our work to deliver the Nature Recovery Network, we launched the first 5 nature recovery projects (NRPs) in May 2022. These projects are central to the delivery of the Network. The Cambridge Nature Network for example aims to develop a network of resilient wildlife rich accessible habitats in and around the City of Cambridge, covering 9,200 ha and will contribute to securing nature corridors in the urban areas of Cambridge including through work to establish new woodland near Coton on the western edge of Cambridge and in the city itself, restoring ancient trees, tree planting and meadow restoration.

The Environment Act 2021 strengthens the legal duty under the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act which means all public bodies, including Highways England and local authorities, have a legal duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions. Management of vegetation in urban areas of key components of nature corridors such as road verges and hedgerows, is one way public bodies can discharge this duty. The Act also makes provision for biodiversity net gain which, when commenced, will encourage new developments to incorporate habitats for nature and may contribute funding towards creating new nature corridors.

In addition, our £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund has kick-started a pipeline of 159 nature-based projects to restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with the natural environment. In round 1 The Tree Council led the 'Close the Gap' Hedgerow Project which through working closely with farmers and community groups will support urban nature corridors through the planting of 51km of new and restored hedgerow in urban and rural areas.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Armenia: Azerbaijan

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[108225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to reconvene talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

**Leo Docherty:**

Given substantive efforts led by the EU and OSCE to support a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, HMG has no plans to convene further talks between the parties. We remain in close contact with partners and continue to support these international efforts to resolve outstanding issues and ensure stability and security in the region. These are the messages I reinforced during calls with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers on 15 and 17 September respectively, and subsequently in meetings in London with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Ambassadors and other senior officials from both countries on 12 December and 9 November respectively.

### ■ Ukraine: Electricity Generation

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[108224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he (a) has had and (b) plans to hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on further steps that can be taken to support Ukraine with energy generation in the context of attacks on the Ukrainian energy grid.

**Leo Docherty:**

The FCDO and BEIS are providing direct support to Ukraine including through regular engagements with Ukrainian counterparts.

To date, UK assistance includes £22 million of direct support to Ukraine's energy sector. On 14 November, the Foreign Secretary signed an agreement to disburse the first £5 million of the UK's £10 million commitment to the Energy Community Ukraine support fund. This will be used to procure high-priority specialised energy equipment for critical repairs. The BEIS Secretary of State has asked industry to consider donations of energy equipment.

In addition, the UK Government has delivered 856 mobile generators and provided £5 million for civil nuclear safety and security equipment and activities.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Atrial Fibrillation**

**Chris Green:** [\[106395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new patients have been (a) detected with atrial fibrillation and (b) treated with an appropriate NICE recommended treatment, since the introduction of the NHS Framework Agreement on Direct Oral Anticoagulants in January 2022.

**Chris Green:** [\[106478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to undertake an assessment of the impact of the NHS Framework Agreement on Direct Oral Anticoagulants to treat atrial fibrillation, implemented from January 2022.

**Helen Whately:**

Information on the number of new patients detected with atrial fibrillation is not collected in the format requested. As of October 2022, 126,000 patients on general practitioner practice atrial fibrillation registers who were eligible for anticoagulation received treatment. The proportion of patients treated with anticoagulation increased by 3% from April to October 2022.

An annual evaluation of the National Health Service commissioning guidance and framework agreement for anticoagulation will be made in the first quarter of 2023/24 when the relevant prescribing and performance data is finalised.

**■ Cardiovascular Diseases and Dementia: Health Services**

**Chris Green:** [\[106479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress his Department has made towards delivering the NHS Long Term Plan ambition to help prevent up to 150,000 heart attacks, strokes and dementia cases by 2029.

**Helen Whately:**

Progress on delivering this ambition has been affected by the pandemic. The Department is working with NHS England and local government to recover cardiovascular disease prevention services to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan ambition.

**■ Care Homes: Coronavirus****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[106351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to remove the requirement for care homes to recommend residents undergo PCR testing where more than two covid-19 cases inside a care setting have been confirmed.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government's guidance on outbreak testing, where more than two COVID-19 cases inside a care setting have been confirmed, is informed by public health advice. This aims to ensure that positive cases of COVID-19 can be identified and to prevent transmission. We continue to keep this guidance under review.

**■ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: Medical Treatments and Research****Jim Shannon:**[\[105340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when National Institute for Health and Care Excellence plans to next update the Quality Standard for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to take account of recent advances in research and clinical practice.

**Helen Whately:**

There are no current plans to update the quality standard.

**■ Contraceptives****Feryal Clark:**[\[105494\]](#)

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 finding by Public Health England in its report, Contraception: Economic Analysis Estimation of the Return on Investment (ROI) for publicly funded contraception in England, published in June 2018, that the return on investment over 10 years on publicly provided contraception is £9 in savings for every £1 spent.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, the Government recognises the significant Return on Investment on publicly funded contraception.

We are committed to ensuring the public receive the best possible contraceptive services and we continue to provide funding for these essential services through the GP Contract and Public Health Grant.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[88801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the grant of the Marketing Authorisations for Cominarty products on 9 November 2022 will affect (a) immunity against civil liability, (b) indemnities against product liability and (c) other indemnities given by his Department.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 21 November 2022]:* Regulation 345 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 provides partial immunity from civil liability for suppliers where a temporary authorisation is in place to supply a product under regulation 174. Supply of the vaccine was authorised under regulation 174 as a temporary measure before the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency granted a Conditional Marketing Authorisation (CMA). Once the CMA is in place, this partial immunity no longer applies.

We are unable to provide information relating to any indemnities provided by the Department as this is commercially sensitive. However, indemnities do not affect the routes available to an individual to pursue a legal claim against the manufacturer, including for product liability. These indemnities establish that, in certain circumstances, a party to the agreement will pay the other party's losses arising from a claim.

## ■ **Defibrillators: Public Places**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[106450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the adequacy of access to community defibrillators in (a) places where there are high concentrations of people and (b) general.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[106452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of defibrillators purchased by retail organisations in the past five years.

**Helen Whately:**

The information requested is not held centrally and no specific assessment has been made.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[106453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps has he taken to improve access to community defibrillators in (a) south west London and (b) England.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England is working with partners to improve community first response and establish defibrillator networks in England, including in South West London, to improve outcomes from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. The Government encourages

communities and organisations in England to consider purchasing a defibrillator as part of first aid equipment, particularly in locations with high concentrations of people.

#### ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[107081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care when he plans to provide a substantive answer to Question 97476, tabled by the Rt hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury on 28 November for answer on 1 December.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 97476.

#### ■ Electroconvulsive Therapy

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[106539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to work with the Patient Safety Commissioner to conduct a review of electroconvulsive therapy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Patient Safety Commissioner is a statutory office holder, acting independently of Government. The Commissioner promotes the safety and views of patients and the public in relation to medicines and medical devices, as stated in the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021. The Patient Safety Commissioner has been in post since September 2022. The Commissioner has been engaging with stakeholders to develop an annual business plan, which will be published in due course.

#### ■ Epidermolysis Bullosa: Medical Treatments and Research

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[108422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to increase funding for research into new drugs and treatments for epidermolysis bullosa.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* The Department funds research into rare diseases, such as epidermolysis bullosa (EB), through the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including rare diseases such as EB. In the last five years, the NIHR has funded two studies into EB with a total award value of £3,022,759. In the last five years, the NIHR has also supported the delivery of over 25 studies relating to EB via its infrastructure.

NHS England is aware that several innovative treatments for EB are in trials or being considered by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Should these treatments receive a positive recommendation by NICE, NHS England will ensure that service provision is in place.

## ■ Genito-urinary Medicine

**Feryal Clark:** [\[105498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to ensure the provision of sexual and reproductive healthcare including the provision of long-acting reversible contraception is not further disrupted by the monkeypox outbreak.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We continue to work closely with the UK Health Security Agency, local authorities and NHS England to monitor the impact of monkeypox on sexual health services and support action to maintain access to these services, including contraceptive and the provision of long-acting reversible contraception.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[105502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Local Government Association Report entitled Breaking Point: Ensuring the future of sexual health services, published on 15 November 2022.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, we are committed to improving sexual and reproductive health in England and will consider this report, alongside other evidence and data in developing our plans to do so. We will set out our plans in due course.

## ■ Health Education: Females

**Feryal Clark:** [\[106447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Women's Health Ambassador since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy on increasing public awareness of menstrual health and gynaecological conditions.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Officials have had regular discussions with the Women's Health Ambassador since her appointment in June.

## ■ Health Protection (Coronavirus, Testing Requirements and Standards) (England) Regulations 2020

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[108106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to retain The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Testing Requirements and Standards) (England) Regulations 2020.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* There are no current plans to repeal these regulations.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Testing Requirements and Standards) (England) Regulations 2020 ensures all private providers offering COVID-19 testing services on a commercial basis in England, provide services that are of a sufficiently high safety or clinical standard.

#### ■ Health Services: Domestic Abuse

**Feryal Clark:** [\[104358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to para 5.57 of the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, CP 751, what steps he is taking to ensure that victims of domestic abuse (a) receive help and (b) safety when they access health settings.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[104360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the steps the NHS will take to help tackle inefficiency will include specialist health-based domestic abuse provision.

**Neil O'Brien:**

All National Health Service staff undertake mandatory safeguarding training, which includes a focus on domestic abuse. NHS England and Health Education England continue to review mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that staff are equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge and principles to protect patients.

Integrated care boards (ICBs) are required to set out how the needs of victims of abuse will be addressed in joint forward plans. NHS England is developing guidance to assist ICBs in designing these plans and to promote a collaborative approach to service delivery for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

#### ■ Health Services: Females

**Feryal Clark:** [\[106554\]](#)

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, whether his Department has taken steps to encourage research on ways in which services can adapt to the needs of inclusion health groups.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are currently considering the approach to the implementation of the Women's Health Strategy, including on research into the needs of inclusion health groups.

The National Institute for Health and Care Research welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including inclusion health. It is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

## ■ Heart Diseases

**Stephen Hammond:** [\[105331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England announced in the NHS Long Term Plan it will work with partners to improve community first response and build defibrillator networks to improve survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

A national network of community first responders and defibrillators will save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028.

## ■ Hospitals: Food

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[101786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to monitor the consistency of the implementation of national standards for healthcare food and drink in healthcare settings in England.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[101787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how will the new national standard for healthcare food and drink that relates to 24/7 food service provision, be monitored by NHS England.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[101788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a report on a quarterly basis on progress in implementing the National standards for healthcare food and drink.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We will monitor the implementation of the revised National Health Service national standards for food and drink and we expect all trusts to deliver against these standards. Trusts will self-declare implementation status within NHS England's internal reporting mechanisms, including through the NHS Premises Assurance Model and assessment by the Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment from late 2023. Trusts are also encouraged to provide updates on compliance with the standards in annual reports. Through the Health and Care Act 2022, we can introduce secondary legislation mandating the national food and drink standards in the NHS.

## ■ Infant Foods: Costs

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[105480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the average cost of safely feeding a baby requiring infant formula for the first six months of its life.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* There are no current plans to make such an estimate.

**■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease****Steve McCabe:**[\[106316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help improve the (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment of (i) Crohn's disease and (ii) ulcerative colitis.

**Steve McCabe:**[\[106317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to increase public awareness of (i) Crohn's disease and (ii) ulcerative colitis.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* To help improve diagnosis, treatment and awareness of both Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis, NHS England is developing evidence-based tools including an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) RightCare scenario. This will set out what high-quality joined-up care looks like at every point of the patient journey, including diagnosis. In addition, there is information on IBD available on NHS.UK and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published the IBD quality standard.

**■ Influenza: Vaccination****Mrs Paulette Hamilton:**[\[108377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people living with a severe mental illness are able to receive a flu vaccination in winter 2022-23.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* People with severe mental ill-health are eligible for a free flu vaccine where they have other clinical conditions which would increase the risk of serious complications. Health professionals will make clinical assessments to consider the impact of flu infection on an individual's pre-existing condition.

**■ Integrated Care Boards: Diabetes****Gareth Thomas:**[\[107055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many integrated care boards in London provide diabetic advice services to members of the South Asian community; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

There are four integrated care boards in London providing diabetes services to all residents, including members of the South Asian communities.

**Integrated Care Boards: Standards****Rachael Maskell:**[\[104282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage integrated care boards to (a) innovate and (b) share best practice.

**Helen Whately:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 requires integrated care boards (ICBs) to promote innovation. The Department and NHS England have shared case studies of best practice in guidance for ICBs and integrated care partnerships. The FutureNHS online collaboration platform enables health and social care professionals to connect through 'workspaces'. These workspaces create a network of online communities to share knowledge and collaborate on projects.

**Liver Cancer: Medical Treatments****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[102876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential geographic variation in access to innovative liver cancer treatments such as selective internal radiation therapy.

**Helen Whately:**

There are 10 National Health Service trusts currently commissioned to provide selective internal radiation therapy for metastatic colorectal cancer. Following the publication of 'Selective internal radiation therapies for treating hepatocellular carcinoma' by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence, seven of the 10 trusts confirmed an interest in also treating hepatocellular carcinoma. We expect the number of trusts to increase to approximately 15, following completion of a market engagement and prior information notice process.

**Maternity Services: Staff****Jim Shannon:**[\[99840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many maternity support were working in the NHS, in each of the past five years.

**Will Quince:**

The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) maternity support staff working in National Health Service (NHS) hospital trusts and commissioning bodies in England over the past five years.

	AUGUST 2018	AUGUST 2019	AUGUST 2020	AUGUST 2021	AUGUST 2022
Maternity Support Staff - FTE	7,270	7,439	8,098	7,485	7,545

Source: NHS Digital Workforce Statistics

Maternity support staff have been defined as all support staff that work in a 'maternity services' and 'neonatal nursing' care setting. This includes nursing associates, nursery nurses, nursing assistants/auxiliaries, healthcare assistants and support workers.

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.

## ■ Maternity Services: Standards

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[106558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Women's Health Strategy, page 68, what targets his Department has established to help achieve the target of the NHS being the best place in the world to give birth.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government's national maternity safety ambition aims to halve the 2010 rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths and brain injuries in babies occurring during or soon after birth, by 2025. The ambition also includes reducing the rate of pre-term births from 8% to 6%.

Since 2010, the rate of stillbirths has reduced by 19.3%, the rate of neonatal mortality for babies born over 24 weeks gestational age of viability has reduced by 36% and the proportion of babies born preterm has reduced from 8% in 2017 to 7.5% in 2020. The overall rate of brain injuries occurring during or soon after birth has fallen to 4.2 per 1,000 births in 2019, 2% lower than in 2010 and we have launched a Brain Injury Reduction Programme. NHS England is developing a single delivery plan for maternity, which will be delivered nationally through the Maternity Transformation Programme.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[106559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether personalised care and support plans in pregnancy are dynamic and responsive to changes in their clinical needs and choices.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We ensure that all women have a personalised care and support plan in place and make informed decisions about their care through fully understanding the risks, benefits and consequences of the choices they have.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[106560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether disparities in (a) outcomes and (b) experiences of care for mothers and babies has been reduced since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Office for National Statistics publishes an annual analysis on stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates, including by ethnicity and deprivation. As the latest available data is from 2021, no specific assessment has been made since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy.

#### ■ **Medical Equipment: Finance**

**Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[106318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he has made an assessment on the effectiveness of NHS tariff payments for (a) oxygen concentrators and (b) home dialysis machines.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific assessment has been made. NHS England has recently made provision within the tariff paid to trusts for additional energy costs of some services, such as home haemodialysis, to be reimbursed to patients via the local hospital trust. NHS England has increased tariff prices by 4.1% this year to reflect costs and support trusts in increasing local repayment tariffs for patients.

#### ■ **Ovarian Cancer**

**Claire Hanna:** [\[105549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the report, Pathfinder by Target Ovarian Cancer on awareness, diagnosis, access to treatment and support for sufferers of this cancer.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department and the NHS Cancer Programme welcomes the report and continues to work with Target Ovarian Cancer and other stakeholders to improve outcomes for people with ovarian cancer.

**■ Radiotherapy****Henry Smith:** [\[105333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress NHS England has made on its demand capacity review into radiotherapy.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England will be completing the capacity and demand review of external beam radiotherapy capacity in 2022/23. This will support local systems to plan radiotherapy provision and allocate system capital allocations appropriately, based on an assessment of equipment age, capacity and demand, opportunities to improve access and service risk.

**■ Respiratory System: Health Services****Rachael Maskell:** [\[105409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of formulating an adult respiratory unit model to enable adults with flu or other respiratory illnesses to gain a rapid assessment in winter 2022-23.

**Helen Whately:**

On 18 October 2022, NHS England wrote to systems on the expansion of winter resilience plans. Systems have been asked to consider establishing Acute Respiratory Infection hubs to manage increased acute respiratory infection (ARI) in the community. Guidance has been issued to support local systems to use existing infrastructure to design ARI hub models to manage demand and provide additional capacity. The hubs will ensure timely access for assessment and treatment and prevent avoidable hospital admissions and attendances.

**■ Sanitary Protection: Pupils****Feryal Clark:** [\[106446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on providing free period products in every college and school in England since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There have been no specific discussions.

In January 2020, the Department for Education launched a scheme which makes free period products available for state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England.

**■ Sleep Apnoea****Rachael Maskell:** [\[105393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will estimate the number of people in England who have sleep apnoea; and if he will take steps to (a) identify whether individuals with this condition who use a (i) continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)

and (ii) bilevel positive airway pressure (BPAP) machine need support with the energy costs of running such a machine at home and (b) provide such support.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government recognises that patients reliant on electrical medical equipment may have extra energy costs. Supportive cost of living measures by the government specifically aimed at the most vulnerable have made £15 billion worth of support available to those with the greatest need. In addition, certain specialised NHS services do make provision for financial rebates to ease energy costs faced by patients using medical equipment at home. Local support may also be available.

■ **Social Prescribing**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[107158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress he has made in encouraging social prescribing.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[107159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that all those who would benefit from social prescribing have access to it.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[107160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help integrated care boards encourage social prescribing.

**Helen Whately:**

As of June 2022, there were more than 2,793 new social prescribing link workers in the National Health Service and as of November 2022, over 1.3 million people have been referred to social prescribing. The Department is also providing grant funding to the National Academy of Social Prescribing to advance social prescribing and disseminate good practice.

In 2021, NHS England issued guidance which stated that by April 2022, all integrated care boards were expected to have developed a formal agreement for engaging and embedding the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector in system-level governance and decision-making arrangements. The implementation guidance also describes embedding social prescribing services in integrated care systems.

■ **Social Services: Costs**

**Karin Smyth:** [\[109619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with social care providers on the potential impact on them of the time taken to implement the fair cost of care policy.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department engaged with providers and local government prior to publishing the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care guidance in March 2022. We also funded

the Care Provider Alliance to support providers and provide feedback on the Fair Cost of Care process.

The decision to delay the charging reforms has allowed us to provide local authorities with a further £3.2 billion, which we are reinvesting in social care through the Social Care Grant. This will support local authorities to improve adult social care, including addressing sustainability issues such as low fee rates.

## ■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[106428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including means-tested council support payments in the lifetime limit on social care costs.

**Helen Whately:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 states that an individual's contribution towards eligible personal care and support needs will be taken into account for the cap on care costs, when implemented. Should local authority contributions be taken into account, individuals living in different locations in England contributing the same amount towards the cost of care could reach the limit at different times, dependent on the level of the local authority's contribution.

## ■ Social Services: Reform

**Karin Smyth:** [\[109618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of postponing the introduction of social care reforms on care provider stability.

**Helen Whately:**

While charging reforms have been delayed, we have provided councils with a further £3.2 billion, which we are re-investing in social care through the Social Care Grant. This includes a ringfenced fund of £400 million in 2023/24, which will increase to £680 million in 2024/25 and maintain the current levels of Fair Cost of Care funding of £162 million per year. This will assist local authorities to address waiting lists, low fee rates and workforce pressures in the adult social care sector.

## ■ York Hospital: Paediatrics

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[105407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to replicate nationally York's Paediatric respiratory unit's system which enables parents to have rapid access to clinicians about concerns over a child's condition.

**Helen Whately:**

On 18 October 2022, NHS England wrote to systems on the expansion of winter resilience plans. Systems have been asked to consider establishing Acute

Respiratory Infection hubs to manage increased acute respiratory infection (ARI) in the community. Guidance has been issued to support local systems to use existing infrastructure to design ARI hub models to manage demand and provide additional capacity. The hubs will ensure timely access for assessment and treatment and prevent avoidable hospital admissions and attendances.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Freezing of Assets: Russia

**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[106294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the National Crime Agency's statement of 3 December 2022 which reported that it had secured 100 disruptions against Putin-linked elites and their enablers, what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of those disruptions which were classified as (a) major, (b) moderate and (c) minor.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The National Crime Agency's Combatting Kleptocracy Cell (CKC) has been tasked with investigating criminal sanctions evasion and high-end money laundering, including by individuals in the UK who are linked to the Russian regime.

Of the total CKC disruptions recorded, from the invasion of Ukraine to date, they are split approximately a third each between major, moderate and minor. For reasons of operational security we are not able to provide further details publicly.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[106302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the National Crime Agency press release, entitled Wealthy Russian businessman arrested on suspicion of multiple offences, published on 3 December, how many of the 100 actions that demonstrably remove or reduce a criminal threat secured by the Agency against Putin-linked persons have resulted in money being (a) frozen under a UK sanctions regime, (b) frozen under the sanctions regime of another jurisdiction, (c) frozen under civil recovery provisions in the UK and (d) frozen under civil recovery provisions of another jurisdiction.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The National Crime Agency's Combatting Kleptocracy Cell (CKC) has been tasked with investigating criminal sanctions evasion and high-end money laundering, including by individuals in the UK who are linked to the Russian regime.

Of the total CKC disruptions recorded, from the invasion of Ukraine to date, 42% have involved the freezing of funds. Of this, approximately 55% have resulted in money being frozen under a UK sanctions regime; 20% have resulted in money being frozen under the sanctions regime of another jurisdiction; 25% have resulted in money being frozen under civil recovery provisions in the UK; and none have resulted in money being frozen under civil recovery provisions of another jurisdiction.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**[\[106303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many account freezing orders have been granted against individuals associated with designated persons under sanctions relating to Russia since February 2022.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The National Crime Agency's Combatting Kleptocracy Cell (CKC) has been tasked with investigating criminal sanctions evasion and high-end money laundering, including by individuals in the UK who are linked to the Russian regime.

12 Account Freezing Orders (AFOs) have been secured thus far covering a number of accounts.

The CKC's work forms one part of a wider cross-government effort to tackle illicit finance and works closely with others including the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI).

**■ Gangs: Greater London****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[106372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce gang-related activity in London.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government is committed to tackling the harm caused by gang-related activity, including preventing serious violence and drug-related activity.

On serious violence, we are taking a twin-track approach; combining tough enforcement to get dangerous weapons off the streets – including through stop and search methods – with programmes that steer young people away from crime.

Since 2019, we have allocated the London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) £33.7m, including £12.6m this financial year (2022/23). The London VRU delivers a range of interventions that support young people at risk of involvement in serious violence and gangs, which requires close work with those local communities affected.

We are also continuing to provide funding to the Metropolitan Police to increase enforcement activity in areas where the most violence occurs, through our Grip hotspot policing programme. The Government has allocated approximately £52.6m over the last three years to the Grip programme in London, including £7.9m for this financial year (2022/23). Through this programme, the Metropolitan Police are delivering data-driven, targeted visible patrols to suppress violence where it is most concentrated.

On tackling drug-related activity, we are investing up to £145m over the next three years to bolster our flagship County Lines Programme, which has already resulted in over 2,900 lines closed, over 8,000 arrests and in the engagement of over 9,500 individuals through safeguarding interventions. As part of this programme, we are funding the Metropolitan Police's Operation Orochi, to support activity to disrupt and close lines originating in London.

We are also funding Catch22 to provide a specialist support and rescue service for under 25's from the major exporting force areas (London, the West Midlands, Merseyside and Greater Manchester), and their families, who are criminally exploited through county lines, to help them safely reduce and exit their involvement.

■ **Home Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of August 2022, what was the nature of the hospitality provided by UK Borders and Enforcement to visiting senior officials for which StubHub was paid £720.60 on 23 August 2022.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of May 2022, whether the £1,411.12 spent by UK Borders and Enforcement staff on a business lunch with French officials at the Cinnamon Club on 13 May 2022, included any expenditure on alcoholic beverages.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of March 2022, whether the £1,320.58 spent by UK Borders and Enforcement staff on a dinner with Turkish officials at Pont De La Tour on 16 March 2022, included any expenditure on alcoholic beverages.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of March 2022, whether the £1,640.74 spent by UK Borders and Enforcement staff on a dinner at Gilbey's in Windsor on 29 March 2022, included any expenditure on alcoholic beverages.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We regularly engage with our diplomatic partners to deepen our cooperation in areas that advance the UK's interests. This spend was made in accordance with Home Office policy on gifts and hospitality.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of May 2022, what was the furniture that The London Removal Company UK Ltd. was paid £1,030 to remove on 23 May 2022.

**Chris Philp:**

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was responsible for arranging the removal of a number of personal

items, including furniture, belonging to a former Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services at the end of his tenure.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what their Department spent in 2021 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office reports on Transparency expenditure on Government Procurements cards greater than £500.

Information on expenditure on GPC cards less than £500 would only be available at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

**Ruth Edwards:** [\[104336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

We do not routinely comment on operational or intelligence matters, however the UK will always stand up to threats from foreign nations. As we set out in the Integrated Review in 2021, we are committed to addressing growing threats from Iran, as well as other states.

The UK Government has long been clear about its concerns over the continued destabilising activity of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the UK and overseas. This includes IRGC political, financial and military support to a number of militant and proscribed groups in the region, including Hizballah in Lebanon and Syria, militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. We also support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to such non-state actors, namely Lebanese Hizballah (UNSCR 1701) and the Houthis (UNSCR 2216).

**Ruth Edwards:** [\[104337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made with Cabinet colleagues of the potential threat the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps poses to (a) the UK and (b) its overseas interests.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

We do not routinely comment on operational or intelligence matters, however the UK will always stand up to threats from foreign nations. As we set out in the Integrated Review in 2021, we are committed to addressing growing threats from Iran, as well as other states.

The UK Government has long been clear about its concerns over the continued destabilising activity of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the UK and overseas. This includes IRGC political, financial and military support to a number of

militant and proscribed groups in the region, including Hizballah in Lebanon and Syria, militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. We also support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to such non-state actors, namely Lebanese Hizballah (UNSCR 1701) and the Houthis (UNSCR 2216).

## ■ Migrants: Domestic Abuse

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[106497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he plans to take steps to review the No Recourse to Public Funds condition for migrants who have suffered from domestic abuse.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for this Government and we are committed to supporting all victims. Anyone who has suffered domestic abuse should be treated as a victim first and foremost, regardless of their immigration status.

The Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) already allows for eligible migrant victims to apply for the lifting of the no recourse to public funds condition (NRPF) associated with their leave, enabling the victim to access welfare benefits while their application for indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse (DVILR) is made and considered.

To be eligible for DVILR an individual's last grant of leave must have been on a spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner or same sex partner visa in a relationship with a British citizen or settled person. Other cohorts, such as those with refugee leave or the partners of those with pre-settled status via the EU Settlement Scheme, are also eligible to apply for DVILR. Migrant victims of domestic abuse who are subsequently granted DVILR are not subject to NRPF.

In March 2021 we launched the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme. This pilot, run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners and supported with £1.5 million of Government funding, has provided wraparound support services for all migrant victims of domestic abuse with NRPF.

## ■ Migrants: Finance

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[106499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of (a) adults and (b) children in the UK who have No Recourse to Public Funds as of 8 December 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition applies to millions of people, the vast majority of whom are visitors or other temporary migrants who have no need for public funds during their stay. It also applies to those without status, many of whom may not be in touch with the Home Office.

The Home Office's Chief Statistician wrote to the Office for Statistics Regulation on 3 July 2020 to explain why the Home Office does not feel that it is of practical application to produce an estimate of the total population subject to NRPF present in the UK at any one time.

The Home Office publishes an extensive range of data in respect of No Recourse to Public Funds change of conditions applications, including data on age, gender and nationality. This data is available in the Home Office transparency data, published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>, in the "Immigration & Protection" data tables.

## ■ Rape: Males

**Henry Smith:**

**[107101]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has taken recent steps to ensure that male victims of rape are not classified as victims of violence against women and girls by his Department.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The Government is absolutely committed to supporting all victims of rape, regardless of gender.

Under the cross-Government Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, published in July 2021, the term "violence against women and girls" (VAWG) refer to crimes which disproportionately, but not exclusively, affect women and girls. This includes stalking, 'honour' based crime (e.g. female genital mutilation and forced marriage) and sexual offences such as rape. We recognise that men and boys also experience abusive and violent crimes that fall within the umbrella of these crime types. We recognise the term VAWG cannot, and should not, negate the experiences of male victims.

We acknowledge that there are specific challenges male victims of these crimes may experience. In March 2022, we published our refreshed Supporting Male Victims document. This outlined several commitments to improve our response to male victims of these crimes including the Ministry of Justice investing £1.4m to the Male Rape Fund in 2021/22 (and a further £1.4m in 2022/23).

Additionally, both the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, published in March 2022, sets out our ambition to reduce the prevalence of all VAWG crimes, regardless of who they affect. Commitments made within these documents benefit all victims, including men and boys.

In June 2021 we published the End-to-End Rape Review Findings and Action Plan. This action plan outlined a robust programme of work to achieve a significant improvement in the way the criminal justice system responds to rape. This includes a £6.65m investment from the Home Office into Operation Soteria to develop new national operating models for the investigation and prosecution of rape.

In terms of police recording, the police do not record any crimes as being 'VAWG'. VAWG is an umbrella term used by the government/others to describe a range of behaviours and offences but is not a formal crime definition. In relation to rape offences, the Home Office counting rules require offences to be recorded based on the age and sex of the victim. This would mean in all circumstances a male victim of rape would be formally recorded as being a male victim of rape.

## ■ UK Visas and Immigration: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for the month of September 2022, (a) how many thermos cups were purchased by UK Visas and Immigration via Amazon on 21 September 2022, and (b) what was the comparable cost of thermos cups available via standard catalogue platforms.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (a) how much public money has been spent by (i) UK Visas and Immigration and (ii) HM Passport Office since 1 January 2021 on the purchase of corporate coloured cups for staff working in their respective offices, and (b) how many cups have been purchased by each organisation as part of this initiative.

**Robert Jenrick:**

This spend was made in accordance with Home Office policy.

## ■ Visas: Married People

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[106569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to decrease processing times for spouse visas; and whether she has set out a timetable to reduce application processing times to 12 weeks.

**Robert Jenrick:**

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

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

We are keeping the service standard level under review.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Trade Agreements: India**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[902812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on securing a free trade agreement with India.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* The Secretary of State has just returned from India, where she met her counterpart in the Government of India to discuss the free trade agreement, including goods, services, and investment. She also had the opportunity to meet Indian and UK businesses, who made clear the mutual benefits a forward-facing deal could bring to both nations.

Round six is currently underway, and at its conclusion we will update the House via a Written Ministerial Statement.

**JUSTICE****■ Ministry of Justice: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what their Department spent in 2021 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card.

**Mike Freer:**

In 2021, the MoJ (the departmental group including agencies and arms length bodies) spent £21.7m on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card.

**■ Prison Officers: Sick Leave**

**Andrew Selous:** [\[106410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will list the ten prisons which had the highest proportion of officers off sick over the past 12 months; and if he will make an estimate of the average proportion of total prison officers off sick as a percentage of the total workforce at each of those prisons.

**Damian Hinds:**

The quarterly HM Prison and Probation Service workforce statistics publication covers staffing information, including the working days lost due to sickness absence.

The ten prisons which had the highest proportion of band 3-5 officers who had at least one period of sickness absence in the 12 months to 30 September 2022 is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Top 10 prisons with highest proportion of band 3-5 officers <sup>1</sup> with at least one period of sickness absence <sup>2</sup>, in the 12 months to 30 September 2022 <sup>(p)</sup>

PRISON	BAND 3-5 OFFICERS OFF SICK AT LEAST ONCE IN PERIOD	TOTAL BAND 3-5 OFFICERS EMPLOYED IN PERIOD	PROPORTION OF BAND 3-5 OFFICERS SICK AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL BAND 3-5 OFFICERS IN POST	ALL STAFF EMPLOYED IN PERIOD	PROPORTION OF BAND 3-5 OFFICERS SICK AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL STAFF WORKFORCE IN POST
<b>Werrington</b>	148	161	91.9%	274	54.0%
<b>Send</b>	124	139	89.2%	238	52.1%
<b>Hindley</b>	215	244	88.1%	380	56.6%
<b>Liverpool</b>	283	322	87.9%	530	53.4%
<b>Grendon</b>	134	154	87.0%	314	42.7%
<b>Full Sutton</b>	430	496	86.7%	711	60.5%
<b>Isle of Wight</b>	302	349	86.5%	627	48.2%
<b>Eastwood Park</b>	172	199	86.4%	329	52.3%
<b>Littlehey</b>	243	282	86.2%	502	48.4%
<b>Downview</b>	141	165	85.5%	280	50.4%

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

2. Individuals are only counted once, even if they have more than one episode of sickness absence recorded.

(p) Figures relating to current financial year are provisional.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Help to Buy Scheme: Interest Rates

**Dr Neil Hudson:**

**[106561]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support his Department is providing to people who have purchased properties through the Help to Buy Scheme with rising interest rates.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Help to buy Equity Loan Scheme has helped over 369,000 households to own their own home and will continue to help many people until March 2023. To support Help to Buy customers, the loan scheme is already interest free for five years. We are actively supporting customers who are struggling to make their interest repayments so if customers are in this position they are encouraged to speak to Target about options available to manage these.

**■ Housing: Construction**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he is taking steps to create more social and affordable housing.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with business representatives on the potential impact of housing shortages on the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of staff (i) nationally and (ii) in York.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment has he made of the potential impact of housing shortages on social care.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to increase the number of social and affordable housing units built.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Affordable housing is key to creating the sort of vibrant communities we all wish to see.

That is why, through our Affordable Homes Programme, we are investing £11.5 billion to deliver tens of thousands of affordable homes in every part of the country. A significant number of these homes will be for social and affordable rent, ensuring that those who are unable to afford a home in the market are able to live and work in the communities they call home.

**■ Multiple Occupation: Holiday Accommodation**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to regulate properties classified as houses in multiple occupation where a private landlord also rents some rooms as short-term holiday lets.

**Felicity Buchan:**

A property is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) if it meets the definitions set out in the Housing Act 2004, even if a landlord also lets part of the property as short term let.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Mould

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[106416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the presence of mould in social housing properties on tenants.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to require (a) councils and (b) other social housing providers to make assessments of the number of homes that do not reach acceptable standards on (i) damp, (ii) heating and (iii) ventilation.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The Secretary of State has [written](#) to social housing providers, setting out his expectation that they act swiftly to rectify damp and mould and be prepared to respond to the Regulator of Social Housing on the extent of these issues.

The annual [English Housing Survey](#) publishes data on damp and mould and energy efficiency.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Ulster Scots Broadcast Fund

**Carla Lockhart:** [\[108366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with Northern Ireland Screen on the remit of the Ulster Scots Broadcasting Fund.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

As part of New Decade, New Approach, the Government committed to discussions with Northern Ireland Screen on expanding the respective remits of the Irish Language and Ulster Scots Broadcast Funds. In the course of these discussions, the Government agreed to provide a one-off boost of £1 million to each fund, to cover an expansion in their remits. This additional funding has been delivered in full, meeting the Government's New Decade, New Approach commitment in this regard, and was referred to in my answer of 21 November, UIN 85057:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/85057>

**SCOTLAND****■ Scotland Office: Trade****Gareth Thomas:**[\[106310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, 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 Alister Jack:**

The Scotland Office works closely with the Department for International Trade to ensure the opportunities being created through international trade deals and the services provided to businesses are understood in Scotland. Working with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Scotland Office Ministers also have a programme of overseas visits planned during 2022/23 to promote Scottish exports and inward investment.

There are two dedicated officials in the Scotland Office spending the majority of their time on trade. However, their work is supported by staff who cover a range of policy areas where international trade can feature, including rural affairs, business support, foreign affairs, energy and infrastructure. As such, a detailed breakdown of staff numbers cannot be provided on this occasion.

**TRANSPORT****■ Department for Transport: Interpreters and Translation Services****Emily Thornberry:**[\[107074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card for January to July 2022, what the nature of the interpretation and translation services were for which his Department paid £11,634.63 over that period, and for what reason has the supplier of those services not been named.

**Jesse Norman:**

The UK government has been engaged in negotiation with representatives of the Spanish Government on the terms and extent of a driving licence exchange agreement with Spain.

This has required "live" interpretation during these online negotiation meetings. The Department for Transport, as lead department responsible for driving licence exchange policy, is responsible for paying the interpretation service used.

We have redacted the name of the interpreter as per Transparency guidelines and data protection act.

## ■ Department for Transport: Trade

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[106298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

**Jesse Norman:**

In 2017, three members of DfT staff were directly working on international trade. In 2018 and 2019 the Department significantly expanded staff numbers allocated to this area. Since 2020 there has been a specific Trade Division in the International Directorate, with fourteen staff dedicated to these issues.

Many other staff in the Department have diverse work portfolios which include international trade as a part. It is not possible to quantify exactly how many officials overall work on international trade issues within DfT.

The Government will continue to monitor and provide for an appropriate level of resource to meet demand in this important area.

## ■ Department for Transport: Vacancies

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[106523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

**Jesse Norman:**

Teams have been defined in alignment with Director General responsibilities.

<i>DIRECTOR GENERAL GROUP</i>	<i>% VACANT POSITION GAP - CURRENT FTE TO BUDGET</i>
Rail Infrastructure Group	16%
Decarbonisation, Technology and Strategy Group	13%
Corporate Delivery Group	4%
Roads and Local Group	3%

To note, the department's executive agencies have been excluded.

Department for Transport's FTE will be published as usual in the Departmental Annual Report and Accounts and is available here.

[DfT: annual report and accounts 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106523/dft-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-to-2022.pdf)

**■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen****Ian Paisley:**[\[106406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage hydrogen use in private sector fleets.

**Jesse Norman:**

Passenger cars were in scope for the Department's £20 million Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub competition, which closed on 2 December. The Government has previously supported private sector car fleets through its £23 million Hydrogen for Transport Programme and £2 million Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Fleet Support Scheme. In addition, 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.

**■ Railways: Concessions****Fleur Anderson:**[\[108431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that rail travel is affordable for over-60s.

**Huw Merriman:**

People aged 60 and over can purchase a Senior Railcard, which offers one-third off Standard and First Class Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance fares.

**Caroline Lucas:**[\[109516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December to Question 102818 on Railways: Concessions, for what reasons he has not held discussions with stakeholders on the impact on students in year 13 of the different level of concessions available in the same academic year; if he will make it his policy to hold such discussions; and if he will make a statement.

**Huw Merriman:**

No discussions have taken place as we have no plans to extend or change the validity of the 16-17 Saver at this time. The 16-17 Saver provides young people with access to half-price rail travel to cover the period they are required to continue in education, employment or training. On turning 18, young people can then take advantage of the 16-25 Railcard offering up to a third off most rail fares.

**TREASURY****■ Treasury: Trade****Gareth Thomas:****[106301]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

**James Cartlidge:**

HM Treasury is the government's economic and finance ministry, maintaining control over public spending, setting the direction of the UK's economic policy, and working to achieve strong and sustainable economic growth.

Free and fair trade is fundamental to the prosperity of the United Kingdom and the world economy, and HMT takes a flexible and dynamic approach to resourcing in order to meet this objective. As a result, there are a number of HMT officials, across groups, working on issues related to international trade matters, and total numbers of staff fluctuate within and across years.

The number of paid full time equivalent staff in the Treasury was as follows over the past 5 years.

DATE	NUMBER OF HMT STAFF EMPLOYED
March 2022	2,045
March 2021	1,992
March 2020	1,599
March 2019	1,447
March 2018	1,328