

**Daily Report****Monday, 19 December 2022**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 19 December 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:48 P.M., 19 December 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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



## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Sexual Offences: Disclosure of Information

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[108334\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to protect the privacy rights of victims of sexual offence cases in a court of law by ensuring the non-disclosure of their counselling records.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

THE RECENT REVIEW OF DISCLOSURE FOUND THAT TOO MUCH THIRD-PARTY MATERIAL, INCLUDING VICTIMS COUNSELLING AND THERAPY NOTES, WERE BEING ACCESSED. THE REVISED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES PUBLISHED IN MAY 2022 ADDRESSED THIS AND INTRODUCED INCREASED PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS. PRIOR WRITTEN REASONS MUST BE RECORDED BEFORE ACCESSING THIS MATERIAL, AND ACCESS CAN ONLY OCCUR WHERE IT IS NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE. PRE-TRIAL THERAPY NOTES WILL NOW ONLY BE ACCESSED IN THE RARE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO A REASONABLE LINE OF INQUIRY. THIS ENSURES SIGNIFICANT PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS WHILE MAINTAINING A FAIR TRIAL.

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[108336\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to her Department's policy on allowing the police and Crown Prosecution Service to scrutinise counselling records of victims of sexual violence, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a (a) presumption of non-disclosure and (b) requirement that requests for notes could only be made once a suspect had been arrested and charged.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

THE REQUIREMENT TO DISCLOSE MATERIAL WHICH MIGHT REASONABLY BE CONSIDERED CAPABLE OF UNDERMINING THE CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION AGAINST THE ACCUSED OR OF ASSISTING THE CASE FOR THE ACCUSED IS SET BY LEGISLATION, AND NOT BY THE DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES. THE REVISED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES PUBLISHED IN MAY 2022 INTRODUCED INCREASED PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS IN RESPECT OF THEIR COUNSELLING NOTES BEING ACCESSED DURING THE COURSE OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. PRIOR WRITTEN REASONS MUST BE RECORDED BEFORE ACCESSING COUNSELLING NOTES OF VICTIMS, AND ACCESS CAN ONLY OCCUR WHERE IT IS NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE. THE HOME OFFICE HAS ALSO RECENTLY CONCLUDED A CONSULTATION ON POLICE REQUESTS FOR PERSONAL RECORDS ('THIRD PARTY MATERIAL'). THE RESPONSE TO THIS CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS WILL BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY.

**■ Sexual Offences: Victims****Alex Sobel:****[108335]**

To ask the Attorney General, if her Department will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential impact of the scrutiny of counselling records of sexual violence and abuse survivors by the police and Crown Prosecution Service on (a) the reporting of crimes and (b) the uptake of counselling services by those survivors.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

THE RECENT REVIEW OF DISCLOSURE FOUND THAT TOO MUCH THIRD-PARTY MATERIAL, INCLUDING VICTIMS COUNSELLING AND THERAPY NOTES, WERE BEING ACCESSED. THE REVIEW HEARD FROM VICTIMS' GROUPS THAT THIS LEADS TO VICTIMS FACING AN IMPOSSIBLE DECISION TO EITHER SEEK JUSTICE OR SEEK THERAPY. THE REVISED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES PUBLISHED IN MAY 2022 ADDRESSED THIS AND INTRODUCED INCREASED PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS. PRIOR WRITTEN REASONS MUST BE RECORDED BEFORE ACCESSING THIS MATERIAL, AND ACCESS CAN ONLY OCCUR WHERE IT IS NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE. IN ALIGNMENT AND SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE AMENDED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDANCE THE CPS PUBLISHED GUIDANCE ON PRE-TRIAL THERAPY FOR PROSECUTORS AND INVESTIGATORS. THE GUIDANCE OPENS WITH THE CLEAR AND DEFINITIVE PRINCIPLES THAT: THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE VICTIM SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE DETERMINATIVE FACTOR IN WHETHER, WHEN AND WITH WHOM THEY SEEK PRE-TRIAL THERAPY. IT IS FOR THE VICTIM TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THERAPY WITH THEIR THERAPIST, INCLUDING WHAT TYPE OF THERAPY IS OBTAINED AND WHEN THAT THERAPY IS OBTAINED.

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**Alex Sobel:****[108337]**

To ask the Attorney General, whether it is his Department's policy that a victim of sexual assault undertaking (a) police-provided and (b) private counselling is made aware that they can retract any information provided from session notes.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

THE REVISED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES PUBLISHED IN MAY 2022 INTRODUCED INCREASED PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS IN RESPECT OF THEIR COUNSELLING NOTES BEING ACCESSED DURING THE COURSE OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. PRIOR WRITTEN REASONS MUST BE RECORDED BEFORE ACCESSING COUNSELLING NOTES OF VICTIMS, AND ACCESS CAN ONLY OCCUR WHERE IT IS NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE. SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE AMENDED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDANCE THE CPS PUBLISHED GUIDANCE ON PRE-TRIAL THERAPY FOR PROSECUTORS AND INVESTIGATORS. THE CPS GUIDANCE IS CLEAR THAT PRIOR TO APPROACHING A THERAPIST ABOUT MATERIAL RELATING TO THE VICTIM THAT MIGHT BE RELEVANT TO THE INVESTIGATION, THE POLICE SHOULD SEEK THE AGREEMENT OF THE VICTIM TO THIS APPROACH BEING MADE AND INFORM THE VICTIM OF THEIR RIGHT TO OBJECT AT ANY TIME TO THE PROCESSING OF THEIR PERSONAL DATA WHICH MAY FOLLOW.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[108338]**

To ask the Attorney General, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to only allow the (a) police and (b) Crown Prosecution Service to request scrutiny of counselling records of sexual violence and abuse survivors that relate to a specific offence.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

THE REVISED ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES PUBLISHED IN MAY 2022 INTRODUCED INCREASED PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS IN RESPECT OF THEIR COUNSELLING NOTES BEING ACCESSED DURING THE COURSE OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. PRIOR WRITTEN REASONS MUST BE RECORDED BEFORE ACCESSING COUNSELLING NOTES OF VICTIMS, AND ACCESS CAN ONLY OCCUR WHERE IT IS NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE THE CPS GUIDANCE ON PRE-TRIAL THERAPY FOR PROSECUTORS AND INVESTIGATORS IS CLEAR THAT PRIOR TO APPROACHING A THERAPIST ABOUT MATERIAL RELATING TO THE VICTIM THAT MIGHT BE RELEVANT TO THE INVESTIGATION, THE POLICE SHOULD SEEK THE AGREEMENT OF THE VICTIM TO THIS APPROACH BEING MADE AND INFORM THE VICTIM OF THEIR RIGHT TO OBJECT AT ANY TIME TO THE PROCESSING OF THEIR PERSONAL DATA WHICH MAY FOLLOW. THE HOME OFFICE HAS ALSO RECENTLY CONCLUDED A CONSULTATION ON POLICE REQUESTS FOR PERSONAL RECORDS ('THIRD PARTY MATERIAL'). THE RESPONSE TO THIS CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS WILL BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY.

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ■ Alternative Fuel Payments

**Simon Lightwood:**

**[106568]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when further details of the Alternative Fuel Payments scheme will be announced and when payments will be made to eligible households.

**Graham Stuart:**

The vast majority of Alternative Fuel Payments eligible households in Great Britain will receive payment automatically via their electricity supplier with no need to take any action, and we anticipate this payment being made as soon as possible in the new year.

**■ Alternative Fuel Payments: Sheltered Housing****Ben Lake:**[\[105482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether people living in flats in sheltered accommodation and who are off the gas grid will be eligible for the Alternative Fuel Payment.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Alternative Fuel Payment of £200 will provide support for those in properties using fuels such as heating oil, liquified petroleum gas, coal or biomass for heating. Households which are off the gas grid and which use alternative fuel as their main source of heating will be eligible.

**■ Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage****Owen Thompson:**[\[107148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the installation of localised carbon capture and storage equipment at (a) waste incinerators and (b) other carbon-dioxide emitting plants.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government aims to capture and store 20-30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year by 2030, including from waste management and other industrial facilities. In August, the Government announced a 20-project shortlist to progress to the due diligence stage of the Track-1 Cluster Sequencing process. Support for projects will be delivered via new business models and the £1 billion Carbon Capture and Storage Infrastructure Fund.

In addition, the £289 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF) and the Scottish IETF can support sites to invest in decarbonisation technologies, including onsite carbon capture.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[107149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of localised carbon capture at carbon-dioxide emitting facilities such as waste incineration and biogas plants for the UK's industrial requirements for carbon dioxide.

**Graham Stuart:**

Since last autumn, the UK carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) market's resilience has improved, with additional imports and further domestic production. It is for the CO<sub>2</sub> industry to

ensure supplies to UK businesses and the Government is working with industry to encourage a diverse supply.

The Government is aware of several new UK-based CO<sub>2</sub> sources under development by industry, however, these will take time to realise and are commercially sensitive.

Waste management carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects are eligible for support under the Industrial Carbon Capture business model, which is considered the best way to support their deployment, given the current barriers and the importance of CCS for decarbonising the sector.

## ■ **Cleaning Services**

**Kim Leadbeater:**

**[109738]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the laundry business sector regarding the increases in cost of living and potential Government support for that sector; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the stability of that sector and the ancillary support it provides to hospitals.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

We have not engaged directly with representatives from the laundry sector but continue to work with a range of business sectors including organisations representing small businesses facing increasing costs driven by global factors, including high energy and cost of living pressures.

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme ensures that businesses are protected from excessively high energy bills over the winter period. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer recently announced in his Autumn Statement that there will be an extended and increased business rates relief for retail and hospitality businesses worth almost £13.6 billion. This is the most generous in year business rates relief in over 30 years, outside of Covid-19 support.

## ■ **Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy**

**Owen Thompson:**

**[109647]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to implement the (a) revised arrangements to the Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy and (b) the Brussels Convention supplementary to the Paris Convention.

**Graham Stuart:**

The 2004 Protocols amending the Paris and Brussels Conventions came into force on 1st January 2022, following their ratification by the contracting parties at the end of 2021. The Nuclear Installations (Liability for Damage) Order 2016 implemented the amendments into the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. Discussions with the civil nuclear sector have informed the UK's approach to implementing its liability regime. The key amendments in the 2004 Protocols are new categories of damage,

increased operator liability, and an increased limitation period for claims for personal injury from 10-30 years after an incident.

### ■ District Heating

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[105214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that the energy support provided by his Department to heat network customers after March 2023 will be bespoke to the needs of those people.

**Graham Stuart:**

A HM Treasury-led review of the EBRS will determine support for non-domestic energy consumers beyond 31 March 2023. The government has published terms of reference for the review, with the findings to be published by 31 December 2022.

### ■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Iron and Steel

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[110648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will extend the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for the steel sector beyond March 2023.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

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

### ■ Energy Bills Rebate: District Heating

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[106542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure landlords and letting agents are passing on the Energy Bill Discount to tenants in properties with a heat network.

**Graham Stuart:**

If a heat network customer has a domestic electricity meter, they should already be in receipt of the Energy Bills Support Scheme. On 1 November, Government regulations came into force requiring intermediaries, such as landlords, to pass on energy bill support through to end users, such as tenants.

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

## ■ Flexible Working: Conditions of Employment

**Patrick Grady:**

[110742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of increasing employee rights for flexible working on (a) absenteeism and (b) staff retention.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

As set out in the Flexible Working Post Implementation Review which was published in September 2021<sup>[1]</sup>, research shows lower levels of absenteeism and higher levels of employer loyalty among those who have taken up a flexible working arrangement. However it remains difficult to isolate the specific impact of the role played by legislation.

[1] [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1398/pdfs/ukxi0d\\_20141398\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1398/pdfs/ukxi0d_20141398_en.pdf)

## ■ Local Net Zero Forum

**Dan Carden:**

[110816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the first Ministerial meeting of the Local Net Zero Forum will take place.

**Graham Stuart:**

A meeting between Ministers and local government leaders is expected to take place early in the new year.

## ■ Natural Gas: Hydrogen

**Alan Brown:**

[105436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the role of hydrogen blending in encouraging investment in the hydrogen sector.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government intends to reach a decision in 2023 on whether to allow blending of up to 20% hydrogen (by volume) into gas distribution networks. Blending may help to bring forward investment and support early growth of the hydrogen economy. BEIS recently considered the potential value of blending through a consultation on hydrogen transport and storage infrastructure business models and regulation and is currently reviewing the submitted responses. The Government is working with industry and regulators to assess the associated costs and risks of blending, which will need to be carefully managed if permitted.

## ■ Recruitment: Flexible Working

**Patrick Grady:**

[110743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring employers to list the available flexible working opportunities with every job advert.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government consulted on whether employers should be required to list the available flexible working opportunities in job adverts in 2019. Having reviewed consultation responses from a range of stakeholders and taken account of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government decided not to take forward a legislative requirement. Instead we are giving employees the right to request flexible working from their first day of employment. This conclusion was set out in “Making Flexible Working the Default”, which was published in September 2021.

■ **Royal Mail**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[107155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Royal Mail on its future business strategy.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Ministers and officials meet with Royal Mail regularly to discuss a range of issues in its role as the universal postal service provider.

As a private business, Royal Mail's strategic decisions are matters for its Board and shareholders. The Government does not have a role in Royal Mail's business decisions.

■ **Royal Mail: Rural Areas**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[107156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a formal partnership between Royal Mail and other public services to help people isolated in communities.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[107157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of partnering with Royal Mail to (a) help tackle wider civic challenges and (b) provide a service which supports people who are lonely or in need of regular contact for their own wellbeing.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government recognises the important role postal workers play in supporting local communities.

However, as a private business, it is for Royal Mail's management to decide which initiatives it chooses to support. The Government does not have a role in Royal Mail's business decisions.



**CABINET OFFICE****■ Cabinet Office: Transfer of Questions****Grahame Morris:**[\[110664\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2022 to Question 902659 on Prison officers: retirement, for what reasons this question was transferred from the Cabinet Office to the Ministry of Justice.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Terms and Conditions of Prison Officers, including any proposals to change their retirement provisions, are matters on which the Ministry of Justice lead.

**■ Dominic Raab****Angela Rayner:**[\[110722\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 92230 on right Hon. Member for Esher and Walton, whether the Prime Minister has asked Adam Tolley KC to investigate further complaints about the Deputy Prime Minister since 29 November; and whether he plans to amend further the published terms of reference for the investigation.

**Angela Rayner:**[\[110723\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 92230 on right Hon. Member for Esher and Walton, whether his Department has received any further formal complaints regarding the conduct of the Deputy Prime Minister since 29 November.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Further to my answer of 29 November, the Government confirmed publicly on 14 December that the Prime Minister has asked the investigator to include five further formal complaints relating to conduct at the Ministry of Justice as part of the ongoing investigation, and in line with the existing Terms of Reference.

**■ Honours****Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[107174\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the next 3-5 year review of the Honours System is due to (a) take place and (b) report.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The review will take place and is expected to report in 2023.

**■ Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study****Virginia Crosbie:**[\[110845\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish the response of the Government to the Sir Robert Francis KC Infected Blood Compensation Study; and what

the method of payment will be for those people in Wales receiving an interim payment as part of the Infected Blood inquiry.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer my Hon Friend to the statement I made in the House on 15 December.

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

### ■ Churches: Energy

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

**[102787]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether he expects dioceses to pass the Energy Costs Grant direct to parishes.

**Andrew Selous:**

The Church Commissioners were pleased to provide £15m to the Archbishops' Council for distribution to dioceses for Energy Costs Grants. All dioceses received a share of this Grant in October. The main purpose of the Grant is to help Parochial Church Councils to cover the increased cost of heating and lighting church buildings this winter. Dioceses are also able to use some of their Grants to supplement the £3m Ministers' Hardship Fund announced earlier in the year to provide targeted hardship payments for clergy and other employed ministers to cover household bills, in particular energy costs.

The Church Commissioners intend to gather feedback in the New Year to see how much of the Grant dioceses have allocated, by what mechanism they distributed it, and what proportion was used to supplement the Ministry Hardship Fund.

In addition to support for parishes and clergy, the Church of England has opened its doors locally to support or provide Warm Spaces. These may be in churches, village halls or other suitable community spaces such as libraries or cafes. More information about the Warm Welcome Campaign and where to locate your nearest warm space can be found here: <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>

## DEFENCE

### ■ Armed Forces: Charities

**Rachel Hopkins:**

**[109762]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what services his Department procured from armed forces charities in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

**Rachel Hopkins:**

**[109763]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what was the value of services his Department procured from armed forces charities was in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

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

■ **Armed Forces: Housing**

**John Healey:**

[\[109435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average wait time was for emergency repairs by Pinnacle for families of armed forces personnel living in service family accommodation in the 2021-22 financial year.

**John Healey:**

[\[109436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of boilers (a) repaired and (b) replaced by Pinnacle in service family accommodation required further (i) repair and (ii) replacement within three months of the initial work.

**John Healey:**

[\[109437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many boilers were (a) repaired and (b) replaced by Pinnacle in service family accommodation in November 2022.

**Alex Chalk:**

This information is not held. Maintenance tasks in relation to Service Family Accommodation are not undertaken by Pinnacle.

Maintenance tasks are undertaken by Amey or Vivo and recorded under a single general category of heating/hot water/boiler, which does not specify the component requiring work.

Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) operates a three strike boiler programme, in that, if a boiler is over 10 years old and fails three times in 12 months it is replaced on the third fail.

Approximately 2,500 boilers are replaced annually within SFA either through the 3 Strike Programme or Project upgrades.

**John Healey:**

[\[109439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many complaints his Department has received about Pinnacle Group's management of service family accommodation since March 2022.

**Alex Chalk:**

Due to the format in which complaints data is recorded, the information requested can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

However, there are currently a total of 3,089 complaints logged against all the Future Defence Infrastructure Service suppliers.

**John Healey:** [\[110573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people are employed by Pinnacle Group's National Service Centre to deal with enquiries and complaints on Service Family Accommodation.

**John Healey:** [\[110588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the Pinnacle Group to increase staff numbers at the National Service Centre's Customer Solutions team to 56.

**Alex Chalk:**

Pinnacle's National Service Centre, which comprises the Repairs Helpdesk, Enquiries and Customer Solutions team, currently employs a total of 84 people.

Pinnacle is increasing staffing of the National Service Centre's Customer Solutions team from an initial 14 to 56 staff, at present there are 40 staff in the National Service Centre's Customer Solutions team.

**John Healey:** [\[110586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many compensation payments have been made out to armed forces personnel and their families for issues relating to (a) single living accommodation and (b) service family accommodation.

**Alex Chalk:**

Information for compensation payments for Single Living Accommodation is not held centrally.

5,322 compensation payments (in the form of vouchers) have been made since 1 April 2022 for issues relating to Service Family Accommodation.

## ■ Defence Transition Services and Veterans Welfare Service

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[109764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what step-by-step support pathways are available to veterans and their families seeking assistance from the (a) Veterans Welfare Service and (b) Defence Transition Services.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Veterans Welfare Service and Defence Transition Service conduct a holistic assessment of needs for each referral received via phone, email or letter. From this assessment the most relevant support is identified and either the individual is signposted to the appropriate support organisation, or a referral is made on their behalf. There are no formally laid out, step-by-step support pathways used by either service as support is tailored to each case and each individual.

## ■ Defence Transition Services: Finance

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[109760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the budget allocated to Veterans UK to deliver transition services was in 2021-22.

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[\[109761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the budget allocated to Veterans UK to deliver veteran welfare services was in 2021-22.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 November to Question 90739.

Budgets are allocated within Defence Business Services at the delivery of veterans' services level. It is not possible to break this information down to individual services.

**Attachments:**

1. Veterans Welfare Service: Finance [UIN 90739.docx]

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[108097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the design by Team Resolute will use only UK steel for the Fleet Solid Support ships.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer that I gave him on 30 November 2022 to Question number 93475.

**Attachments:**

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel [UIN 93475.docx]

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement**

**John Healey:**

[\[109434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the expected (a) in service and (b) out of service date is for the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme.

**Alex Chalk:**

On current plans, the Fleet Solid Support Ships are expected to be in operational service by 2032 and have a service life of thirty years.

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Shipbuilding**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[108095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the response from the Minister for Defence Procurement to the Rt hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne on 12 December, if he will provide a breakdown of the 2,000 jobs in UK (a) shipyards and (b) supply chains which will be created through the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Fleet Solid Support ship contract will create a significant number of new jobs, including around 1,200 high quality manufacturing jobs at Harland & Wolff's sites. It is expected that around 800 jobs will be sustained in the UK supply-chain for equipment, design and support services.

## ■ Forces Help to Buy Scheme

**John Healey:**

**[110572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to extend the Forces Help to Buy scheme beyond 31 December 2022.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme was set up in 2014 to provide Service personnel with the opportunity to purchase a property for immediate occupation, creating a stable environment regardless of assignment and reducing the challenge presented by an inherently mobile career. The Ministry of Defence recognises that FHTB continues to be a popular scheme, helping more than 27,500 Service personnel to buy or extend a home.

An announcement was made on Monday 19 December confirming that the FHTB scheme has been made permanent. The announcement can be found at the below link.

[Forces Help to Buy scheme made permanent to help Service Personnel purchase housing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-made-permanent-to-help-service-personnel-purchase-housing)

## ■ Maritime UK

**Grahame Morris:**

**[108154]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many hours officials in the (a) Royal Navy, (b) Royal Fleet Auxiliary and (c) National Shipbuilding Office worked to (i) attend and (ii) support the policy agenda of the National Council of Maritime UK to date.

**Alex Chalk:**

Maritime UK is an important institution for the maritime sector bringing together maritime industries, driving business growth and raising the UK maritime profile both at home and abroad.

Both the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (ACNS) and Commodore Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) are observer members of the National Council of Maritime UK. ACNS and an RFA officer attend the quarterly National Council Meetings and an RFA Officer joins Maritime UK for approximately 6 -10 Maritime networking events annually with ACNS in occasional attendance. In addition, the RFA have a full time Officer embedded in Maritime UK. More widely, RN and RFA officials engage regularly with Maritime UK members as part of their daily business.

The CEO and Deputy Director of the NSO have attended previous meetings of the Maritime UK National Council as invited guests to update on the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh and the work of the NSO. NSO officials engage regularly with Maritime UK members on a wide range of shipbuilding matters.

Given the wide range of engagement with Maritime UK, at both desk level and above, it is not possible to quantify this in hours.

## ■ Military Aid

**John Healey:**

[\[110570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2022 to Question 100894 on Military Aid, how many Military Aid to Civilian Authority requests his Department (a) received and (b) approved in (i) November and (ii) December 2022.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the right hon.Member to the answers I gave him on 17 November and 8 December 2022 to Questions 86646 and 100894 respectively.

**Attachments:**

1. Military Aid [UINs 86646.docx]

## ■ Military Aid: Ambulance Services

**John Healey:**

[\[109428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Armed Forces personnel are being (a) deployed and (b) placed on standby to cover the Ambulance Service as part of a Military Aid to Civilian Authority request from the Department of Health and Social Care; and how many of those are (i) full time personnel and (ii) reservists.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answers I gave on 15 December 2022 to Questions 108077 and 108381. These roles are being fulfilled by full-time military personnel.

**Attachments:**

1. Military Aid: Industrial Disputes [UINs 108077 and 108381.docx]

## ■ Military Aid: Fire and Rescue Services

**John Healey:**

[\[109422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December to Question 100891 on Military Aid: Fire Services, how many Armed Forces personnel he plans to be (a) deployed and (b) on standby for this Military Aid for Civilian Authority request; and how many of those are (i) full-time personnel and (ii) reservists.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence has agreed to a request for 80 professional military firefighters. These full-time military personnel are available to be deployed in the event of industrial action being called in order to bolster the Fire and Rescue Service's contingency plans.

**John Healey:**

[\[109423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December to Question 100891 on Military Aid: Fire Services, when he expects this Military Aid to Civilian Authority request to be completed.

**James Heappey:**

The Fire Brigades Union is currently holding its ballot, meaning the likely strike window would be between 13 February and 23 July 2023.

**John Healey:**[\[109424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December to Question 100891 on Military Aid: Fire Services, when his Department approved this Military Aid to Civilian Authority request.

**James Heappey:**

The request for 80 professional firefighters was agreed on 14 November.

■ **Permanent Joint Headquarters****John Healey:**[\[107057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what operations are being run out of Permanent Joint Headquarters.

**James Heappey:**

Enduring operational deployments which are commanded by Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) are as follows:

REGION	OPERATION	OVERVIEW
	Europe	Op CABRIT The deployment of an enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup to Estonia.
Op ELGIN	The UK's commitment to the stability and security of the Western Balkans, as well as to supporting the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of countries in the region.	
Op ORBITAL	The UK's training mission to Ukraine.	
Op TOSCA	UN Peacekeeping mission in Cyprus.	
PJHQ also command the deployment of Sky Sabre air defence into Poland.		



REGION	OPERATION	OVERVIEW
	Africa	Op NEWCOMBE The UK contribution to MINUSMA (UN Peacekeeping mission) in Mali.
Op TURUS	The UK's provision of security, humanitarian, and development support to Nigeria.	
Op TANGHAM	The UK support to African Union peace enforcement operations and UN missions in Somalia.	
Indo-Asia Pacific	Op WOODWALL	The deployment of two British Warships (Offshore Patrol Vessels) in the Indo-Asia Pacific.
	Broader Middle East	Op SHADER Counter Daesh mission.
Op KIPION	UK maritime presence in the Gulf and Indian Ocean.	
Op CROSSWAYS	Operational capacity building with KSA.	

#### ■ Permanent Joint Headquarters: Staff

**John Healey:**

[\[107056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel are working at Permanent Joint Headquarters.

**James Heappey:**

As of 30 November, 567 military and Civil Service personnel work at the Permanent Joint Headquarters.

## ■ RAF Valley: Noise

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[110598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of levels of noise pollution from Texan training planes flying over Arfon; and what recent steps he has taken to reduce noise disruption.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Texan aircraft complies fully with relevant international aviation noise standards.

Arfon lies fully under the North Wales Military Training Area which provides valuable and regularly used training airspace for RAF Valley and other military aerodromes. This training area offers specific advantages in terms of scale, terrain and deconfliction from other airspace users that meet many essential training requirements for the RAF and the Texan fleet.

However, the Station plans the use of this airspace carefully, and works closely with the Texan Squadron to distribute training as equitably and fairly as possible. A significant proportion of Texan flying is undertaken in other areas, where these provide suitable conditions to meet essential training objectives, including overwater areas in order to minimise disturbance to local communities and ease the congestion within the North Wales Military Training Area.

## ■ Shipbuilding: Contracts

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[110604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the National Shipbuilding Office has made an estimate of the value of Government shipbuilding contracts which have been awarded to overseas firms since that office was set up.

**Alex Chalk:**

Since the launch of the National Shipbuilding Office in September 2021, the UK Government has announced around £4.34 billion in shipbuilding contracts, with £4.28 billion going to UK companies and £59.3 million going to those based overseas:

PROGRAMME	CONTRACT TYPE	VALUE	SHIPYARD	NOTES
NavyX, Ministry of Defence	Procurement - off the shelf vessel (international competition)	£7.5 million Overseas £2 million to UK companies for conversion	Awarded to Damen Shipyards (Netherlands) on 10 February 2022	Vessel not included on 30 Year Cross-Government Shipbuilding Pipeline in the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh
Queen Elizabeth	Support (UK-only)	£34 million	Awarded to	

PROGRAMME	CONTRACT TYPE	VALUE	SHIPYARD	NOTES
Class Docking, Ministry of Defence	competition)		Babcock (UK) on 15 March 2022	
Type 26 Batch 2, Ministry of Defence	Build (single source)	£4.2 billion	Awarded to BAE Systems (UK) on 15 November 2022	
Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Support (international competition)	£45 million	Awarded to Babcock (UK) on 10 December 2022	
Northern Lighthouse Board, General Lighthouse Authority, Department for Transport (DfT)	Build (international competition)	£51.8 million via a DfT loan which will be repaid via Light Dues, with interest and no call on the UK Exchequer	Awarded to Astilleros Gondán S.A (Spain) on 12 December 2022	Includes £2 million of contracts with UK Supply Chain

1. The table does not include Fleet Solid Ships as the contract has not been awarded, but as previously announced the Preferred Bidder is Team Resolute comprised of Navantia UK, Harland & Wolff and BMT.
2. The table covers central Government shipbuilding and repair contracts and those of Arms Length Bodies in line with the National Shipbuilding Office's review, and does not include local council contracts.

### ■ Team Resolute: Contracts

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

**[108087]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans a Fleet Solid Support Ship contract will be signed with Team Resolute.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the right.hon Member to the answer given in response to Question 88827 on 22 November 2022.

#### **Attachments:**

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts [UIN 88827.docx]

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[109465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date Harland & Wolff was notified that Team Resolute had been selected as the preferred bidder for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

Team Resolute, including Harland & Wolff, was formally notified of its appointment as preferred bidder on 15 November 2022.

## ■ Typhoon Aircraft

**Chris Evans:**

[\[110665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2022 to Question 19681 on Typhoon Aircraft, whether his Department plans to reassess the retirement of the Tranche 1 Typhoon aircraft in the context of (a) its remaining airframe fatigue life and (b) the war in Ukraine.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 12 December 2022 to Question 105283.

The hon. Member may wish to note that Question 19681 was answered on 21 June 2022 rather than 3 November 2022.

**Attachments:**

1. Typhoon Aircraft [UIN 105283.docx]
2. Typhoon Aircraft [19681 - Typhoon Aircraft.docx]

## ■ UK Border Force: Military Aid

**John Healey:**

[\[109425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answers of 5 December to Question 93455 UK Border Force: Military Aid and of 22 November to Question 86666 on Military Aid, what tasks Armed Forces personnel were asked to carry out as part of the 63 approved Military Aid to Civilian Authority requests; and how many Armed Forces personnel were deployed as part of those requests.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 14 December 2022 to Question 108078.

**Attachments:**

1. DHSC + Home Office; Military Aid [UIN 108078.docx]

## ■ USA: Nuclear Weapons

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[110896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the US B61-12 is able to operate as a GPS guided bomb; for what reason it is to be deployed in NATO bases in Europe; and

whether he has had recent discussions with his US counterparts about the deployment of B61-12 at RAF Lakenheath.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence is unable to comment on the capabilities of US nuclear weapons, which is a matter for the US Government.

To guarantee the security of its NATO Allies, the United States has deployed a limited number of B-61 nuclear weapons to certain locations in Europe. These remain under US custody and control in full compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It remains longstanding UK and NATO policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at a given location.

■ **Veterans: Immigration**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[109570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many non-UK service personnel in the Army have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK following (a) 6 years of service and (b) being medically discharged in the last 6 months.

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[109571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many non-UK service personnel in the Army have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK after applying outside the 2-year time limit, following (a) 6 years of service and (b) being medically discharged in the last 6 months.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

All applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK are submitted to the Home Office. The Ministry of Defence does not hold information about the number of applications submitted or granted, including any submitted or granted since the fee waiver was implemented on 6 April 2022 to Serving personnel on discharge or to undocumented veterans living in the UK.

■ **Warships: Procurement**

**John Healey:**

[\[109433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) in service and (b) out of service dates are for the (i) Type 23 frigate programme, (ii) Type 26 frigate programme, (iii) Type 32 frigate programme, (iv) Type 45 destroyer programme and (v) Type 83 destroyer programme.

**Alex Chalk:**

On current plans, the last Type 23 frigate will transition out of service in 2035 while all ships of the Type 26 Class are expected to enter service between 2028 and 2035. Current planning assumptions are for the Type 32 frigates to enter service over a period of three years commencing in 2032.

It is expected that the last Type 45 destroyer will transition out of service in 2038. The Future Air Dominance System, which is still at the programme pre-concept phase, but is likely to include the Type 83, will replace the Type 45 in line with its out of service dates.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ 5G

**Nick Smith:**

[\[108143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the economic impact of the rollout of standalone 5G (a) in Blaenau Gwent constituency and (b) nationally.

**Julia Lopez:**

In 2017, the government set an ambition for the majority of the UK population to have access to 5G by 2027. This has been met five years early, with basic “non-standalone” 5G - which uses 5G equipment on 4G infrastructure.

We expect the Mobile Network Operators to begin deploying Standalone 5G in 2023. This next phase of investment will help unlock the full potential of 5G as a foundational technology for the knowledge-based economy, to support uses in industrial and innovation in the provision of public services, bringing both significant economic and societal benefits to the UK.

We are developing a Wireless Infrastructure Strategy which will establish a new ambition for 5G rollout, and set out how the UK can realise the full socioeconomic benefits of advanced wireless connectivity. We aim to publish the strategy early next year.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[108304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many 5G masts have been installed on residential properties in each of the last two years.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[108305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many 5G masts have been installed in each region in the last two years.

**Julia Lopez:**

5G network rollout and the management of masts, mobile sites and network infrastructure is a matter for the mobile network operators (MNOs), and this information is not held by the government.

However, local authorities must grant planning permission for building masts and therefore some local authorities keep mast site registers which may contain installation information.

When deploying masts, the MNOs will consider consumer demand and how any mobile site fits with their network deployment plans.

## ■ Arts: Capital Investment

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to invest in capital projects to enhance (a) the arts and (b) music in local communities.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking ensure funding for (a) arts and (b) music is evenly distributed across the country.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[106514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to ensure that every community has (a) arts and (b) music venues.

**Julia Lopez:**

In March 2022 we were delighted to announce the recipients of the £48 million first round of funding from the Cultural Investment Fund. This round of funding will go to more than 60 organisations, including those whose focus is on arts and music. The Cultural Investment Fund will invest up to £128.4 million of further capital in innovative cultural and creative projects, libraries, and museums across the country over the Spending Review period (2022/23–2024/25). Alongside this, the Cultural Development Fund represents the Department's largest existing ring-fenced funding explicitly for culture-led regeneration projects outside London, in line with our Levelling Up work. The successful applicants to the £30.2 million third round of the Cultural Development Fund will be announced in spring 2023, and will help to unlock economic growth in towns and cities across England through investment in cultural and creative activities, using creativity as a catalyst to make places more attractive to live, work and visit.

In addition, Arts Council England recently announced the outcome of its 2023-2026 Investment Programme, which will be investing £446 million each year in arts and culture across England. This funding will support a record 990 organisations across the whole of England and will give people across the country more opportunities to access high-quality arts and culture on their doorstep.

Arts Council England has also extended the Supporting Grassroots Live Music 'time-limited priority' until 31 March 2023, with a ring-fenced fund of £1.5 million. The fund is designed to support organisations across the country – including venues and promoters – with little or no prior experience of public funding applications.

In June 2022, the Department for Education and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport co-published a refreshed National Plan for Music Education, which sets out our vision to enable all children and young people across the country to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents. As part of the plan, the Government announced a new investment of £25 million of capital funding to enable the purchase of musical instruments and technology, including adaptive instruments. The Department for

Education also confirmed they will continue to invest £79 million per year for the Music Hubs programme over three years up to and including 2024/25, so that music hubs can continue to provide vital support to local schools.

This Government's investment in arts and culture remains a key part of its levelling up work.

## ■ Broadband

**Stephanie Peacock:**

**[109681]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact on (a) consumers and (b) competition of telecoms providers which advertise FTTC connections as fibre broadband.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity. Our approach to achieving this is to make it as attractive as possible for companies to build gigabit-capable networks in the UK by creating a regulatory environment that encourages competition and investment between firms. Our strategy also includes promoting the take up of fibre broadband to ensure consumers can maximise its benefits. Gigabit-capable broadband will offer consumers a faster and more reliable connection.

DCMS recognises the decisions of both the Advertising Standards Authority and the High Court of Justice on the issue of fibre advertisement. In 2017, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK's regulator of advertising, reviewed consumer understanding of the term 'fibre' as used in broadband advertising (particularly for part-fibre services such as Fibre to the Cabinet) and any impact the use of this term has on consumers' transactional decisions. The ASA engaged with stakeholders and received a range of responses from providers of part-fibre and full-fibre broadband services, consumer organisations and other regulators.

The ASA published their findings in November 2017 and concluded by stating the following: "It is not possible to conclude that the word 'fibre', as currently used in part-fibre advertising, is likely to mislead and misinform consumers."

The findings also demonstrated that the word 'fibre' appeared to be relatively unimportant when participants interpreted broadband advertising. In addition, the report found that it generally did not trigger the start of a purchase journey for consumers.

Both the ASA and Ofcom are independent regulators and matters relating to industry rules on advertising is a matter for their discretion.



## ■ Broadband: Housing

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[109677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure new-build homes come with gigabit-speed broadband.

**Julia Lopez:**

We are committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible, and it is a priority to ensure that new homes are built with fast, reliable and resilient broadband.

We laid The Building etc. (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2022 in Parliament on 26 September 2022. This statutory instrument amends Building Regulations to ensure that the construction of new homes in England includes the installation of gigabit-ready infrastructure, and the installation of gigabit-capable connections where this can be provided within a cost cap of £2,000 per dwelling.

The new requirements come into force on 26 December 2022, and will help to ensure that new homes are future-proofed and have access to Gigabit broadband at the point of construction, giving more people the connectivity they want and need without costly and disruptive installation work after the home is built.

Where a gigabit capable connection is not available without breaching the cost cap, the next fastest connection available within the cost cap must be installed. The cost cap does not apply to the requirement for developers to install gigabit-ready infrastructure, which must be installed to ensure that the new homes are future-proofed.

We are working with the Devolved Administrations to ensure consistency across the UK, as far as possible.

## ■ Cricket

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

[\[108282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to help (a) support village cricket clubs and (b) increase the number of people playing cricket in England.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Supporting grassroots sport is a key government priority. DCMS is working alongside Sport England in order to support their ten year strategy to drive up participation rates across all sports, including cricket.

Sport England has invested more than £23 million into cricket over the last five years, including more than £3.9 million to support grassroots clubs through the immediate challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. In North East Hampshire, Stratfield Turgis & Hartley Wespall Cricket Club received £20,000 in 2018 as part of the Community Asset Fund and £3,600 through the 'Return to Play Fund' last summer, to support adaptations for the return of cricket post-pandemic.

Sport England funding to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) focuses on tackling the inequalities which exist within the game, such as expanding the talent pathway for the women's and girls game, increasing opportunities for disabled children and supporting governance reform and inclusive leadership support across the County Network.

■ **Cricket: Bullying and Discrimination**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[110880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Cricket Discipline Commission at tackling discrimination, bullying, racism and sexism in cricket in (a) England and (b) Wales.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The work of the Cricket Discipline Commission is a matter for the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). The Government has no role in scrutinising its work.

We will continue to directly hold the ECB to account on cultural change in the sport, particularly around racism, and reserve the right to take further measures if progress is not made.

■ **Culture: Exports**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[109539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether she plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 was revoked by The Export of Objects of Cultural Interest (Control) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 with effect from the end of the transition period.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Carbon Emissions**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[108320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, by what date they expect their Department to be carbon neutral in its day to day operations.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is committed to delivering Net Zero by 2050.

The Government 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 set out the actions that UK government departments and their agencies will take to reduce their impacts on the environment, including targets for departmental reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, with current targets for the period 2021-25. The Department is committed to reducing its

greenhouse gas emissions wherever possible, and has ambitious targets under the Greening Government Commitments.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[107075]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to her Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card, for the accommodation of which individuals was (a) £1,688.99 paid to Meruorah Komodo on 8 July 2022, and (b) £3,426.84 paid to TheMulia.Com on 24-25 August 2022; and what was the purpose of each of those visits.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Department represents the UK in delivering its international digital and technology objectives within a number of multilateral forums.

As part of the Indonesian G20 Presidency, Department officials attended the third and fourth Digital Economy Working Group in July and August 2022. G20 venues were designated by the Indonesian G20 Presidency for all Digital Economy Working Group meetings and the Ministerial Meeting - with the expectation that all delegations stayed in the same hotel where the G20 meetings took place. The purpose of this spend was therefore to pay for the accommodation of officials negotiating on behalf of the UK during the third G20 Digital Economy Working Group meetings in July 2022 and the fourth G20 Digital Economy Working Group meeting in August 2022, leading into the G20 Digital Ministerial.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Department will not disclose the names of the individual officials.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[107076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to her Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card for May 2022, for the accommodation of which individuals was £1,193.42 paid to the Hilton Back Bay Boston on 19 May 2022, and what was the purpose of that visit.

**Julia Lopez:**

In May 2022, officials from the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI) were invited to speak at the Privacy-Enhancing Technology Summit in Boston, USA. The purpose of the trip was to support the CDEI's work programme on Responsible Data Access, including the delivery of the UK-US Privacy-Enhancing Technologies prize challenges. In line with departmental policy, value for money was assessed prior to confirming the visit and the Government Procurement Card was utilised to accommodate individuals during an official visit.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Department will not disclose the names of the individual officials.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[107078]**

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

**Julia Lopez:**

The Department utilises Government Procurement Cards to purchase low-value goods and services as an efficient method of payment. In 2021, the Department spent £67,757.40 on goods and services, with a value of less than £500, using a Government Procurement Card. The majority of purchases using a Government Procurement Card, based on the total value of spend, are above £500 and published to GOV.UK on a monthly basis as part of the Department's commitment to transparency.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[107083]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to her Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card for September 2022, what item her Department purchased from Click Netherfield Ltd. on 1 September 2021, and for what purpose that item is used by her Department.

**Julia Lopez:**

In September 2021, the Department hired a glass vitrine to display a ceramic cockerel in the Scottish Parliament building during the Edinburgh International Culture Summit. The ceramic was a gift from Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Boris Johnson during a visit to Ukraine.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[110645]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's publication of electronic purchasing card spending over £500 for April 2021 to March 2022, what items or services were purchased from Coywood Computers for £1,478.99 on 10 February 2022; and or what reason that purchase was made using the Klarna payment service.

**Julia Lopez:**

In February 2022, the Department sourced 50 x HP laptop chargers from Coywood Computers for the IT service desk. The stock was required to replenish business as usual (BAU) stock to support the business with increased demand for temporary/loan chargers, whilst working in the office, and replacements for faulty chargers.

The online retailer was selected based on stock availability, at a time when technology demands were significantly higher in the Department and our regular supply chain faced long lead-times for sourcing products.

The purchase was made directly through the retailer's website and the goods were fully paid at the point of purchase, with no additional transaction fees.

## ■ Mobile Broadband

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[109685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to support the transition from 2G to 3G networks.

**Julia Lopez:**

In December 2021, DCMS published a Joint Statement with the UK's mobile network operators (MNOs) confirming that all 2G and 3G networks would be switched off by 2033 at the latest. We welcome that some individual operators will switch off these networks, particularly 3G networks, earlier than this date. Each MNO is moving at its own pace within this timeframe and since this statement was published a number of operators have announced individual plans for 3G switch off.

We are committed to extending good quality mobile coverage across the UK. In March 2020, the government announced a deal with the MNOs to increase 4G coverage to 95% of the UK landmass.

In 2017, the government also set an ambition for the majority of the UK population to have access to 5G by 2027. This has been met five years early, with basic "non-standalone" 5G - which uses 5G equipment on 4G infrastructure. In our forthcoming Wireless Infrastructure Strategy, we will establish a new ambition for 5G. We will also set out how we will continue to drive 5G deployment across the UK and ensure that UK businesses reap the full benefits of 5G.

There is no explicit regulatory requirement for MNOs to maintain a 2G or 3G network and the government has limited powers to compel operators to maintain, switch off or streamline specific networks. It is for operators to take final decisions on the provision of network services.

MNOs will contact customers to let them know if they are affected and what steps they need to take prior to the switch off of these networks. DCMS officials are working closely with relevant government departments and Ofcom to support this transition away from 2G and 3G networks. The Government welcomes 2G and 3G networks being switched off in a responsible way, and will continue to work with MNOs to ensure a smooth transition that meets the needs of business users and consumers.

## ■ Mobile Broadband: Research

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[110691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the press release published 13 December 2022 on 5G and 6G technology, what the criteria were that her Department used to allocate £28 million to the three universities for 5G and 6G R&D.

**Julia Lopez:**

DCMS ran a fair and open competition published through [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) - Five consortia submitted bids - with the three highest scoring bids selected for funding. DCMS assessed bids against questions relating to:

1. Vision and Approach
2. Organisation(s) Suitability and Management
3. Outcomes, Engagement and Benefits
4. Delivery Plan
5. Financial and Commercial

Full guidance is available [here](#).

#### ■ **Mobile Roaming (European Communities) Regulations 2007**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[110677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, what plans he has to (a) retain, (b) revoke or (c) replace the Mobile Roaming (European Communities) Regulations 2007.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Mobile Roaming (European Communities) Regulations 2007 are scheduled to be revoked by The Trade (Mobile Roaming) Regulations 2023, which were presented for laying before parliament on 15 December 2022.

#### ■ **Sport Winter Survival Package**

**James Wild:**

[\[107201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2022 to Question 87999, if he will provide a breakdown listing (a) the 15 sports that received loans and (b) the total number of loans allocated to each.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Sport Survival Package distributed a total of £264.8 million funding (loan and grant funding) across 15 sports to ensure their survival throughout the pandemic.

The number of loans issued to sports and their organisations is as follows: one loan was issued to athletics, 10 loans were issued to basketball, 35 loans were issued to football, one loan was issued to horse racing, five loans were issued to ice hockey, five loans were issued to motorsport, five loans were issued to netball, one loan was issued for non-ticketed events, 27 loans were issued to rugby league, 103 loans were issued to rugby union and one loan was issued to tennis.

#### ■ **Telecommunications: Road Works**

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[109678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing flexi permits which allow telecoms operators to carry out multiple works over multiple streets for a specified time.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Department for Transport consulted twice on proposals for a flexi permit in autumn 2021 and February 2022. The proposals would have allowed one permit to cover a number of works over a period of time across a specific area. The proposals were strongly opposed by highway authorities. The Government published a [response](#) to the consultation in May 2022 which announced that the government had decided not to proceed with the proposal for flexi permits at that time. However, the government did say that it would continue to work with the street works sector to develop further the concept and provide more evidence. So far, trials have taken place in Sheffield, Bexley, Essex and Lancashire, on a voluntary basis by organisations in the sector.

Work is now underway to launch longer, more extensive trials - testing out different scenarios and in different areas than those that have happened to date. The trials seek to determine if potential benefits outweigh any drawbacks when flexi permits are used in conditions closer to real life - examining effects on congestion and reinstatement performance, for example. My officials are currently working with counterparts in the Department for Transport, a number of local authorities and telecoms operators to bring forward more trials in the new year.

**■ Television: Disability Aids****Gill Furniss:**[\[109667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to take steps to require all broadcast television to be fully subtitled.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government recognises the importance of subtitling and supports television being accessible to all. Under the Communications Act 2003 and Broadcasting Acts of 1990 and 1996, broadcasters are already required to meet targets for access services - including subtitling. Statutory targets are set by Ofcom which include five and ten year targets for licensed television services. Ofcom's [Code on Television Access Services](#) sets out these obligations and provides guidance and best practice on subtitling for broadcasters.

**■ Tickets: Sales****Afzal Khan:**[\[110873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of prohibiting the sale of tickets for events at a sum greater than their face value.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is committed to cracking down on unacceptable behaviour in the ticketing market and improving people's chances of buying tickets at a reasonable price. That is why we have strengthened the law on ticketing information requirements and introduced a criminal offence of using automated software to buy



more tickets online than allowed. Ticketing sites can help fans buy and resell tickets, but they must comply with the law and should never be used as a platform for breaking it.

Enforcement agencies such as the Competition and Markets Authority, National Trading Standards and the advertising industry's own regulator, the Advertising Standards Authority, have a track record of investigating breaches of consumer law and improving transparency in the ticketing market, and are prepared to go after those who flout the law or abuse the ticketing market. The recent conviction of ticket touts for the unlawful mass reselling of Ed Sheeran tickets at inflated prices and obtained by fraudulent means, is just one example.

We do not believe that price capping is an appropriate solution at this time, as experience in other markets has shown that it would not be an effective tool to address the problem at hand, and would present significant practical challenges in implementation and enforcement. Individuals are able to seek advice or report problems with goods or services bought from a trader based in the UK, and the appropriate advice agency is the Citizens Advice Consumer Service.

## ■ Youth Services

**Kate Kniveton:**

**[108395]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is taking steps to support (a) the Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services and (b) other voluntary organisations with providing (i) training and (ii) other development opportunities for young people.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to allocate funding to youth services in line with local need. This is funded from the Local Government settlement, which was over £12 billion last year. DCMS officials are currently reviewing the statutory duty and its associated guidance to assess its effectiveness after a call for responses from key youth stakeholders. We will publish the outcomes of the review in due course.

The Government recognises the vital role that youth services and activities, including of the type supported by the Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services, play in improving the life chances and wellbeing of young people. The Government has committed to a National Youth Guarantee: that by 2025 every young person will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities. This is supported by a three year £560 million investment in youth services, reflecting young people's priorities and addressing the inconsistencies in regional youth spending, with a firm focus on levelling up, including the £368 million Youth Investment Fund, for which over 20 wards in Staffordshire are eligible to apply.

To support the youth sector workforce, DCMS funds the National Youth Agency to set professional standards, qualifications and a curriculum for youth work, including a new youth work apprenticeship and free-to-access training, all of which are available to young people. DCMS has delivered a Youth Worker Bursary Fund with the NYA



since 2019, distributing approximately £1.9 million facilitating over 1,700 individuals who would otherwise be unable to afford it to undertake training in Level 2 and 3 Youth Work qualifications. A further £1 million has been committed for FY 22/23.

Additionally, through the £7.4 million Volunteering Futures Fund, DCMS has created thousands more volunteering opportunities to improve accessibility of volunteering in the arts, culture, sports, civil society, youth and heritage sectors. The fund is helping a diverse range of people to access the benefits volunteering can bring. There is a strong focus on young people, those experiencing loneliness, those with disabilities and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

From 2023 onwards, the reformed NCS programme will offer a year-round choice of opportunities to young people, with a focus on skill development and volunteering. NCS will work with and fund a range of partners, including grassroots volunteering organisations, to deliver the programme across the country.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children in Care: Death

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[109658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2022 to Question 65894 on Children in Care: Death, how many children in care aged 16 and 17 died while they were living in (a) semi-independent or (b) independent accommodation between April 2021 and March 2022.

**Claire Coutinho:**

Every death of a vulnerable child or young person is a tragedy, and the following information is sensitive in nature. There were between 1 and 5 looked-after children who died while living in semi-independent or independent accommodation between April 2021 and March 2022. The department is not able to provide an exact figure to protect confidentiality.

### ■ Department for Education: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[107068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to her Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card for April 2022, what items of filming equipment were purchased from (a) SLRHut on 31 March, (b) Photospecialist on 31 March, (c) EssentialPhoto on 1 April, (d) Western Digital (UK) on 4 April, (e) Amazon Marketplace on 7 April, and (f) DJI on 26 April, and for what purpose is each item used by her Department.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[107072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to her Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card for May 2022, (a) for what purpose does her Department's Higher Education and Further Education directorate

require the subscription to Riddle.Com purchased on 6 May 2022, and (b) how many of the quizzes produced using that website since 6 May 2022 have been targeted at (i) internal and (ii) external audiences.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[107080]**

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

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has spent £284,811.85 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a Government Procurement Card (GPC) from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Information on expenditure over £500 by the Department by Government Procurement Card (GPC) and electronic Purchasing Card Solution (ePCS) can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dfe-government-procurement-card-gpc-over-500>.

All Government Procurement Card (GPC) and electronic Purchasing Card Solution (ePCS) transactions are governed by a strictly applied policy. All transactions must be approved by the Card Holder and authorised by a nominated secondary member of staff. Some purchases and transactions are not allowed. This includes purchases that are not for official business purposes, prohibited purchases (such as alcohol and vouchers), purchases that could be made via an alternative, compliant purchasing route, and other transactions such as the withdrawal or transfer of cash.

Information on spending over £500 by the Department on filming equipment with a GPC/ePCS is available in the attached table. These items were purchased by the central Policy Profession Unit, which is a cross Government unit serving approximately 32,000 civil servants in the Civil Service Policy Profession across the UK. These items contributed towards building communication capacity and to produce photos and filming for Policy Profession events, training, and communications. These items were purchased following a fully costed business case.

Multiply, a new programme for improving adult numeracy, is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. To engage potential students, the Department launched a quick mathematics quiz to help people understand where they might want to improve their numeracy. People are then signposted to relevant courses in their local area.

The quiz function is provided by Riddle and can be found here:

<https://skillsforlife.campaign.gov.uk/courses/multiply/>.

**Attachments:**

1. Table of GPC expenses [107068 107072 107080 table.xlsx]

## ■ Educational Maintenance Allowance: Social Mobility

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [102803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of abolishing the Educational Maintenance Allowance on social mobility.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [102804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment her Department has made of the impact of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund with the Educational Maintenance Allowance on social mobility.

**Robert Halfon:**

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) ceased in England a number of years ago. The government made the decision to discontinue the EMA as evidence showed that it was poorly targeted and wasteful in supporting financially disadvantaged young people to stay in education beyond the age of 16. The EMA was paid to 45 per cent of all 16 to 18-year-olds in further education, but survey evidence found that only around one in ten of those who received EMA said that they would not be able to participate without it.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund targets those young people most in need of financial support to stay on in further education and training. The bulk of the funding is allocated to institutions who are responsible for ensuring that these funds go to those who need them. Bursaries of up to £1,200 per year are also available to specific vulnerable groups.

An independent impact evaluation looking at the change from the EMA to the 16-19 Bursary Fund was commissioned by the government and published in 2015. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-16-to-19-bursary-fund-year-1-report>.

For the 2022/23 academic year the department has increased the Bursary Fund by over £9 million from £134,352,473 to £143,691,863. This will help with the increasing costs of attending education, and we are keeping this situation under review.

## ■ Manufacturing Industries: Apprentices

**Jim Shannon:** [104144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing funding for female apprentices in the manufacturing sector.

**Robert Halfon:**

Apprenticeships are a great way for individuals to receive high-quality training and begin or progress in a successful career in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The department would like to see more females accessing traditionally male-dominated fields and those offering higher wage returns. The proportion of females

starting apprenticeships in engineering and manufacturing technologies has risen from 7.3% in the 2017/18 academic year to 9.5% in 2021/22.

The department is increasing investment in apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024/25 to support employers of all sizes across England in offering more apprenticeships in all sectors, including STEM. Employers in engineering and manufacturing can access apprenticeship funding to support new starters and meet their skills needs. The department has no current plans to provide separate funding for females undertaking manufacturing roles

Our Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network is championing gender representation amongst employers in industries where improvement is needed, including in engineering and manufacturing. The network published a report during National Apprenticeship Week 2022 sharing best practice and hints and tips for employers to improve diversity in apprenticeships. In addition, our Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge Programme is continuing to provide free resources to promote STEM apprenticeships to females in schools.

The department is also working with the Apprenticeships in Manufacturing group, which includes industry partners such as Make UK and Enginuity, to grow the number of high-quality apprenticeships in the manufacturing sector.

#### ■ Overseas Students: Hong Kong

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[102786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to take steps with Cabinet colleagues to review the charging of overseas student fees to British National (Overseas) visa holders from Hong Kong who have moved to the UK.

**Robert Halfon:**

To qualify for home fee status in the UK, a person must have settled status or a recognised connection to the UK. This includes people who are covered by the EU Withdrawal Agreement, have long residence in this country, or who have been granted international protection by the Home Office. There are also requirements associated with ordinary residence in the UK.

Subject to meeting the normal eligibility requirements, British Nationals (Overseas) status holders will be able to qualify for home fee status once they have acquired settled status in the UK. This is usually acquired after five years.

There are no plans to review British Nationals (Overseas) status holder's access to home fee status.

#### ■ Overseas Students: Ukraine

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[\[106534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on supporting Ukrainian students studying full-time at Ukrainian institutions remotely from the UK.

**Margaret Greenwood:**

**[106535]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has plans to provide financial support to Ukrainian students studying full-time at Ukrainian institutions remotely from the UK.

**Margaret Greenwood:**

**[106536]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of Ukrainian students studying full-time at Ukrainian institutions remotely from the UK.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department has worked alongside colleagues at the Home Office to explore what support can be made available for both Ukrainian students continuing their study remotely from the UK, and those studying at UK institutions.

Universities in Ukraine are striving to maintain the education of their students under extremely challenging conditions. This includes through the provision of online distance learning for students enrolled at Ukrainian universities who now live in another country, including in the UK. The department encourages these students to speak with their education provider in Ukraine to understand what support is available for them to continue their studies at their Ukrainian provider. This includes those studying through the UK twinning programme, of which the government announced funding to support in June 2022. Information about this can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-uk-package-offers-a-lifeline-to-ukrainian-researchers-and-entrepreneurs>. The programme provides support to Ukrainian universities by establishing partnerships with those in the UK.

Student finance is available only for eligible students studying a course provided predominantly in the UK by a UK higher education provider, including Ukrainian students who have enrolled at UK universities. In England, those studying via distance learning are, in general, not eligible to receive student loans to cover maintenance costs. This is also the case for Ukrainian students in England, who are studying via distance learning.

The department does not hold data on the number of Ukrainians who are studying online at Ukrainian institutions via distance learning in the UK.

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[109569]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing financial support to Ukrainian nationals who are in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, are continuing to study remotely for qualifications at Ukrainian education institutions and who are unable to access either universal credit or UK student loans because they are students at institutions outside the UK.

**Robert Halfon:**

It is important to maintain parity of treatment for all students in higher education (HE), whether they are a domestic student or an international student studying remotely with an overseas education provider.

Student finance is available only for eligible students studying a course provided predominantly in the UK by a UK HE provider. In England, domestic students studying via distance learning are, in general, not eligible to receive student loans to cover maintenance costs. This is also the case for Ukrainian students in England, who are studying via distance learning.

To support those who are granted leave under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and have enrolled at UK universities, we have extended access to HE student support, home fee status, tuition fee caps, advanced learner loans and 19+ funding allocations. This ensures Ukrainians who have been affected by the war in Ukraine can access support on the same basis as those within other protection-based categories, such as refugees.

The government remains committed to supporting universities in Ukraine who are striving to maintain the education of their students under extremely challenging conditions. This includes through the provision of online distance learning for students enrolled at Ukrainian universities who now live in another country, including in the UK. This also includes those studying through the UK twinning programme of which the government announced funding to support in June 2022. The programme provides financial support to Ukrainian universities by establishing partnerships with those in the UK.

If a Ukrainian student decides to undertake a Ukrainian university course from the UK, the department encourages students to speak with their education provider in Ukraine to understand what support is available for them to continue their studies. They should also speak to their university about the intensity of study they are offering, as this may impact their ability to access government support, through Universal Credit, whilst in the UK.

## ■ Private Education: Fees and Charges

**Bridget Phillipson:**

**[108191]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will ask the Competition and Markets Authority to investigate changes in the levels independent school fees.

**Nick Gibb:**

All registered independent schools must, as a condition of registration, meet the Independent School Standards (ISS). Schools which do not meet the ISS can face regulatory action, including deregistration. The ISS do not cover the fees charged by independent schools, which are a contractual matter between the school and the parent/carers.

Since independent schools do not normally receive public funding, the Department does not have any role in monitoring their spending or regulating their finances. Where the public sector funds places in independent schools, that funding is subject to the conditions put in place by the funding body.

Where parents/carers have concerns about the setting or payment of fees, these should be discussed with the school.

It would be a decision for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) whether to investigate changes in the levels of independent school fees. The CMA does permit the reporting of issues in a market sector through their website. This is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-the-cma-about-a-competition-or-market-problem>.

Many independent schools are also subject to regulation as charities or companies.

## ■ Religion: Education

**Jim Shannon:**

**[108214]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the report by Ofsted entitled Research review series: religious education, published on 12 May 2021; and if she will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The Department welcomed the publication of Ofsted's research review into religious education (RE) in May 2021, particularly given that it sought to identify factors that contribute to high quality RE curricula and teaching in schools. The Government's policy is to allow the RE curricula to be designed at a local level, through locally agreed syllabuses or by individual schools and academy trusts developing their own curriculum. Whilst it is important that the review is taken into account, the Government does not prescribe how much time a school devotes to any individual subjects, including RE. It is for individual schools to plan, organise and deliver their own curriculum.

## ■ Schools: Energy

**Bridget Phillipson:**

**[108186]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have (a) applied for capital funding for energy efficiency upgrades in each of the last five years and (b) been granted that funding.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has allocated over £13 billion in condition funding since 2015 for maintaining and improving school facilities in England, including improving energy efficiency.

All new buildings delivered through the School Rebuilding Programme will also be energy efficient and designed to be net zero carbon in operation.

In addition, schools can access capital funding for energy efficiency and carbon reduction upgrades in schools through Salix Finance Ltd., a non-departmental public body under the sponsorship of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Prior to 31 March 2021, schools could access Salix funding through three routes: (1) the Salix Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme for maintained schools, (2) Salix Energy



Efficiency Fund (SEEF) for academies, with applications administered by Salix, and (3) through the Department's Condition Improvement Fund (CIF).

From the financial year 2018/19, the Department managed funding of schemes (2) and (3) as follows:

YEAR	APPLIED FOR SEEF PROJECT	SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES	PROPORTION SUCCESSFUL
2018/19	459	277	60%
2020/21	331	179	54%

YEAR	APPLIED FOR SALIX LOAN AS PART OF CIF BID	SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES	PROPORTION SUCCESSFUL
2018/19	467	184	39%
2019/20	444	194	44%
2020/21	568	348	61%
2021/22	415	209	50%

Since 1 April 2021, the Department has continued to work with BEIS to help schools and colleges access the £1.4 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funded by BEIS and administered through Salix. Up to £635 million was made available through phase 3b of the scheme, in October 2022, for installing low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures in public buildings, with a minimum of 30% going to schools and colleges. This will help to cut emissions and save on energy bills.

In the CIF round for 2022/23, the Department has introduced a new assessment criterion of environmental sustainability, worth a maximum of four points of the 100 points available in assessment. Applications made and awarded were as follows:

CIF ROUND	APPLIED WITH 'INCREASE IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY' = "YES" IN APPLICATION FORM	SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES	PROPORTION SUCCESSFUL
2022/23	1861	957	51%

The Department is now assessing applications submitted to the CIF round for 2023/24 and will announce the outcomes in May 2023 at the earliest.



## ■ Schools: Finance

**Justin Madders:** [\[108248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the level of funding pressures on schools and their ability to deliver full-time education.

**Justin Madders:** [\[108249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on school budgets of the Association of School and College Leaders October 2022 survey findings that (a) 58 per cent of respondents are considering/likely to reduce teaching staff and increase class sizes, (b) 43 per cent were considering reducing curriculum options and (c) 55 per cent were considering reducing the number of teaching assistants.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Association of School and College Leader's survey findings were published in October 2022. In November, the 2022 Autumn Statement announced additional investment in schools. As a result, the core schools budget will increase by £2 billion in both 2023/24 and 2024/25, over and above totals announced in the 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review. This year, schools' funding is already £4 billion higher than last year. The Autumn Statement means it will rise by another £3.5 billion, on top of that, next year. Taken together, that means a 15% increase in funding in two years.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies have noted this additional funding will fully cover expected increases in school costs up to 2024 and will take spending per pupil back to at least 2010 levels in real terms. This means 2024/25 will be the highest ever level of spending on schools in real terms per pupil. It will enable head teachers to continue to concentrate funding in the areas that positively impact educational attainment. This includes high quality teaching and targeted support to the children who need it most.

The Department recognises that every school's circumstances are different. Where schools are in financial difficulty, they should contact their Local Authority or the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

## ■ Skills Bootcamps

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[106411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many starts on skills bootcamps, resulted in people (a) completing the course, (b) receiving a job interview and (c) securing a job offer in 2021 – 22.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[106412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish a breakdown of the starts on skills bootcamps by (a) age, (b) ethnicity, and (c) sex in 2021 – 22.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [106413]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish a breakdown of the starts on skills bootcamps by course taken in 2021–22.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [106414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish a breakdown of the starts on skills bootcamps by (a) region and (b) local authority in 2021–22.

**Robert Halfon:**

On 8 December 2022, the department published a statistical release, showing how many Skills Bootcamps starts there were in financial year 2021/22, based on data returned by Skills Bootcamps providers, available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/skills-bootcamps-starts/2021-22>.

This data release only covers the number of Skills Bootcamps starts. Further breakdowns of the starts on Skills Bootcamps, including by age, ethnicity, gender, by course taken, and by region and local authority will be provided in an evaluation report.

A further release will also be published covering completions and outcomes data for this cohort.

## ■ Supply Teachers

**Bridget Phillipson:** [108192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many supply teachers are working in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in England.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools in England can recruit supply teachers in one of four ways, with most schools choosing to use supply agencies. The Department does not ask agencies to report on the number of supply teachers.

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

The census identifies those teachers who are employed via a service agreement with an agency, but not whether they are a supply teacher. Teachers in schools on census day with a contract or service agreement lasting fewer than 28 days are recorded as 'occasional' teachers. The number of occasional teachers in each school and Local Authority is available here: <https://content.explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/api/releases/9a34fd81-bbaa-46ca-b5d5-e24c67a15d4d/files/e037a806-f8a0-46ea-58c2-08da7ec3a78e>.

## ■ Training: Kingston upon Hull North

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[105297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on improving skills training in Kingston upon Hull North constituency.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department regularly discusses skills matters with other government departments, including the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, but not specifically about individual constituencies.

The department is investing £3.8 billion more in further education and skills over the Parliament to ensure individuals across the country, including those living in Kingston upon Hull North, have access to the skills they need to build a fulfilling career in jobs the economy needs.

The department has boosted funding by an extra £1.6 billion for 16-to-19 education in 2024/25 compared with 2021/22. This is the biggest increase in 16-to-19 funding in a decade, and will help to fund the additional students anticipated in the system, 40 extra hours per student, and an affordable increase in funding rates per 16-to-19 student.

This additional funding will help providers such as Hull College, Wyke Sixth Form College, and Wilberforce Sixth Form College, who serve the Kingston upon Hull area. Collectively, their curriculum offer includes T Levels, apprenticeships, an extensive range of qualifications from Entry Level to Higher Education, and adult education programmes. Across each institution, their provision is shaped in collaboration with local employers to ensure it meets local skills needs.

Within Kingston upon Hull, there are several providers that are offering T Levels or preparing to do so. Wyke Sixth Form College and Wilberforce Sixth Form College commenced delivery of T Levels in 2021. Hull College, Ron Dearing UTC and St Mary's College (academy) all plan to commence T Level delivery in 2023. There are also several other local further education colleges offering T Levels to students in the area, such as East Riding College (Part of TEC Partnership) and Bishop Burton College who are both located in Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire.

The department is increasing investment in apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024/25 and supporting employers in all sectors and all areas of the country to use apprenticeships to develop the skilled workforces they need. Since May 2010, there have been a total of 11,880 apprenticeship starts in Kingston upon Hull North.

The department has also introduced the Free Courses for Jobs scheme, which enables adult learners nationwide without a level 3 qualification (or learners with any qualification level but earning below the National Living Wage) to gain a qualification for free.

In addition, there is the introduction of Skills Bootcamps which are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific

skills and fast-track to an interview with an employer. Residents in the Kingston upon Hull North Constituency can access engineering Skills Bootcamps being delivered in the city, such as Fibre Engineer and Heat Pump Engineer Skills Bootcamps as well as a range of Skills Bootcamps available online.

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

### ■ Universities: Industrial Disputes

**Munira Wilson:**

**[105586]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times (a) Ministers and (b) officials from her Department have met representatives of (a) the University and College Union, (b) Universities UK and (c) the Universities and Colleges Employers Association to hold discussions on industrial action at universities since 25 October.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department has regular meetings with representatives of trade unions that have members in the higher education sector, including the University and College Union, as well as with Universities UK and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association.

Universities are autonomous and responsible for the pay and pension provision of their staff. While the government plays no role in such disputes, we hope all parties can reach an agreement that delivers good value for students, staff, and the universities, so that industrial action can be avoided.

The department urges all sides to work together so that students do not suffer from lost learning, and we encourage any student worried about the impact of strikes on their education to raise this with their university.

### ■ University of Huddersfield: Pay and Working Conditions

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[106322]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had discussions with representatives of the University of Huddersfield on (a) staff pay and (b) working conditions in the last 12 months.

**Robert Halfon:**

Whilst the department has not met specifically with the University of Huddersfield, we have regular meetings with representatives of trade unions that have members in the higher education sector, including the University and College Union, as well as with Universities UK and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association.

These discussions include matters related to industrial disputes, such as use of fixed-term and casual contracts, the health of the Universities Superannuation Scheme

pension fund and data on impacts of strikes on students and their learning, but not the industrial disputes themselves.

Universities are autonomous and responsible for the pay and pension provision of their staff. While the government plays no role in such disputes, we hope all parties can reach an agreement that delivers good value for students, staff and the universities, so that industrial action can be avoided.

The department hopes that all sides can work together so that students do not suffer with further learning loss. Any students worried about the impact of strikes on their education are encouraged to raise this with their university.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Air Pollution: EU Law

**Geraint Davies:**

**[110549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the implications for her policies of the report by the European Commission entitled Study to support the impact assessment for a revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Directives and that report's appendix, published on 26 October 2022.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We have noted the proposals set out by the EU Commission, with whom we work closely through the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. These proposals will be subject to negotiation between Member States in EU Council.

The UK remains firmly committed to reducing air pollution on a national scale and we are legally required to set domestic targets that we can achieve. We have worked with internationally recognised experts to deliver the evidence to inform our target setting, and we are now setting targets for PM2.5 that are stretching but specific to our national circumstances.

### ■ Environment Protection

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[109573]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of progress towards all soil in England being managed sustainably by 2030, as set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan.

**Trudy Harrison:**

'Healthy soil' is included as one of the 66 indicators in the Outcome Indicator Framework of the 25 Year Environment Plan. These indicators are used to track environmental change that relates to the 10 goals. A Healthy Soil Indicator (E7) is currently being developed and a progress report for the 25 Year Environment Plan was published in July 2022 [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan-progress-reports>].

We are developing a range of soil health monitoring measures to create a robust baseline from which we can monitor improvements in soil health considering the physical, chemical and biological aspects of soil. This is aided by substantial new government investment in the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme, which will yield valuable new data to aid improved understanding of national soil condition.

## ■ Flood Control: Publicity

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[109572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with (a) ministerial colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, (b) the Cabinet Office, and (c) leaders in local government on improving flood risk awareness.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of subjects, including flood risk. Discussions among Cabinet colleagues are considered confidential.

The Environment Agency (EA) launched its annual [Flood Action Campaign](#) on 7 November, to encourage people to prepare in advance for flooding. This campaign promoted awareness of flood risk this winter, the actions people can take to prepare and government investment in flood resilience. In excess of 100 partners supported the week which generated over 130 pieces of coverage in print, online and broadcast across national and regional media. EA and Defra social media posts received 1.8m impressions and 5.2k engagements. Year on year, page views of the 'how to plan ahead for flooding' page during Flood Action Week increased by 33%.

This autumn the EA also held winter readiness briefings and workshops with rural stakeholders, supported by the Met Office and the Flood Forecasting Centre, to communicate the range of services available to help prepare for possible flooding in rural locations this winter.

## ■ Roads: Air Pollution

**Geraint Davies:**

**[110547]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the research conducted by Dr Anitha Chinnaswamy, assistant professor at Coventry University's Centre for Business in Society on the effects of outdoor air pollution on drive-thru employees and users, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on tackling drive-through staff's high exposure to air pollution.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra works collaboratively across Government to tackle air pollution and its impacts. Road vehicle emission standards have been very effective at reducing tailpipe emissions, and these will be further reduced through the UK's phase out of petrol and

diesel cars and vans in 2030 and HGVs by 2040. Government continues to invest in emerging technological developments to reduce harmful emissions from road vehicle tyre and brake wear.

Through the Environment Act we are setting two stretching new targets for fine particulate matter – the pollutant most damaging to human health, and these and existing standards and targets will continue to drive down air pollution from all sources, including road transport.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ **Abdulahdi al-Khawaja and Abduljalil al-Singace**

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[109820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 13 December 2022 to Question 102990 and Question 102991, if he will provide the most recent date upon which the cases of (a) Abdulhadi AlKhawaja and (b) Abduljalil AlSingace were raised with the government of Bahrain.

**David Rutley:**

The UK continues to follow developments on matters that relate to human rights within Bahrain. Our close and long-standing ties with Bahrain allow UK Ministers and senior officials to raise sensitive human rights issues, including cases, regularly, privately and effectively. The cases in question were raised at an officials meeting in December 2022.

### ■ **Academic Technology Approval Scheme**

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[110867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 62964 on Academic Technology Approval Scheme: Oxford East, by when his Department plans to help tackle the delay in processing applications to the Academic Technology Approval Scheme within published timescales.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK takes seriously its responsibility towards countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and advanced conventional military technology. The Academic Technology Approval Scheme is a thorough, necessary and proportionate tool to protect UK research from misappropriation and divergence to military programmes of concern. The majority of applications are processed within published timescales. A small percentage of complex cases remain outside target processing times and our teams are working to clear them as soon as possible. The ATAS IT system is being updated before the summer surge next year, which will improve processing rates.



## ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[109702]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the response to the Urgent Question on 12 December 2022 on British Council Contractors: Afghanistan, Official Report, column 741, how many names his Department has sent to the Home Office for security checks for Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3 as of 13 December 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

Under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) Pathway 3, the FCDO received over 11,400 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) before the window to submit EOIs closed on 15 August 2022. We have been processing each EOI to assess if the eligibility criteria has been met, have started to notify individuals of the outcome and are referring cases to the Home Office. Given the sensitivity of this part of the process, we are not able to provide specific numbers on security checks. Once these security checks have been completed, we will provide further information on next steps to eligible individuals. We will update Parliament on numbers to be resettled under Pathway 3 once we have completed the allocation process, have notified all those who submitted EOIs of the outcome and have assured data to share.

## ■ Agriculture: Climate Change

**Patrick Grady:**

**[107099]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has to update the 2015 Conceptual Framework on Agriculture to incorporate the commitments the Government made on (a) the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture and (b) the new Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme at COP27.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has no immediate plans to update the 2015 Conceptual Framework on Agriculture. However, the current Independent Commission for Aid Impact review "UK aid to agriculture in a time of climate change" is likely to provide useful insights that would inform any future update. Resilience to climate change and environmental sustainability was identified as an important cross-cutting priority in the Conceptual Framework and this priority was reflected in the UK Government's initiatives to address the climate and environment impacts of agriculture at COP26. This focus was continued at COP27, with a dedicated Agriculture and Adaptation Day, a new set of Priority Actions to deliver the Agriculture Breakthrough goal and an extended mandate for the Koronivia Joint Working Group on Agriculture.



## ■ Alaa Abdel Fattah

**Naz Shah:** [\[109613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Prime Minister discussed the release of Alaa Abd El-Fattah release during COP27.

**Naz Shah:** [\[109614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is considering diplomatic sanctions against the Egyptian Government if they fail to allow consular access or release of Alaa Abd El- Fattah.

**Naz Shah:** [\[109615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to secure consular access to Alaa Abd El-Fattah.

**David Rutley:**

Mr Alaa Abd El-Fattah obtained British Citizenship in December 2021. The Egyptian authorities have repeatedly stated that they do not recognise Mr El-Fattah's British nationality and continue to refuse consular access, which was first requested in December 2021. There have been frequent follow-up requests, including at the highest levels with Prime Minister raising Mr El-Fattah's case and our request for consular access with President Sisi during COP27 on 7 November.

## ■ Bahrain: Elections

**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[109819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 102995, which local NGOs and civil society groups monitored the parliamentary elections in Bahrain on 12 and 19 November.

**David Rutley:**

Organisations that monitored the parliamentary elections in Bahrain on 12 and 19 November included: Bahraini Jurists/Lawyers Society, Bahrain Public Relations Associations, Bahrain Transparency Society, National Institution for Human Rights, Al Marsad Society for Human Rights, Ma'an" Society for Human Rights, Mabadea Society for Human Rights, and Bahrain Zakhar Society.

## ■ Belarus: Russia

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[109581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts about the consequences for his policies of recent meetings in Belarus between Russian and Belorussian military officials.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Foreign Secretary is in regular contact with international partners on all aspects of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine. Discussions with partners frequently consider the role of the Lukashenko regime in providing support to Putin's unprovoked and illegal war in Ukraine.

The UK Government condemns Lukashenko's collaboration with Russia and takes every opportunity to remind the Belarusian regime that there will be serious consequences if they become more directly involved in Russia's war. We also urge Belarus to re-consider its 'grouping of forces' with Russia in southern Belarus, which risks escalating regional instability.

■ **Climate Change: Finance**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[105356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress his Department has made on establishing the funding facility to help tackle climate-induced loss and damage agreed at COP27.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

All parties at COP27, including the UK, agreed to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, as well as a fund for responding to loss and damage (L&D). Parties also agreed to establish a Transitional Committee to operationalise the funding arrangements and the fund.

The UK is currently engaging with the UNFCCC and parties to establish the Transitional Committee for the L&D fund and will continue to constructively engage with it to help ensure the fund and wider funding arrangements for L&D deliver effectively for countries most vulnerable to climate change.

At COP27 the UK also announced £5 million of funding for the Santiago Network for L&D, which will bring together and enhance the technical assistance available to developing countries suffering from the worst impacts of climate change, as part of a £13m package of support on adaptation and losses and damages.

The UK continues to prioritise adaptation and spent £2.4 billion of International Climate Finance (ICF) over 2016-2020 on climate adaptation, including investments in areas relevant to addressing losses and damages.

■ **European Parliament Members: Lobbying**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[110608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he will ask the President of the European Parliament to launch a full EU-wide investigation into the arrests of former and existing Members of the European Parliament for illegal lobbying activity; and if he will make a statement.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Government is aware of the ongoing investigations by Belgian authorities into allegations of corruption relating to existing and former members and staff of the European Parliament. The President of the European Parliament has publicly stated that the European Parliament is cooperating with relevant national law enforcement and judicial authorities in support of their investigations and has committed to "an internal investigation to look at all the facts related to the Parliament."

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Brexit****Sir Bill Wiggin:**[\[109825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on their ability to deliver successful policy outcomes.

**Leo Docherty:**

Leaving the EU has provided the UK with the freedom to conceive and implement laws and policies that put the UK first. In 2020 the UK and EU concluded the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) - the world's largest zero tariffs and zero quotas deal, taking back control of our laws, borders, money and fisheries. The TCA and the Withdrawal Agreement are functioning broadly as expected and are monitored through their respective institutions, giving the UK the opportunity to maximise the benefits of Brexit.

The Government is now focussed on implementing the TCA and building respectful, mature relationships with our European neighbours to address shared challenges, such as our collective response to the Ukraine crisis, energy and illegal migration.

The UK continues to work multilaterally with the G7 and NATO, and has also established a new strategic partnership with AUKUS.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ministerial Corrections****Bambos Charalambous:**[\[109723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Parliamentary Under Secretary's letter of correction to the Official Report on 2 December 2022 following an Urgent Question on 28 November 2022, for what reason the correction was made.

**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[109724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) his Department had discussions with his counterparts in Saudi Arabia prior to the submission of the letter of correction to the Official Report on 2 December 2022.

**David Rutley:**

I corrected my answer to clarify that I misspoke, and that the reports of torture in the case of al-Kheir were allegations, as set out in my initial response to the Urgent

Question. The FCDO and British Embassy Riyadh have frequent discussions with counterparts in Saudi Arabia. The Urgent Question was raised with our Embassy in Riyadh, but there was no discussion of correcting the Official Report. HMG has raised al-Kheir's case with the Saudi authorities on several occasions, and has reiterated the UK's principled opposition to the use of the death penalty.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Vacancies**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[107119\]](#)

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

**David Rutley:**

Following the Autumn Budget announced by the Prime Minister and Chancellor, FCDO will be launching detailed Business & Country Planning and Workforce Planning exercises in the new year. This will help to determine the FCDO's future workforce requirements from 2023-24 onwards, taking into account Ministerial priorities and delivering our FCDO transformation. Headcount and managing vacancies will be informed by plans for a smaller, more agile and more efficient civil service. Information on Full Time Equivalent roles will be published as usual in the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts found online.

■ **Georgia: Russia**

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[110714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Georgian counterpart on the implications of the visit of the Speaker of the Russian State Duma to Abkhazia on 1 December 2022 and the subsequent signing of a cooperation agreement.

**Leo Docherty:**

Although the Foreign Secretary has not discussed this issue with his Georgian counterpart, it is the longstanding policy of the UK and the vast majority of the international community that Abkhazia is Georgian territory, as we have repeatedly made clear in statements at the UN, OSCE and Council of Europe. The signing of the cooperation agreement is a further attempt to undermine Georgia's sovereignty over the territory of Abkhazia. The UK's strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and close cooperation on defence and security, makes us one of Georgia's most valued partners in countering Russian hybrid threats.

■ **Ghana: Corruption**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[108179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of financial corruption in Ghana.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Accordingly to the 2022 Afrobarometer survey, the majority of Ghanaians (77 per cent) believe corruption has increased in recent times, compared to 2019 (53 per cent). In 2021, Ghana ranked 73rd out of 180 countries in Transparency International's corruption perception index (CPI). The UK will continue to work with international partners in support of open, transparent and accountable governance.

**■ Ghana: Hygiene****Dr Matthew Offord:****[108164]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Water Aid's hand washing programme in Ghana.

**Dr Matthew Offord:****[108170]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the proportion of the population in (a) rural and (b) urban areas of Ghana who have immediate access to piped water systems.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

WaterAid is an active partner in delivering outcomes for vulnerable people under the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition (HBCC). Between April 2020 and October 2021, WaterAid in Ghana helped deliver 25,000 bars of soap and 3,000 hygiene kits; trained 177 Community Health Workers in Covid-19 prevention and to promote handwashing; and installed 95 handwashing in health care facilities. The HBCC partners reported that between 57 per cent and 98 per cent of the targeted population in 14 countries were practicing handwashing with soap at five critical times to help prevent illness after the intervention.

Ghana conducted a population and housing census in 2021 - for which the UK's Office of National Statistics provided technical support. As of 2021, 32 per cent of Ghana's population is using piped water. Further progress is still needed to close the gap between rural and urban populations, respectively at 29 per cent and 34 per cent.

**■ Government Hospitality: Wines****Mr David Lammy:****[109409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the cost to his Department was of most expensive bottle of wine (a) purchased by and (b) consumed from the Government Wine Cellar this year.

**David Rutley:**

I refer the honourable Member to the reply of 17 October to PQ 59209 placed by the hon. Member for Rhondda. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/59209>

**■ Iran: Demonstrations****Virginia Crosbie:**[\[108453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help prevent the use of the death penalty for protesters in Iran by (a) making representations to his Iranian counterpart and (b) raising the issue in multilateral fora.

**David Rutley:**

The use of the death penalty against protestors standing up for their basic human rights is morally abhorrent. The UK opposes the death penalty in all circumstances. On 8 December, the Foreign Secretary released a statement condemning the regime's action and summoned Iran's most senior diplomat to demand that Iran must halt all executions and end the violence against its own people. On 9 December, we sanctioned 10 Iranian officials connected to Iran's judicial and prison systems, including 6 individuals linked to the Revolutionary Courts that have been responsible for prosecuting protestors with egregious sentences including the death penalty. The UK will continue to hold Iran to account for its brutal crackdown of protests and refusal to respect the basic human rights of its citizens.

**■ Israel: West Bank****Andrew Selous:**[\[106407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of reports that Israel will retrospectively legalise outposts in the West Bank; and if he will make a statement.

**David Rutley:**

We are clear that settlements are illegal under international law and threaten the viability of a Two State Solution. The UK urges the Government of Israel to permanently end its settlement expansion and settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Israeli outposts in the West Bank are also illegal under international and Israeli law, and should be removed entirely.

**■ Kazakhstan: Russia****Stephen Doughty:**[\[110713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the President of Kazakhstan on helping to ensure that Kazakhstan is not used to evade Russian sanctions.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Foreign Secretary has not spoken to the President of Kazakhstan. However, on 20 December we will host a Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Tileuberdi, where we will discuss all aspects of UK-Kazakhstan cooperation, including the response to Russia's war in Ukraine, and sanctions against Russia. The UK is committed to ensuring that third countries are not used by Russia to evade sanctions.

We regularly underline our support for Kazakhstan's compliance with international sanctions, and welcome remarks made by Kazakh Government officials regarding their stance against circumvention.

■ **Maria Kalesnikava**

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[110715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of the Belarussian opposition on the hospitalisation of Maryya Kalesnikava.

**Leo Docherty:**

On 30 November, I [Minister for Europe] issued a public statement of support for Marya Kalesnikava and her family, calling on the Belarusian authorities to provide appropriate care to Marya and to release all political prisoners. HMG maintains contact with members of the Belarusian democratic opposition in exile, the then Foreign Secretary met Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya during her visit to London in March 2022, with the plight of Belarusian political prisoners a shared priority. Marya Kalesnikava's condition was discussed at a recent OSCE side event attended by Sviatlana Tsikhanovskaya and representatives of the UK Government.

■ **Mozambique: Renewable Energy**

**Jeff Smith:**

[\[107128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to British International Investment's funding for Globeleq Limited, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Globeleq Limited's projects on the transition to renewable energy in Mozambique.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Globeleq has supported the financing of a number of African power projects, including the ground-breaking Cuamba solar (plus battery) storage project and the Temane gas fired power project, both in Mozambique.

The Temane project is central to Mozambique's energy transition. When operational, the Temane project is expected to meet the electricity needs of 1.5 million Mozambicans and support the creation of 14,000 jobs. It will provide reliable, dispatchable power for baseload, with the ability to transition to a 'peaking role' as more renewables become available.

The project's flexible technological operating configuration and the interconnecting transmission line allows for greater penetration of intermittent renewables across Mozambique's grids over time. This includes the pioneering Cuamba project (cited above), under construction by Globeleq, which is one of the first utility scale solar projects in Africa capable of storing energy, paving the way for wider uptake of renewable power. In addition, Temane is technologically capable - from day one - to blend green hydrogen fuel into its fuel mix when that becomes available.



**Jeff Smith:**

**[107129]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the involvement of British International Investment and Globeleq in Central Térmica de Temane (CTT), what assessment he has made of the price the Mozambique state utility company EDM will pay for power from CTT.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The Temane gas project is a project developed and invested in by Globeleq, an experienced developer of power projects across Africa, of which British International Investment is the majority shareholder.

Prior to investing in Temane, Globeleq undertook due diligence and an evaluation of the commercial terms negotiated and agreed with the state-owned company 'Source Energia and Electricidade de Moçambique' (EDM). The power purchase agreement signed between the project company and EDM is commercially confidential.

**Jeff Smith:**

**[107130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the involvement of British International Investment and Globeleq in Central Térmica de Temane, whether his Department took steps to support the Mozambique government in negotiating additional access to the renewable power from the Hidroeléctrica de Cahora Bassa hydroelectric dam for the domestic market.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The Government of Mozambique has strong ambition to provide universal access to energy by 2030. The Temane project is central to Mozambique's energy transition. There is a recognition from the Government that for Mozambique to reach that universal target by 2030, the country would need to consider other sources of energy that are affordable, and not solely rely on the Cahora Bassa dam generated energy, which also has high costs associated with grid densification infrastructure. That is why the Government has made some progress in the last year with other energy projects, including the Temane Project, and expanding the off-grid solar renewables projects.

The Temane project is in line with the country's decarbonisation pathway to net zero by 2050. The Temane project's flexible technological operating configuration and the interconnecting transmission line allows for greater penetration of intermittent renewables across Mozambique's grids over time. Temane is technologically capable - from day one - to blend green hydrogen fuel into its fuel mix when that becomes available.

There has been no specific engagement with the Government of Mozambique to support additional access to renewable power from the Hidroeléctrica de Cahora Bassa hydroelectric dam.



## ■ Myanmar: Aviation

**Imran Hussain:**

[\[106354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the report by Amnesty International entitled *Deadly Cargo: Exposing the Supply Chain that Fuels War Crimes in Myanmar*, published on 3 November 2022, on the supply of aviation fuel to Myanmar.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We welcome Amnesty International's important report on the supply of aviation fuel to Myanmar. It clearly sets out the risks associated with the provision of aviation fuel to Myanmar, which is used to facilitate military airstrikes against the civilian population.

On 28 February 2022, the UK updated its Overseas Business Risk Guidance to make it clear that UK businesses should conduct thorough supply chain due diligence to ensure that commodities such as aviation fuel do not reach the Myanmar military. The UK is also using targeted sanctions and lobbying against those who provide weapons and parts to the Myanmar Air Force.

## ■ Myanmar: Democracy

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[106419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on democracy in Myanmar.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Ministers regularly engage with international counterparts on returning Myanmar to a democratic path. The UK also uses our role as UN Security Council pen-holder to raise awareness on the international stage, including by coordinating a Press Statement on 2 February 2022, which called for a return to democracy, an end to violence, and respect for human rights.

## ■ Nepal: Energy

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[110856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken steps to build energy generation partnerships on a bilateral basis with Nepal.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK is implementing its Climate Smart Development Programme in Nepal. This will promote renewable energy access by supporting the Government of Nepal to further access climate finance and leverage both public and private investments to meet its adaptation and mitigation targets. Similarly, the Government of Nepal, UK, World Bank and 15 other Development Partners (DPs) endorsed the Kathmandu Declaration on Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) in September

2021. This will advance Nepal's climate pathway through investment in forestry, agriculture, clean energy, sustainable tourism, clean transport programs and climate smart urbanisation.

## ■ Norfolk Island: Foreign Relations

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[106326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had any recent discussions with his Australian counterpart on the Norfolk Islands.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Norfolk Island has been a Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia since 1914 and its governance is a matter for Australia. It has not been raised in recent discussions with the Australian Government.

## ■ Northern Ireland Protocol

**Stephen Farry:** [\[107214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made in negotiations with the EU on the Northern Ireland Protocol since October.

**Stephen Farry:** [\[107217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with which Northern Ireland stakeholders he has held discussions on the Northern Ireland Protocol since his appointment.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Government is engaging in constructive dialogue with the EU to find shared solutions to problems caused by the Northern Ireland Protocol. The current technical discussions between UK and EU officials are a positive step forward. However, significant gaps remain between our positions. It remains our preference to resolve this through talks - but the situation in Northern Ireland is urgent, and we have therefore brought forward the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill to address these issues.

The Foreign Secretary most recently met Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič on Thursday 15 December, and both they and officials continue to remain in touch. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has had regular contact with Northern Ireland stakeholders throughout this process.

## ■ Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[108307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many FTE staff have been allocated to the Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation in each of the last two financial years; and what the (a) budget and (b) spend has been for that office in each of those years.

**Leo Docherty:**

The requested data covers the period of the merger of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) with the Department for International Development (DFID) including a period pre-dating the formation of the Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM). OCSM was formed from the cross-Government Stabilisation Unit (SU) and departments from FCO and DFID and was formally launched in February 2022. Full data is therefore only available for financial year 2021-22. For security reasons the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office provides staffing numbers in banded (approximate) ranges.

In financial year 2021-22, the Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM) held between 90 and 99 staff on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) contracts. The actual spend for that period was £7.3million and the staffing budget was £8.8 million.

**■ Rohingya: Genocide****Imran Hussain:**[\[106353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to intervene in the Rohingya genocide case before the International Court of Justice.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

On 25 August 2022, the UK announced its intention to intervene in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case regarding Myanmar's compliance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention, in relation to acts committed against the Rohingya. The UK is currently working on the scope of its intervention, including detailed consideration of the legal arguments. It intends to make a formal declaration to the Court in due course.

**■ Transcaucasus: Roads****Alex Sobel:**[\[109822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his Azerbaijani counterpart on the blockage of the only road connecting Armenia to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) by Azerbaijanis, and the potential humanitarian implications of the situation.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK Government has made clear that blocking the Lachin corridor and disrupting gas supplies in winter risk severe humanitarian consequences. We continue to urge the governments of both Azerbaijan and Armenia to abide by all ceasefire commitments in good faith. This is consistent with our support for international efforts to facilitate a sustainable and peaceful settlement to the conflict. I [Minister for Europe] have reinforced this position in my calls with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers in September, in recent meetings with senior officials from both capitals, and in my meetings in London with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Ambassadors to the UK.

## ■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict

**Chris Law:**

[\[109612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that the Government's support for international accountability mechanisms relating to the conflict in Ukraine prioritises sexual violence and other crimes against children.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK is providing £2.5 million support to the Atrocity Crimes Advisory (ACA) Group, to support Ukraine's domestic investigations and prosecution of core international crimes, including sexual violence and crimes against children. We are leading the conflict-related sexual violence strand of the ACA.

The UK has also made a £1 million contribution, in addition to our £10.5 million annual contribution, to support the International Criminal Court (ICC) work. This will increase the ICC's collection of evidence capacity and help provide enhanced psychosocial support to witnesses and survivors in Ukraine.

## ■ Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[109414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October to Question 59749 on Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid, what steps his Department has taken on repurposing seized Russian assets to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine since the Ukraine Recovery Conference .

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK Government and its G7 partners have been clear Russia must pay for the damage caused by its illegal war in Ukraine. Together with other Government departments and law enforcement agencies, we are looking at legally robust mechanisms to seize assets to fund reconstruction. We continue to work with Ukraine and international partners to support that reconstruction.

## ■ Ukraine: Nuclear Power Stations

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[110716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with Ukrainian officials and officials on the IAEA regarding claims that Russian occupiers at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are denying employees access to the site who refused to sign contracts with the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK is supporting the efforts of Ukraine and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to address the safety and security of Zaporzhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). I [The Minister for Europe] spoke to the IAEA Director General on 2 December. The Foreign Secretary spoke to him on 15 November. UK Government

officials have regular exchanges with their counterparts in Ukraine, the IAEA and the G7. Ukrainian staff at the ZNPP must be able to carry out their duties without threats or pressure and we will continue to use all political and diplomatic channels to insist Russia withdraws its forces and returns control of nuclear facilities to Ukraine.

### ■ **Ukraine: Water Supply**

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[110717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussion has he had with Ukrainian officials on damages to the water supply in Mykolayiv due to Russian rocket attacks.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK Government holds regular discussions with the Ukrainian Government about damage caused by Russia's attacks on critical national infrastructure, including water supply. During recent visits to Kyiv, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary discussed these issues and ways in which the UK Government can support the Ukrainian Government to make urgent repairs. In Kyiv on 19 November, the Prime Minister confirmed that the UK will provide £12 million to the World Food Programme and £4 million to the International Organisation for Migration to help meet urgent winter humanitarian needs through the provision of generators, shelter, water repairs and mobile health clinics.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **Abortion: Drugs**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[105497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure that all women and young people have access to the telemedical pathway for early medical abortion.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In March 2022, Parliament voted to amend the Abortion Act 1967 to allow women in England and Wales to take one or both pills for early medical abortion at home. The Abortion Act does not set a legal age limit for access to early medical abortion via the telemedicine pathway. The Department continues to work with NHS England, the Care Quality Commission and abortion providers to ensure that children and young people have timely access to all abortion services, including telemedicine abortion services.

### ■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Death**

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[108362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the number of alcohol-related deaths per year.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We are providing new funding for local government to improve drug and alcohol misuse treatment and recovery services in England and increasing the availability of inpatient detoxification beds. We are also investing £27 million to establish alcohol care teams in the 25% of hospitals in England with the greatest need.

**Ambulance Services: Prisons****Steve Reed:**[\[109590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of ambulance callouts to prisons to treat drug-related instances in each of the last three years.

**Steve Reed:**[\[109591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of phone calls made from prisons to hospitals requesting ambulance assistance for drug related issues in each of the last three years.

**Will Quince:**

No specific estimate has been made.

**Autism and Learning Disability: Community Care****Barbara Keeley:**[\[109501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring Integrated Care Boards to publish plans for meeting the commitments relating to community provision for (a) autistic people and (b) people with learning disabilities set out in the Building the Right Support Action Plan, published on 19 August 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are no current plans to make an assessment.

Each integrated care board implements a five year joint forward plan with partner trusts and Foundation Trusts. This will include the needs of the entire local population, including people with a learning disability and autistic people.

The NHS Long Term Plan 2019 sets out our commitment to invest in intensive, crisis and forensic community support to support more people with a learning disability and autistic people to receive personalised care in the community, closer to home, and reduce preventable admissions to inpatient services. Every local health system will be expected to use some of this growing community health services investment to have a seven day specialist multidisciplinary service and crisis care.

To support our approach of devolving power, the government has set up the Hewitt Review to consider the balance between integrated care system accountability, targets, and performance.

## ■ Blood: Donors

**Caroline Nokes:**

[\[109534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has mechanisms which allow blood bank supplies from non-covid-19-vaccinated donors available to non-covid-19-vaccinated patients who stipulate that preference.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Blood bank supplies are not identified based on the donor's COVID-19 vaccination status. The Joint United Kingdom Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation Services Professional Advisory Committee (JPAC) provides guidelines for the blood transfusion services in the UK. In July 2021, JPAC published a position statement, which was updated in November 2022, stating that blood services cannot provide information on the COVID-19 vaccine status of donors to recipients and it is not necessary from a safety or efficacy perspective.

This is based on advice from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency that no additional blood and plasma safety measures are recommended in relation to the occurrence of suspected adverse reactions to COVID-19 vaccines. Individuals vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines may be accepted as donors, provided they feel well.

## ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

**Ian Paisley:**

[\[108211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to encourage manufacturers of cannabis-based medicinal products to (a) conduct clinical trials and (b) pursue regulatory approval for their products.

**Will Quince:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) has issued two calls for research proposals and a highlight notice on medicinal cannabis. Manufacturers are responsible for generating evidence to support the use of these products and to seek regulatory approval. The Government has encouraged manufacturers to do so and offered scientific and research advice from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the NIHR.

## ■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[109415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in the UK have been diagnosed with severe Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, as defined in the NICE guidelines.

**Helen Whately:**

The information requested is not held centrally.



**■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Endoscopy****Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[109507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any of the 19 community diagnostic centres announced on 7 December 2022 will provide endoscopy treatments; and if he will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

Two of the 19 community diagnostic centres will provide endoscopy services.

**■ Dental Services: City of Durham****Mary Kelly Foy:** [\[108376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve access to NHS dental services in the City of Durham.

**Neil O'Brien:**

In September, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care, including in the City of Durham.

On 25 November 2022, the Department introduced legislation to amend the National Health Service dental contract to incentivise dentists to deliver care to high needs patients through fairer remuneration. The legislation requires NHS dentists to update their NHS.UK profiles more frequently to ensure patients can access accurate information on the services available. The Department will enable NHS England's commissioners to more flexibly commission additional care for patients where this can be delivered by NHS dental teams.

**■ Dental Services: Refugees****Julian Sturdy:** [\[104174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help Ukrainian refugees in the UK access dental care.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Arrivals from Ukraine are guaranteed free access to National Health Service healthcare, including screening, vaccinations, mental health support, dental and hospital services. A welcome pack has been provided to all arrivals, which was translated into Ukrainian and Russian.

**■ Drugs: Animal Products****Christina Rees:** [\[109664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps towards mandatory labelling of animal-derived ingredients in medicines in the context of patients with specific dietary needs.



**Christina Rees:**

[\[109665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact animal-based products in medications have on the treatment options for (a) vegetarians and (b) vegans; and if he will take steps to require the switching from animal to plant-based alternatives to non-active ingredients within medicines wherever viable on new products.

**Will Quince:**

The requirements for the information which must appear on medicines labelling is set out in Part 13 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012. The primary purpose of the label is to unambiguously identify the medicine and to convey warnings in relation to safe and effective use of the product. There is no legal requirement for a pharmaceutical manufacturer to state whether a particular medicine contains animal-derived ingredients, as this does not convey warnings on the safety of the medicine.

However, the legislation allows for the inclusion of a statement such as 'suitable for vegetarians/vegans' where a company can provide evidence to demonstrate that no products of animal origin have been used in the manufacture of the ingredients or the medicine. Where a company proposes to include such a statement on the labelling or in the patient information leaflet, the Medicines and Healthcare products regulatory Agency will evaluate the evidence to determine the validity. Medicines are developed to treat or prevent particular medical conditions or symptoms and are licensed on the basis of quality, safety and efficacy. Although there are many medicines free from animal derived materials, no animal-free treatment options exist as the active ingredient cannot be made synthetically or animal derived materials are necessary for the formulation or manufacture of the product. As technology advances, we expect that more non-animal materials will become available.

## ■ **Drugs: EU Law**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[109542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**Will Quince:**

Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council has already been revoked by Schedule 9 of SI 2019/775 insofar as it applied to medicinal products for human use.

## ■ **Elective Recovery Taskforce**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[109509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish (a) key performance indicators, (b) a strategy and (c) a timeline for achieving key targets of the Elective Recovery Taskforce announced on 7 December 2022.

**Will Quince:**

The Taskforce will meet regularly to inform our understanding of challenges in the system and potential solutions to ensure that all available capacity is used to reduce waiting times for patients. This will be supported by research and analysis to develop recommendations and an implementation plan in early 2023.

**■ Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome****Steve McCabe:**[\[96555\]](#)

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) polycystic ovary syndrome and (ii) endometriosis.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2022]:* In 2022, we published the Women's Health Strategy for England, which identified gynaecological conditions, including endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), as a priority.

We have allocated £2.3 billion to establish up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) by 2024/25 to reduce waiting times for diagnostic tests, such as ultrasound for those with suspected PCOS. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is considering the development of a guideline on PCOS. NICE's guidelines set out evidence-based recommendations, including on the diagnosis and management of conditions, to improve the quality of care. We expect healthcare professionals and commissioners to take these guidelines into account in the treatment of patients.

We are also increasing activity through dedicated surgical hubs for planned procedures, focusing on providing high-volume low-complexity surgery, such as laparoscopies for suspected endometriosis. NICE recently conducted a surveillance review of its endometriosis guideline. On 3 November 2022, NICE confirmed that it will update the sections on diagnosing endometriosis, surgical management and surgical management, if fertility is a priority. NICE will also explore mental wellbeing and support for those with suspected or confirmed endometriosis during the scoping of the update. The expected publication date of the updated guideline will be available in due course. NHS England is also reviewing the service specification for severe endometriosis, including care pathways for thoracic endometriosis and expects to report on the outcome in 2023. This will ensure that specialist endometriosis services have access to the most recent evidence and advice and improve standards of care.

**■ Fertility: Medical Treatments****Feryal Clark:**[\[107194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Women's Health Strategy published 30 August 2022, what progress his Department has made on removing non-clinical access criteria to fertility treatment.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[107195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Women's Health Strategy updated 30 August 2022, what progress his Department has made on publishing national data on the provision and availability of IVF.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[107196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish his Department's priorities for reform of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We will provide further information on the implementation of measures to address variations in access to National Health Service-funded fertility services shortly.

■ **General Practitioners: City of Durham**

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[108353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the proportion of GP appointments in the City of Durham conducted face-to-face in the last 12 months; and what that figure was in 2013.

**Neil O'Brien:**

This information is not collected in the format requested.

■ **Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust: Electroconvulsive Therapy**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[106543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review Electroconvulsive Therapy within any inquiry into services within the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

**Maria Caulfield:**

On 22 November, NHS England announced an independent review into the incidents at the Edenfield Centre at Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust this year. However, the use of electroconvulsive therapy is not currently in the scope of the independent review.

■ **Health Services: Autism and Learning Disability**

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[107070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) autistic people and (b) people with learning disabilities were in long-term segregation on 6 December 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 14 December 2022]:* This information is not held in the format requested. However, as of 9 September 2022, there were 114 autistic people and

those with a learning disability in long-term segregation in inpatient settings, using the Care Quality Commission's definition.

## ■ Health Services: Females

**Feryal Clark:** **[106548]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 66 of the Women's Health Strategy for England, published in August 2022, whether his Department is taking steps to encourage research on the impact of (a) menstruation and (b) gynaecological conditions on (i) educational outcomes and attainment, (ii) workforce participation and (iii) sickness absence rates.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). Subject to receiving high quality applications, the NIHR expects to commission a new policy research unit dedicated to reproductive health. The unit will undertake research to inform policy in areas such as menstruation and gynaecological conditions. The impact of menstruation and gynaecological conditions on educational outcomes and attainment and on workforce participation and sickness absence has been highlighted as a potential research topic for this unit. Applications are currently being reviewed and the unit expected to operate from January 2024.

The UK Menopause Taskforce has considered the evidence base and identified priorities for menopause research, such as the cost of menopause to individuals, employers, the public sector and economy. This will inform a menopause research prioritisation exercise commissioned by the NIHR. This exercise will also consider research recommendations from a range of experts, including the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. The exercise began on 5 December 2022 and is expected to conclude in January 2023.

## ■ Health Services: International Cooperation

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** **[109705]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December 2022 to Question 106425 on Health Services: International Cooperation, for what reason (a) Ministers in his Department have not met with the World Health Organisation Director General and (b) no one in his Department has met with the United Nations Secretary General to discuss global health reform after the covid-19 pandemic; and whether any such meetings with Ministers in his Department have been requested by the (i) World Health Organisation and (ii) United Nations.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government has regular contact with the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), including through the United Kingdom Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and the WHO Executive Board. The Departmental Ministers usually meet the Director General at the annual World Health Assembly and did so this year and will continue to do so in other fora. The Department of Health and

Social Care works with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on issues related to global health and via its relationship with the United Nations General Secretary.

### ■ **Healthy Start Scheme: Migrants**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[69490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the consultation on the extension of Healthy Start eligibility to families with No Recourse to Public Funds will take place; and if she will make a statement.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We are currently considering options and further information will be available in due course.

### ■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[107209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the adequacy of the availability of hormone replacement therapy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* There are over 70 hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products available in the United Kingdom and while most remain in good supply, a range of factors including an increase in demand has led to issues with a limited number of products. We have been working with suppliers, stakeholders and the National Health Service and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to maintain overall supply, including expediting resupply dates of the disrupted HRT products.

Since Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) on specific HRT products were introduced to ensure even distribution and allow alternative products to be dispensed, supplies have now improved and recently, several SSPs have been removed. 17 SSP's for HRT products have been issued since April 2022, and currently seven remain in place as the supply position of several products affected by short term supply issues, have resolved.

### ■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Prescriptions**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[108414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether HRT prepayment certificates will be available by April 2023.

**Maria Caulfield:**

A pre-payment certificate for hormone replacement therapy (HRT) will be introduced from 1 April 2023. It will enable women to access as many National Health Service prescriptions for HRT medicines licensed for treatment of the menopause as required for an annual cost of two single item prescription charges.

**Hospitals: Air Conditioning****Geraint Davies:**[\[109406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department provided advice to hospitals on the purchase of air purifiers that use technology deemed safe by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies.

**Will Quince:**

NHS England is developing new guidance in relation to the use of ultraviolet air cleaners in the National Health Service which will be consistent with all relevant guidance and standards.

**Incontinence: Physiotherapy****Rachael Maskell:**[\[109632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential benefits of pelvic physiotherapy as a treatment for urinary stress incontinence.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing evidence based guidance for the National Health Service in line with its established methods and processes.

In 2019, NICE published guideline, NG123, on the management of urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse in women which recommends the non-surgical management of urinary incontinence, including, that women with stress or mixed urinary incontinence should be offered a trial of supervised pelvic floor muscle training of at least three months' duration as first-line treatment.

**Independent Investigation Into East Kent Maternity Services****Feryal Clark:**[\[107189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the independent report commissioned by his Department entitled Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent: 'Reading the signals' published 19 October 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of that report's findings; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department is reviewing the recommendations made in addition to existing work to improve maternity outcomes and will respond in full in due course. An independent working group chaired by the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has been established to guide implementation of actions arising from the Ockenden and East Kent reports.

## ■ Lecanemab

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[101727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to (a) develop test infrastructure and (b) recruit testing staff to test patients for Alzheimer's disease to allow early diagnosis and treatment with Lecanemab.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing authoritative, evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources.

NICE has been asked by the Department to conduct an appraisal of lecanemab for treating early Alzheimer's disease. The appraisal is anticipated to begin in late August 2023.

## ■ Life Expectancy: City of Durham

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[108372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of trends in the level of healthy life expectancy in the City of Durham.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made.

## ■ Long Covid

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[109416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in the UK have been diagnosed with Long Covid.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England promotes the use of diagnostic coding for post-COVID-19 syndrome. In primary care, this data is recorded and monitored via OpenSAFELY, which shows as of March 2022, 162,881 people had received a diagnostic code for the long term effects of COVID-19.

## ■ Maternity Services

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[107199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the continuity of carer model.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There is no longer a national target date for services to deliver continuity of carer and services will be supported to develop local plans. Local midwifery and obstetric leaders are asked to focus on recruitment and retention of the workforce and to



develop plans and to take account of local populations, staffing levels, more specialised models of care required by some women and current ways of working supporting the whole maternity team.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[107200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many maternal medicine networks have been established in England as of 9 December 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are currently fourteen Maternal Medicine Networks in operation in England.

#### ■ **Maternity Services: Contraceptives**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[107193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to improve the provision of contraception in maternity settings.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are committed to ensuring the public receive the best possible contraceptive services and are considering how to improve the provision of contraception in maternity settings as part of our broader work to improve sexual and reproductive health in England. We will set out our plans in due course.

#### ■ **Maternity Services: Research**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[108401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 79 of the policy paper entitled Women's Health Strategy for England, CP 736, published on 30 August 2022, whether his Department has taken recent steps to support research on the efficacy of (a) continuity of carer in pregnancy and (b) other practice models.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funds a policy research unit on maternal and neonatal health and care. The NIHR funds a range of research on maternal and neonatal health focusing on the safety of services and the national maternity ambition to halve maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths and brain injury by 2025. The NIHR expects to recommission the policy research unit to continue this work. Applications are being reviewed and it is expected that the unit will be operational from 2024.

The NIHR has also funded research into care pathways in pregnancies occurring after stillbirth or neonatal death and evaluations of models of care, best practice and pathways for specific groups, such as those dependent on drugs and their infants and those with type 2 diabetes



## ■ Maternity Services: Standards

**Feryal Clark:** [107190]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on ensuring a (a) safe environment, (b) culture of mutual respect and (c) continuous learning and improvement in NHS maternity services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We will continue to work with all National Health Service trusts to ensure that safe and compassionate maternity services are provided. The Department and the NHS have established a working group chaired by the Royal College of Midwifery and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to guide the implementation of recommendations to improve maternity services. The independent working group consists of stakeholders including the Royal Colleges of Paediatrics and Child Health and Anaesthetists, the Obstetric Anaesthetists Association and the British Association of Perinatal Medicine.

NHS England has invested £127 million in NHS maternity workforce and to improve neonatal care. Of this, approximately £34 million will be invested in local maternity systems, in culture and leadership development programmes and in supporting staff retention

## ■ Menopause: Employment

**Feryal Clark:** [108409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with colleagues in the Department of Work and Pensions on workplace support during the menopause since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy for England in August 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are working across Government to improve workplace support to ensure that the menopause does not negatively impact women's experiences at work and to support employers.

**Feryal Clark:** [108416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with (a) employer groups and (b) other stakeholders on (i) the Women's Health Strategy, (ii) supporting women going through the menopause and (iii) tackling workplace taboos and stigmas on menopause.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Ministerial meetings are published on GOV.UK at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-overseas-travel-and-meetings#2022>

**■ Menopause: Health Education**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[108411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy to ensure that girls and boys are educated about menopause from an early age.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In 2020, compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education was introduced in all schools, which includes teaching on women's health, including menopause.

**■ Menopause: Health Services**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[108407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all women and girls experiencing early menopause are able to access specialised and personalised support including for (a) mental health, (b) fertility and (c) bone health.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The NHS Menopause Improvement Programme aims to improve clinical menopause care in England via a new clinical pathway in primary care for women during perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause. This includes access to personalised care.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines on menopause recommend that healthcare professionals consider referring women with early menopause to healthcare professionals with relevant experience to manage all aspects of physical and psychosocial health related to the condition. While NICE's guidelines are not mandatory, we expect healthcare professionals to take this guidance into account in the treatment of patients.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[108413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Menopause Pathway Improvement Programme, (a) when he expects the programme to conclude and (b) whether the Government plans to implement the programme's recommendations.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England aims to deliver the Programme's objectives over three to five years. The Programme has launched phase one of its workplace support guidance in November 2022 and published a factsheet for the menopause via the Self Care Forum.

## ■ Miscarriage

**Feryal Clark:** [\[107205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of Sands on the development of a pregnancy loss certificate since the publication of the Women's Health Strategy.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[107206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans for the pregnancy loss certificate to be made available.

**Maria Caulfield:**

While there have been no specific discussions, we are working with NHS Business Services Authority to develop a timetable to launch the pregnancy loss certificate service.

## ■ Miscarriage: Bereavement Counselling

**Feryal Clark:** [\[107192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to ensure that all (a) women and (b) partners have access to bereavement support following pregnancy loss.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government has funded the Stillbirths and Neonatal Death charity (SANDs) to work with other baby loss charities and Royal Colleges to produce and support the deployment of a National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP). The pathway covers a range of circumstances of a baby loss including miscarriage, stillbirth, termination of pregnancy for medical reasons, neonatal death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). As of 1 April 2022, 99 NHS England Trusts have committed to adopting the nine NBCP standards.

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan, we are looking to improve the access and quality of perinatal mental health care for mothers and their partners. Mental health services around England are also being expanded to include new mental health "hubs" for new, expectant or bereaved mothers. The 33 new maternal mental health services will provide psychological therapy, maternity services and reproductive health for women with mental health needs following trauma or loss related to their maternity experience. These will be available across England by March 2024.

## ■ Miscarriage: Research

**Feryal Clark:** [\[108402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 79 of the policy paper entitled Women's Health Strategy for England, CP 736, published on 30 August 2022, whether his Department has taken recent steps to support research on the causes of miscarriage.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funds a policy research unit on maternal and neonatal health and care. The NIHR expects to recommission the policy research unit. Applications are currently being reviewed and it is expected that the unit will be operational from 2024. The NIHR also funds research in maternal and neonatal health focusing on the safety of services and the national maternity ambition to halve maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths and brain injury by 2025.

■ **Monkeypox: Health Services**

**Feryal Clark:** [105499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of funding for monkeypox services in the NHS.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The monkeypox response is funded mainly by local authority commissioners from their public health grant. As of 23 September 2022, the United Kingdom is at Level 2, transmission within a defined population group, with flat or negative growth. On 8 December UK Health Security Agency published its strategy for the eventual ambition of eliminating person-to-person transmission available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mpox-monkeypox-control-uk-strategy-2022-to-2023>

■ **NHS and Social Services: Sick Leave**

**Gareth Bacon:** [107182]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) NHS and (b) social care workers took sick leave due to a covid-19 infection in the latest period for which data is available.

**Will Quince:**

This information is not held in the format requested. However, data on the number of staff absent due to any COVID-19 related reasons, including the need to self-isolate, is available.

As of 30 November 2022, there were 6,865 National Health Service hospital trust staff in England reporting absences for COVID-19 related reasons. As of 14 November 2022, there were 2,128 of directly employed care home staff and 2,043 of domiciliary care home staff with face-to-face contact absent due to COVID-19 related reasons in England.

**■ NHS: City of Durham****Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[108378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) financial and (b) other steps his Department is taking to help tackle NHS workforce shortages in the City of Durham.

**Will Quince:**

The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan next year, which will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals required in future years, including in the City of Durham.

**■ NHS: Disclosure of Information****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[109669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring NHS Trusts to submit quarterly data returns to the Freedom to Speak Up Index.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Following changes to the National Health Service annual staff survey, from which the Freedom to Speak Up Index was derived, the National Guardian's Office no longer publishes the Freedom to Speak Up Index. However, the National Guardian's Office receives quarterly data from its network of local Freedom to Speak Up Guardians. In addition, the National Guardian's Office receive data through its case reviews and surveys.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[109670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recourse NHS staff have in the event that a hospital's Freedom to Speak Up Guardian breaches staff confidentiality.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are expected to abide by the principles described in the universal job description for Guardians, which emphasises the importance of preserving confidentiality. If a worker believes that their confidentiality has been breached by a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, a complaint can be raised locally or via the National Guardian's Office.

**■ NHS: ICT****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[110804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) operations, (b) appointments and (c) treatments have been (i) postponed and (ii) cancelled as a result of IT failures within the NHS in each of the last 3 years.

**Will Quince:**

This information is not collected in the format requested.

**■ NHS: Pay**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[108280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about funding NHS staff pay.

**Will Quince:**

My Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues relating to health services, including National Health Service pay.

**■ NHS: Staff**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[108144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December to Question 95818, which (a) patient organisations and (b) other relevant stakeholders his Department has consulted on the NHS workforce plan.

**Will Quince:**

NHS England has engaged with a range of stakeholders during the development of the long term workforce plan. Independent think tanks have tested and refined the plan's methodology and NHS England has consulted with stakeholders including medical Royal Colleges, trade unions, regulators, system leaders, third sector organisations and representatives from the workforce. NHS England is continuing this engagement prior to finalising the plan.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[111656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps in addition to those set out in Agenda for Change he is taking to help improve NHS staff morale.

**Will Quince:**

The '2022/23 [priorities and operational planning guidance](#)' prioritises the safety, health and wellbeing of National Health Service staff. Measures to support staff health and wellbeing are kept under review, in addition to addressing equality and diversity, workplace culture, leadership and flexible working.

**■ NHS: Strikes**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[108277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has held discussions about contingency planning for the potential impact of wider NHS strikes.

**Will Quince:**

We have held discussions on contingency planning for industrial action in the National Health Service.

## ■ Obesity: Children

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[109450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce levels of childhood obesity.

**Neil O'Brien:**

New Regulations on out of home calorie labelling for food sold in large businesses, including restaurants, cafes and takeaways, came into force in April 2022.

Restrictions on the promotion by location of products high in fat, salt or sugar came into force on 1 October 2022. We are also working with the food industry to ensure it is easier for the public to make healthier choices and make further progress on reformulation.

## ■ Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Medical Treatments

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[106448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with NICE on developing guidelines for polycystic ovary syndrome.

**Will Quince:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is considering the possible development of a guideline on polycystic ovary syndrome through the established process for identifying and prioritising guidelines that includes discussion with Department officials.

## ■ PPE Medpro

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[102973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government began its mediation process with PPE Medpro Ltd.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 8 December 2022]:* The Department entered mediation with PPE Medpro in September 2021. We continue to monitor the progress of settlement discussions and we will issue formal proceedings should it be necessary.

## ■ Pregnancy Loss Review

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[107204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the final report of the Pregnancy Loss Review.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Pregnancy Loss Review will be published in due course.



**■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[104454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all babies of women taking Valproate during pregnancy receive a thorough examination at birth by a geneticist for diagnosis of Fetal Valproate Spectrum Disorder.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There is no simple test to diagnose fetal valproate syndrome. Where a patient has taken valproate during pregnancy and has concerns regarding their child's health, advice should be sought from their general practitioner. The child may be referred to a specialist for an assessment. In December 2020, the 'Guidance Document on Valproate Use in Women and Girls of Childbearing Years' was published, which provides recommendations for healthcare professionals where there are concerns for children born to mothers who have taken valproate during pregnancy.

**■ Prisoners: Drugs****Steve Reed:**[\[109592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of prisoners sent to hospital for drug-related issues in each of the last three years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific estimate has been made, as this data is not held in the format requested.

**■ Prozac****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[109783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the availability of Fluoxetine in each region.

**Will Quince:**

There is currently a Serious Shortage Protocol in place for fluoxetine 10 milligram tablets, which allows pharmacists to supply a specified alternative fluoxetine product. All other fluoxetine products remain available.

**■ Respiratory System: Infectious Diseases****Theresa Villiers:**[\[108107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ensure continued availability of rapid PCR testing to help control respiratory infections in winter 2022-23.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* Diagnostic testing by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests for respiratory viruses is currently used by National Health Service trusts based on clinical and infection prevention and control needs. All

policies are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and there are currently no plans to replace the PCR respiratory testing capability.

The Living with COVID strategy published in February set out the roadmap to treating COVID-19 like other respiratory viruses such as flu. COVID-19 PCR testing remains available across NHS England in line with guidance, for example, where there is a need for a diagnostic test to inform treatment pathway. NHS Trusts make a choice on the appropriate balance of rapid and high-throughput PCR testing to best meet the needs of patients.

## ■ Sickle Cell Diseases

**Janet Daby:**

[\[105556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing funding and staffing levels for Sickle Cell services .

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made.

## ■ St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust: Accident and Emergency Departments

**Derek Twigg:**

[\[110591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for patients attending the Accident and Emergency unit at St Helens and Knowsley Hospital NHS Trust in each month since October 2021.

**Derek Twigg:**

[\[110592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for patients attending the Accident and Emergency unit at Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust in each month since October 2021.

**Will Quince:**

The following table shows the median total time in minutes in accident and emergency (A&E) at St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust in each month since October 2021.

MONTH	ST HELENS AND KNOWSLEY TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	WARRINGTON AND HALTON HOSPITALS NHS TRUST
October 2021	175	216
November 2021	164	183
December 2021	157	184
January 2022	228	178

MONTH	ST HELENS AND KNOWSLEY TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	WARRINGTON AND HALTON HOSPITALS NHS TRUST
February 2022	169	202
March 2022	182	197
April 2022	236	210
May 2022	168	214
June 2022	168	193
July 2022	177	212
August 2022	172	201
September 2022	195	211
October 2022	198	210

Source: Provisional Accident and Emergency Quality Indicators for England, NHS Digital

The following table shows the median time to treatment in minutes in A&E at St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust in each month since October 2021.

MONTH	ST HELENS AND KNOWSLEY TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	WARRINGTON AND HALTON HOSPITALS NHS TRUST
October 2021	105	123
November 2021	91	94
December 2021	78	94
January 2022	114	91
February 2022	94	113
March 2022	117	126
April 2022	119	105
May 2022	100	113
June 2022	105	98
July 2022	104	111

MONTH	ST HELENS AND KNOWSLEY TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	WARRINGTON AND HALTON HOSPITALS NHS TRUST
August 2022	100	104
September 2022	115	107
October 2022	119	103

Source: Provisional Accident and Emergency Quality Indicators for England, NHS Digital

### ■ Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[110676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, what plans he has to (a) retain, (b) revoke or (c) replace the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016.

**Neil O'Brien:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 December 2022 to Question [105306](#).

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Rachel Maclean:**

[\[902858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to prevent people claiming asylum in the UK if they could have claimed asylum elsewhere.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Individuals should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

Our policies reflect this, including the process whereby an asylum claim may be declared inadmissible to the UK asylum system if the claimant was previously present in, or has a connection to, a safe third country where it would have been reasonable to expect them to claim asylum.

The differentiation policy, which differentiates the entitlements afforded to refugees, is intended to dissuade migrants from making dangerous journeys to the UK and instead claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.

**Vicky Ford:**

[\[902860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle street crime against women and girls.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

We remain committed to delivering our Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

We have allocated £125 million across England and Wales through the Safer Streets Fund and the Safety of Women at Night Fund, including £550,000 investment into the constituency of My Right Honourable Friend, the Member for Chelmsford.

The Government is supporting my Right Honourable Friend the Member for Tunbridge Wells's 'Protection from Sex-Based Harassment in Public Bill', which would make public sexual harassment a specific offence.

**Gary Sambrook:**[\[902862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support victims of fraud.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

This Government takes the issue of fraud very seriously and is dedicated to protecting the public from this devastating crime.

We are working to improve the victim support system to ensure everyone receives the support and advice they need to feel safe again and to prevent revictimisation. Raising awareness and safeguarding victims will form a key pillar of the Government's forthcoming fraud strategy.

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[902863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to create the Protect Duty.

**Suella Braverman:**

I would like to pay tribute to those [Figen Murray and Brendan Cox, amongst others] who have campaigned for this legislation. The foundational aspects of the Protect Duty, now to be known as Martyn's Law, were detailed this morning in Written Ministerial Statements issued in both Houses.

It will keep people safe, by introducing proportionate new security requirements to ensure preparedness for, and protection from terrorist attacks.

This Government will introduce these measures to the House as soon as parliamentary time allows.

**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[902864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the level of threat posed by Iran to British nationals.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

On 16<sup>th</sup> November, the Director General of MI5 outlined that since January, there have been at least ten threats to kidnap or even kill UK-based individuals, and there have been threats from Iran arise since that speech.

Iran has established a pattern of this type of behaviour which is deplorable, yet sadly typical of the regime and its lack of respect for basic rights.

The Home Office works closely across Government to ensure all tools are utilised to protect individuals in the UK against any threats from the Iranian state.

**Stephen Hammond:**

[\[902866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support victims of fraud.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Secretary is clear that standards in the Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade must improve.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services has found that both organisations are under-performing and placed them into the 'engage' process to ensure targeted support.

The Mayor of London is responsible for setting priorities and holding Commissioners to account.

## ■ Animals in Science Regulation Unit

**Ben Lake:**

[\[109706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 97679 on Animals in Science Regulation Unit, if she will commission an independent review of the potential benefits of increasing the fees payable for licences under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to generate additional income to increase inspector numbers and reduce cases of non-compliance.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office has no plans to commission an independent review.

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

The Regulator's capacity and capability for service delivery and compliance assurance purposes is aligned with the requirements defined in the legislation.

## ■ Anti-social Behaviour

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[110731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the levels of anti-social behaviour incidents in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in (i) 2021 and (ii) 2022; and what (A) financial and (B) other steps her Department is taking to tackle anti-social behaviour in those areas.

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[110732]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) financial and (b) other steps her Department is taking to help prevent crime in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government is committed to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Last year the [Beating Crime Plan](#) laid out the Government's plan for tackling crime and ASB and committed to working with local agencies and partners to drive down ASB using the full range of powers and tools in the '2014 Act'.

We provided the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of flexible tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to ASB through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. It is for local areas to decide how best to deploy these powers depending on the specific circumstances.

The Home Office announced in March this year that ASB would be one of the primary crime and issue types being targeted in the next rounds of the Safer Streets Fund. This funding goes towards local projects aimed at increasing the safety of public spaces for all with a particular focus on addressing neighbourhood crime, anti-social behaviour and tackling violence against women and girls. At the end of July, we announced the outcome of Round Four of the Safer Streets Fund, investing an additional £50 million and supporting 111 projects across England and Wales.

We are committed to ensuring that policing has the resources it needs to cut crime and increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 by March 2023. These 20,000 additional officers will be on top of recruitment to cover retirement and those leaving the police.

It is for Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners, as operational leaders and elected local representatives respectively, to decide how best to respond to local priorities.

## ■ Asylum

**Derek Twigg:**

[110590]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's oral statement of 13 December 2022 on Illegal Immigration, Official Report, column 885, what estimate she has made of when the number of asylum caseworkers will be doubled.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We will recruit further staff and expect to have 2,500 decision makers in post by September 2023.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[110753]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to create safe and legal routes for asylum seekers to come to the UK.



**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[110759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to increase the speed and safety of routes (a) parents of children living in the UK and (b) other family reunion.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[110760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that people in or around Afghanistan who have had to flee because of threats or torture from the Taliban are provided access other than under the ACRS scheme to claim asylum in the UK.

**Robert Jenrick:**

These dangerous concealments are facilitated by vile people smugglers, who place profits above the lives of vulnerable people. The Government is determined to prevent further loss of life by breaking the business model.

The Home Office has invested significant amounts since 2014 to secure feeder ports, including increasing the use of body detection dogs and strengthening the vehicle screening regimes with the latest technology. The department is currently in the process of significantly strengthening the clandestine entrant civil penalty regime in order further drive improvements in vehicle security.

Unfortunately, there have been fatalities, including the Purfleet incident in 2019 when 39 Vietnamese nationals sadly lost their lives, and all such incidents are a reminder that attempts to clandestinely cross the border are inherently dangerous.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[110806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral statement by the Prime Minister of 13 December 2022 on Illegal Immigration, Official Report, column 885, whether safe and legal routes to claim asylum (a) are available and (b) will be available after 1 March 2023 to people who are not from Ukraine, Afghanistan or Syria.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The UK, like most other countries, does not accept asylum claims from abroad. Individuals should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

The UK will continue to welcome refugees from across the world through existing safe and legal resettlement routes. These include the existing global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship, the Mandate Resettlement Scheme.

## ■ Asylum: Applications

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[109486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's policy of clearing the backlog of initial asylum decisions by the end of 2023,

how much money has she allocated to completing that objective; and what that money will be spent on.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Funding for the measures which have been announced has been agreed with HM Treasury (together with anticipated efficiencies). The allocation of this funding is due to be confirmed as part of the usual business planning process within Home Office and further information including actual spend will be provided within Home Office financial statements in due course.

The funding allocated to clearing the backlog of asylum decisions will be used to fund additional decision makers as announced.

■ **Asylum: Calais**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[110754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to enable people to (a) claim asylum in the UK in Calais and (b) travel safely to the UK once their application has been made.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[110764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure people who are fleeing countries where they are facing persecution are able to claim asylum in the UK.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we could not possibly consider protection claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come to the UK. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

Our focus is on helping people directly from regions of conflict and instability, and we believe that our resettlement programmes are the best way to provide much needed support.

Although we do not allow claims from abroad, I can confirm, all asylum claims that are admitted to the UK asylum system, are given full and careful consideration so that we do not remove anyone who faces persecution or serious harm to their country of origin.

■ **Asylum: Deportation**

**Derek Twigg:**

[\[110589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's Answer to the hon. Member for Halton during his oral statement of 13 December 2022 on Illegal Immigration, Official Report, column 902, for what reason she has not set a target for the removal from the UK of asylum seekers whose application have been rejected.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Government wants to maximise the number of people returned from the United Kingdom through both voluntary and enforced routes.

**■ British Council: Afghanistan****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[109703]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the response to the Urgent Question on 12 December 2022 on British Council Contractors: Afghanistan, Official Report, column 741, how many (a) names her Department has received from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office for security checks for Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3 and (b) of those security checks how many have been completed as of the 13 December 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) Pathway 3, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office received over 11,400 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) before the window to submit EOIs closed on 15 August 2022.

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office have been processing each EOI to assess if the eligibility criteria has been met, and are referring cases to the Home Office.

Once Home Office security checks have been completed, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will provide further information on next steps to eligible individuals. We will update Parliament on numbers to be resettled under Pathway 3 once we have completed the allocation process, notified all those who submitted EOIs of the outcome and assured data to share.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes****Rachel Maclean:****[107146]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment of the consequences for her policies she has made of the recommendation of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner of a flexible national funding pot, to help enable survivors of domestic abuse to escape abuse.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for this Government. A central part of this is making sure victims and survivors get the support they need.

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, which we published in March, invests over £230 million, including over £140 million specifically for supporting victims and survivors.

This included a commitment to establish trials of a 'flexible fund'. In the Plan, we committed to making funds available to charities, who would have discretion on how they could be used to support victims and survivors.

Delivery of the ‘flexible fund’ by charities could involve cash payments being made to victims and survivors, in the same way proposed by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. These payments could help victims and survivors to leave an abuser.

The Government has also noted the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s report mapping provision of support services for domestic abuse victims and survivors across England and Wales. A full response will be provided in due course.

■ **Fire and Rescue Services and Fire Brigades Union**

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[107137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with (a) fire brigade staff and (b) the Fire Brigades Union.

**Chris Philp:**

Home Office officials and Ministers regularly meet with a range of fire professionals and leaders and with unions and other representative groups to understand the issues affecting fire and rescue services.

■ **Fire and Rescue Services: Carbon Emissions**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[109515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will provide additional funding to fire and rescue services to help enable them to achieve net zero by 2050; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

Fire and Rescue Authorities are responsible for considering the impact of and planning against risks to their Fire and Rescue Service and local communities including environmental risks.

Funding for all Fire and Rescue responsibilities is delivered via the Local Government Settlement. Fire and Rescue Authorities will receive around £2.5bn in 2022/23 to enable the delivery of their services to communities.

■ **Fire and Rescue Services: Finance**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[109514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will fully fund the (a) replacement and (b) operation of fire service end-of-life national resilience assets; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The maintenance and replacement of end-of-life fire National Resilience assets is fully funded for the 2021 to 2025 Spending Review period.

However, the specialist vehicles and equipment which support the National Resilience capabilities were purchased around 2005 and will need to be replaced from 2025. We will seek funding for this for the next Spending Review period.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Grants

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[109512]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to (a) add to the Local Government Finance Settlement the one-off grants that fire authorities receive for pensions and post Grenfell funding in protection services, (b) reinstate the Firelink grant when it comes to an end from the Home Office while Fire Services continue to incur the costs the grant is designed to cover and (c) increase the new burdens grant for the costs of the Redmond review of audit procedures in line with the increase in the costs of external audit; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office keeps the payment of grants to Fire and Rescue Services under regular review and seeks to include them into the Local Government Settlement wherever possible. The Department will continue to seek to rationalise funding for Fire and Rescue where possible, including consolidating smaller grants which can create administration burdens.

The costs of the Fire and Rescue communication systems, along with all of their other costs of delivering their service has been factored into the Local Government Settlement which will be published by the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities later this month.

The Government is clear that local authorities will need to meet audit costs within existing budgets. However, we remain committed to supporting local authorities with the costs of strengthening their financial reporting and will be providing additional funding of £45m over the next three years.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Pensions

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[109513]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to fund the cost of (a) a fire service pensions remedy and (b) the second options exercise for part-time workers in fire services; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The proposed remedies in both instances will ensure that affected firefighters and former firefighters will be placed in the correct position in respect of their pension entitlement and receive their full pension benefits.

Decisions on central government funding relating to these remedies will be subject to future discussions between The Treasury, the Home Office and Local Government.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Reform

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

**[107136]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on the fire service reform consultation.

**Chris Philp:**

The Fire Reform White Paper consultation closed on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2022.

The Home Office is analysing responses and the Government response to the consultation will be published as soon as possible. The response will detail the next steps for reform.

■ **Fraud****Justin Madders:**[\[108255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies on budgeting priorities of the findings of the National Audit Office report, Progress combatting fraud, published 15 November 2022, that crimes relating to fraud have increased by 12 per cent since 2017 and that charges and summons are falling.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The Home Office welcomed the publication of the National Audit Office report and recognises the substantial increasing risk that fraud poses to UK residents and businesses.

To support law enforcement to identify and bring the most harmful offenders to justice, we have already invested £400 million through Spending Review 2021 in tackling economic crime including fraud. This is in addition to the funding that the Home Office commits each year to the National Economic Crime Centre in the National Crime Agency (NCA), and police forces. We recognise that further action is required, and we will shortly publish a new strategy to address the rising threat of fraud, which will set out the outcomes we are aiming to achieve.

■ **Home Office: Carbon Emissions****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[108315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by what date they expect their Department to be carbon neutral in its day to day operations.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government is committed to delivering Net Zero by 2050.

Central Government 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 set out the actions that UK government departments and their agencies will take to reduce their impacts on the environment, including targets for departmental reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, with current targets for the period 2021-25. The Department is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions wherever possible and has ambitious targets under the Greening Government Commitments.

## ■ Home Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106379]**

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, what the purpose of the event was for which video mixers were purchased from Wex Photo Video on 12 and 14 September 2022.

**Chris Philp:**

The video mixers were purchased for an Home Office All Staff memorial event to honour Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106382]**

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 purpose of the photo frames purchased by her Department's communications directorate from Pedunculate Ltd on 26 August 2022.

**Chris Philp:**

On 25 August 2002 the Home Office purchased 100 A4 certificate frames to award commendations from the then Home Secretary, as recognition for exceptional service or bravery in the field of home affairs.

On 31 August 2022 we held a presentation event where 97 individuals were personally awarded commendations by the Home Secretary, including policing and fire services, community organisations, campaigners and civil servants. This event was publicised on Gov.uk and a press release was issued:

[Brave, inspirational and selfless acts recognised with new Home Secretary commendation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/brave-inspirational-and-selfless-acts-recognised-with-new-home-secretary-commendation)

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[110643]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for October 2022, for what purpose her Communications Directorate purchased Panoramic Limestone Background Equipment on 31 October 2022.

**Chris Philp:**

The photography background was purchased to provide a professional multi-purpose backdrop to a broad range of video and photo communications for the Home Office including social media, departmental announcements, Ministerial pre-records, pool clips and other media moments.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Kevin Foster:**

**[108259]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Torbay of 5 December 2022.



**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office will reply by 5 January 2023.

**David Linden:** [\[109728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence sent by email on 13 October 2022 and again on 14 November 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13501.

**David Linden:** [\[109729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence sent by email on 14 October 2022 and again on 14 November 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13502.

**David Linden:** [\[109730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the email correspondence of 13 September, 12 October and 14 November 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13114.

**David Linden:** [\[109731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department will respond to the correspondence sent by email to the urgent casework enquiries address on 12 October 2022 and 10 November from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL12988.

**David Linden:** [\[109732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the correspondence sent by email on 13 September 2022 and again on 2 November from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL12676.

**David Linden:** [\[109733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the correspondence sent by email on 11 October 2022 and again on 15 November from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13262.

**David Linden:** [\[109734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the correspondence sent by email on 11 October 2022 and again on 15 November from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13454.

**Robert Jenrick:**

MPAM/0432042/22 – The Home Office responded to the hon. Member's correspondence on 14 December 2022.

MPAM/0473111/22 – The Home Office responded to the hon. Member's correspondence on 15 December 2022.

MPAM/0451942/22 – The Home Office will provide a response shortly.

MPAM/0450452/22 – The Home Office will provide a response shortly.

MPAM/0449501/22 – The Home Office responded to the hon. Member's correspondence on 14 December 2022.

MPAM/0452824/22 – The Home Office responded to the hon. Member's correspondence on 14 December 2022.

MPAM/0452561/22 – The Home Office responded to the hon. Member's correspondence on 14 December 2022.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[110817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email of 24 October 2022 from the hon. Member for Liverpool Walton, relating to Peshawa Fatahpanah.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office replied on 17 December 2022.

## ■ Prisoners: Foreign Nationals

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[108166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign national offenders, who having served their sentence, were subsequently deported in the last 12 months.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Foreign offenders should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them. Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity. We make every effort to ensure that a Foreign National Offender's (FNO) removal by deportation coincides, as far as possible, with their release from prison on completion of sentence. More than 12,200 FNOs have been removed since January 2019 protecting victims and making our streets safer.

The Home Office publishes data on the number of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) returned from the UK in each quarter in the [Immigration statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The latest data, published on 24 November 2022, can be found in [Returns-summary-sep-2022-tables.ods](#) (Tables Ret\_02a/Ret\_02b) and [Detailed Returns tables](#) (Table Ret\_D03/D04). Figures relate to year ending June 2022.

We deal with significant and complex challenges when seeking to return those who have no right to be in the UK to their country of origin or lawful place of return. These challenges can include travel documentation, late applications, late appeals and broader non-compliance with a lawful returns process. The Nationality and Borders Act will make it easier and quicker to remove FNOs and those with no right to be in the UK. The new legislation extends the period an FNO can be removed from prison under the early removal scheme (ERS) from a maximum of 9 months to 12 months, providing the minimum requisite period has been served. The Act will also streamline the appeals process by introducing an expanded One Stop Process aimed at

reducing the extent to which people can frustrate removals through sequential or unmeritorious claims, appeals or legal action.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [109704]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan citizens resettled in the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme are residing in hotel accommodation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We have been working as fast as possible to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so that they can settle into their local communities and rebuild their lives in the UK.

Information can be accessed by following this link: [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data)

**Sam Tarry:** [109774]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme have been made outside the UK.

**Sam Tarry:** [109775]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful applications under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme were made outside the UK.

**Sam Tarry:** [109776]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful applications under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme were made in the UK.

**Sam Tarry:** [109777]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme have been made in the UK.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will provide up to 20,000 women, children, and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK. The scheme does not have an application process. Instead, eligible people will be referred for resettlement to the UK through one of three referral pathways.

We are continuing the process to grant Indefinite Leave to Remain to all eligible individuals who arrived during the evacuation: officials have already registered over 13,000 applications for resettlement from Afghans in the UK, with biometric residence permits being issued accordingly. In the meantime, applicants remain eligible to work and access services under their continuing leave.

At November 4 2022, we had granted Indefinite Leave to Remain to 6,314 people under ACRS pathway 1.

Work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the ARAP and ACRS on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in future editions of the Immigration Statistics.

More information on the number of grants of Indefinite Leave to Remain issued to Afghans resettling under the ARAP or ACRS can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data>

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[110777]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people (a) arrived in the UK, (b) were granted indefinite leave to remain, (c) were housed in temporary accommodation and (d) were moved into settled accommodation from each referral pathway of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme in each month since the opening of those referral pathways.

**Robert Jenrick:**

At 4 November 2022, 22,833 people have arrived in the UK from Afghanistan, and we have granted Indefinite Leave to Remain to 12,296 individuals across the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme.

Information can be accessed by following this link: [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data).

Work is underway to assure information on caseworking systems relating to all the individuals resettled under the ACRS and relocated under ARAP. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

## ■ Slavery

**Jess Phillips:**

**[110727]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement by the Minister of State for Immigration of 13 December on Update to Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance, HCWS441, what her definition is of objective factors; and how she expects this to affect decisions by case workers.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The updated Reasonable Grounds guidance will mean decision makers now base their assessments on objective factors to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe a person is a victim.

An “objective” factor is a piece of information or evidence that is based in fact. This will ensure that decision makers can make timely and robust evidence-backed decisions and that assistance and support are focused on those who most need it.

## ■ Smuggling: Firearms

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[106374]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce firearm smuggling into the UK.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government is committed to tackling the threat posed by trafficking of illicit firearms into the UK.

The high harm nature of firearms means that the potential threat from criminals and terrorists gaining access to and using firearms poses a significant risk to public safety.

To tackle the flow of illicit firearms being trafficked into the UK, Border Force and its partners ensure that we have the right intelligence, detection and enforcement capabilities at the border. Alongside this, the National Crime Agency and our international partners tackle the threat upstream by engaging with source and nexus countries.

## ■ Visas: Fees and Charges

**Angela Crawley:**

[107180]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people who qualified for visa fee waivers were minors in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We do not hold data on what proportion of people who qualified for visa fee waivers were minors in any of the requested years.

Data has been published on the GOV.UK website that lists the number of fee waiver applications that have been processed, resolved or remain pending a decision. This data covers the period from 2018 Q4 to 2022 Q3 inclusive. The data can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q3-2022>. The relevant data is listed on tab FW\_01.

## ■ Wind Power: Migrant Workers

**Karl Turner:**

[109529]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 902177 on Wind Power: Migrant Workers, when it was agreed to extend the concession; and what discussions (a) Ministers and (b) officials had with employers before the extension agreement.

**Karl Turner:**

[109530]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer to question 902177 on 14 November 2022 on Wind Power: Migrant Workers, when the

decision to extend the concession was communicated to employers; and which employer organisations were contacted as part of the evaluation process.

**Karl Turner:** [\[109531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 902177 on Wind Power: Migrant Workers, what consideration was given to domestic (a) employment and (b) skills as part of the evaluation process.

**Karl Turner:** [\[109532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to consult seafarer stakeholders as part of the evaluation of the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 since that concession came into force.

**Karl Turner:** [\[109533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If she will make an estimate the number of seafarers imported to work on offshore wind farms in UK territorial waters through the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not collect or store data on the number of overseas nationals working under the concession in the offshore industry in the UK from 2017 to date.

The Home Office is not responsible for evaluating the labour market or governing how private companies recruit their workers. The information about the concession is published at Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017: October 2022 update - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) for employers to access if they wish to.

The Home Office regularly engages with other government departments, including the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Transport, and external stakeholders on matters relating to immigration. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Immigration regularly meet various stakeholders and their counterparts across government in formal and informal meetings to discuss a wide range of issues.

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[110846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106455 on Wind Power: Labour Market, if she will take steps to ensure that employers employing workers under the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 regularise the position of those workers before the concession ends on 30 April 2023; and what data her Department holds on steps taken by employers to regularise the position of such workers before 31 October 2022.

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[110847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106455 on Wind Power: Labour Market, if she will place in the Library figures showing the number of workers granted leave to enter the UK under

the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 in each year of its operation when the concession ends on 30 April 2023.

**Kenny MacAskil:** [110848]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106455 on Wind Power: Labour Market, how many persons granted entry to work in the UK under the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 provided a letter from their employer stating that they were employed in the construction or maintenance of a wind farm project within territorial waters.

**Kenny MacAskil:** [110849]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106455 on Wind Power: Labour Market, if she will take steps, before the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 ends on 30 April 2023, to assess the availability of UK workers to carry out this work.

**Kenny MacAskil:** [110850]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106455 on Wind Power: Labour Market, how many persons were granted entry to work in the UK under the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 as a result of providing a valid seaman's book.

**Kenny MacAskil:** [110851]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106455 on Wind Power: Labour Market, how many visa nationals received entry clearance under the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 in each year of its operation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not collect or store data on the number of overseas nationals working under the concession in the offshore industry in the UK from 2017 to date.

We do not collect information on employers using the concession. The Government has no plans to publish information on individual companies who use the immigration system which is consistent with the policy across the wider system.

The Home Office is not responsible for evaluating the labour market or governing how private companies recruit their workers. The information about the concession is published at [Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017: October 2022 update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/offshore-wind-workers-immigration-rules-concession-2017-october-2022-update) on gov.uk for employers to access if they wish to.

As previously set out, the Government regularly reviews all concessions to the Immigration Rules against the general principles of the immigration system to check whether they are necessary and regularly undertakes engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. This will continue to be the case in future.



## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Department for International Trade: Brexit

**Sir Bill Wiggin:**

[\[109461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on their ability to deliver successful policy outcomes.

**Greg Hands:**

Leaving the European Union has given the UK the opportunity to forge its own path as an independent trading nation.

To date we have secured trade deals with 71 countries plus the EU, representing £814bn of UK bilateral trade in 2021. We are focused on securing more deals with dynamic and fast-growing economies and are making good progress in negotiations with India and our accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

We also resolve barriers that inhibit UK business from entering markets and recently announced ambition to unlock export opportunities worth more than £20bn by resolving around 100 priority trade barriers.

### ■ Department for International Trade: Maritime UK

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[108153\]](#)

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

**Andrew Bowie:**

*[Holding answer 15 December 2022]:* The National Council meets three times a year. Department for International Trade (DIT) officials have generally attended these meetings, which last around three hours. It is one of the mechanisms used to engage with industry. DIT along with other Government Departments attends to provide an update and hear from Stakeholders about their issues. It is a good forum for engagement with the sector on international trade and investment policy as it relates to the maritime sector.

### ■ Exports

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[107060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her department is taking to increase export opportunities for businesses in (a) Preston, (b) in the North West region and (c) England.

**Andrew Bowie:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) offers a tailored service to businesses in Preston and the North West via our dedicated Northern Powerhouse team that



offers support and expertise to meet the export needs of SMEs and larger businesses at a local level. Our offices in Leeds, Manchester, and Darlington, help drive growth and prosperity through export and investment, and provide a range of upskilling services to businesses including the export academy and export champion programmes. DIT's Trade Advisor Service gives exporters outside the capital and Southeast the tools, support, and opportunities to succeed in global trade.

## ■ Exports: Costs

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[107059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her department is taking to increase the transparency of export costs.

**Andrew Bowie:**

We recognise the barriers small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face to exporting: our most recent National Survey of Registered Businesses (NSRB) highlights that companies' lack of knowledge, capacity and awareness of opportunities represent real market failures which prevent SMEs from exporting. The Department for International Trade does not ask businesses to respond to the survey to assess and report the actual costs involved.

The 12-point plan for exports aims to address these barriers and is centred around the Export Support Service (ESS) which provides a single point of entry for businesses who export or wish to do so.

## ■ Strategic Trade Advisory Group and Trade Advisory Groups

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[110733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department's review on membership of the (a) Strategic Trade Advisory Group and (b) Trade Advisory Group will be completed.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is working to ensure its full suite of stakeholder engagement is suited to the department's current and anticipated work plan and priorities. Therefore, as stated at the International Trade Select Committee, DIT is looking at wider reforms beyond the membership of our advisory groups. We do however anticipate that the Strategic Trade Advisory Group and Trade Advisory Groups will meet with refreshed membership early in the New Year.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Israel

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[106423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2022 to Question 80842 on Trade Agreements: Israel, whether it has always been the policy of the Government not sacrifice quality for speed in trade negotiations.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is clear that in negotiations we will not sacrifice quality for speed, and this policy will remain unchanged. A new agreement will modernise and upgrade our current trade relations based on the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement to cover services, procurement, and digital trade. We will only sign once we are confident that the new agreement is in the best interest of the UK economy and British people.

**■ UK Export Finance: Mozambique****Jeff Smith:****[107127]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will list the projects in Mozambique UK Export Finance (a) is considering for support or (b) has been asked to consider for support in the future, broken down by (i) location and (ii) aims.

**Andrew Bowie:**

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is not currently considering support for any transactions in Mozambique. UKEF currently operates a restricted cover position with regard to Mozambique which would impact its consideration of any new transactions. Details can be found online at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators).

**JUSTICE****■ Administration of Estates****Munira Wilson:****[107186]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of changing laws governing estate administration to allow caveats to be put in place which can stop indefinitely (a) a grant of probate or (b) letters of administration from being issued.

**Mike Freer:**

The Government has no plans to review the law on the administration of estates which provides checks and balances to protect the interests of the different parties in contentious probate disputes. Where parties are unable to reach agreement and a caveat is not withdrawn, there are steps the applicant can take to remove the caveat by recourse to a direction or order of the court. However, a caveat may remain in place if parties take no steps to remove it.

**■ Bail: Offenders****Steve Reed:****[110721]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of offences committed by defendants on bail while awaiting trial in each of the last three years.

**Edward Argar:**

The number of offences committed by individuals on bail in each of the last three years, for which data is available, is as follows:

2019 – 34,599

2020 – 30,686

2021 – 21,354

**Source: MoJ extract of the Police National Computer**

■ **Berwyn Prison****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[109661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether HMP Berwyn is operating at its full capacity.

**Damian Hinds:**

As at 25 November 2022, Berwyn was operating at very near full capacity. Exact figures are published on a monthly basis and can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-population-figures-2022>.

■ **Coroners: Appeals****Emily Thornberry:**[\[107084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he will respond to the recommendation of the Justice Committee in its report on the Coroner Service published on 27 May 2021, that a system of appeals against coroners' decisions, similar to that in Section 40 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 as originally enacted, should be introduced.

**Mike Freer:**

As set out in the Government's response to the Justice Committee's First Report on the Coroner Service, we undertook to implement six of the Committee's recommendations and consider 10 further recommendations, including the introduction of a system of appeals against coroners' decisions. We will take forward any actions arising from that further consideration as soon as is practicable.

However, as outlined in the Government's response, any appeals system would need to be proportionate, should not make the coronial system adversarial, and must avoid overwhelming the Chief Coroner's Office.

■ **Dominic Raab****Steve Reed:**[\[109588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department holds any records of (a) informal complaints and (b) formal grievances raised about the conduct of the right Hon. Member for Esher and Walton.

**Mike Freer:**

The department holds records of complaints about the Rt Hon. Member for Esher and Walton. The Prime Minister has appointed Adam Tolley KC to conduct an independent investigation into complaints about the conduct of the Deputy Prime Minister and it would not be appropriate to comment further during the investigation.

**■ Five Wells Prison****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[109659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he expects HMP Five Wells to be able to hold offenders to its designed capacity.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[109660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when HMP Five Wells will be contractually required to be able to hold its full planned number of prisoners.

**Damian Hinds:**

We are working closely with G4S, in accordance with the terms of the contract, to achieve full operational capacity as early as possible.

**■ Marriage: Documents****Hywel Williams:**[\[109455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Law Commission's report entitled Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law, HC 557, published on 19 July 2022, when he plans to respond to the recommendations in that report; and with reference to recommendation 36 in that report that couples should be able to have their schedules and marriage documents issued and completed in Welsh alone where the wedding ceremony takes place in Wales, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending that potential right to couples who would prefer Welsh documentation where the marriage takes place in England.

**Mike Freer:**

To date, the Government has made no assessment in the potential merits of including a Welsh-only option for people receiving registration documents in England. We will set out our position to recommendation 36, and wider marriage reform, within the formal Government response to the Law Commission in due course.

**■ Ministry of Justice: Crimes against the Person****Steve Reed:**[\[109589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December 2022 to Question 102864 on Ministry of Justice: Crimes against the Person, whether any grievances against Ministry of Justice Ministers for which the reason included (a) harassment - sex and (b) bullying were (i) upheld and (ii) partially upheld in each year since 2018.

**Mike Freer:**

The department can confirm that no complaints were upheld or partially upheld against Ministry of Justice Ministers since 1 January 2018. These include the reasons of (a) harassment - sex and (b) bullying.

**Ministry of Justice: Vacancies****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[107120\]](#)

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

**Mike Freer:**

We do not hold the information requested and to source this data would produce a disproportionate cost.

**Prison Accommodation****Andrew Selous:**[\[108103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisons allow more than half of the prisoners in that prison out of cell for two hours or less a day.

**Damian Hinds:**

Information about time out of cell for adult prisoners is not held by the Ministry of Justice, as it would require detailed daily monitoring of out-of-cell activity of each prisoner in each establishment. There is no current central instruction prescribing the amount of time prisoners should spend out of their cells. There is a clear commitment, however, to the delivery and performance management of time spent in purposeful activity. Governors have the flexibility to deliver balanced regimes that maintain an appropriate level of time out of cell on a range of activities such as education and employment, which meet the needs of the establishment's population, with a heavy focus on reducing re-offending. This is alongside basic access to time in the open air and domestic services, such as showers. The Prisons Strategy White Paper ([Prisons Strategy White Paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/white-papers/prisons-strategy)) sets out the Government's commitment to prison regime reform. A new Purposeful Activity performance measure has been introduced for the 2022-23 performance period, and additional measures are in place for attendance at work, education, interventions and services.

**Prison Education Review****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[108292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, what the budget of the Dynamic Purchasing System is for each prison.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, how the budget of the Dynamic Purchasing System is determined for each prison.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, what proportion of the budget of the Dynamic Purchasing System was spent in each prison in the most recent accounting period.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, on which courses the budget of the Dynamic Purchasing System was spent on in each prison in the most recent accounting period,.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, which providers have been paid from the budget of the Dynamic Purchasing System in each prison in the most recent accounting period.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of courses funded by the Dynamic Purchasing System.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, whether courses contracted under the Dynamic Purchasing System are subject to the same quality regime as those contracted under the Prison Education Framework.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[108299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2022 to Question 94773 on Prison Education Review, how his Department monitors value for money of courses contracted under the Dynamic Purchasing System.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) is designed to enable governors to commission innovative, local projects that meet the needs of their prisoners. The budget for the DPS in 2022-23 is £21.8 million. Allocation of the education budget is based on Prisoner population and the role of the individual prison. Governors have authority to move education funds between the Prison Education Framework (PEF) and the DPS pots on an annual basis, up to 5 per cent of the PEF contract value. The

overall spend this financial year to date is £11.3 million, against the year-to-date budget of £12.6 million.

As these services involve local spending plans and courses commissioned, we do not keep central records of what each prison commissions, and it would not be possible to obtain the information requested on a prison-by-prison basis without approaching each prison individually, which would incur disproportionate cost.

95 suppliers are currently delivering DPS services, which include: Catering & Hospitality; Construction, Cleaning and Facilities Management; Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies; Retail & Commercial Enterprise; Health & Public Services and Care; Business, Leadership, Administration and Law; Arts, Media and Publishing; Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care; Sport, Leisure, Travel and Tourism; Information and Communication Technology (additional to the core curriculum); Life Skills; Services to support individuals with additional learning needs; Resettlement; Preparation for Work, Careers Information Advice and Guidance.

The success and value for money of local commissioning is evaluated at local level, with support from the central contract management team. For larger DPS contracts, additional assurance processes are put in place by the contract management team. In addition to the contract management process, DPS provision is subject to OFSTED scrutiny, as are PEF and Prison Education provision.

#### ■ Prison Officers: Drugs

**Steve Reed:**

[\[109593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prison officers caught smuggling drugs into prisons in each of the last three years.

**Damian Hinds:**

The vast majority of prison staff are hardworking and dedicated. A minority of staff engage in corrupt activity which is often as a result of conditioning and manipulation by prisoners.

There have been a total of 80 outcomes (Criminal Justice, Dismissal or Exclusion) for Prison Officers linked to conveyance of drug related offences since 1 January 2020. Below is a table showing the breakdown by outcome type over the three-year period to 14 December 2022:

#### PRISON OFFICERS

Year	CJS Outcomes	Exclusions	Dismissals	Total
2020	4	7	8	19
2021	14	11	9	34
2022	4	13	10	27

Source: Linkspace Case Management System

HM Prison & Probation Service has a zero-tolerance policy to drugs conveyed into prisons and take appropriate action to a small number of prison staff who break the rules. Our £100m Security Investment Programme, aimed at reducing crime in prisons, including reducing the conveyance of illicit items such as drugs and mobile phones, was completed in March 2022. This included increased resource to pursue corruption, as well as establish a new 'Prevent' function, aimed at building staff resilience against corruption.

**Notes:**

- 1) The new Counter Corruption Unit came into being in April 2019, with a new structure and a change to ways of working. During the initial transition period, and prior to the introduction of the new Case Management System, it is possible that not all outcomes were being captured. Data has been provided in this response from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.
- 2) Outcome data is shared as we cannot assume guilt during an ongoing case. Due to the length of time a case can take to progress through the criminal justice system and the appeals system, the numbers of outcomes may increase or decrease as the years progress.
- 3) Exclusions and Dismissal – These figures quoted are subject to the progress of the case and counted separately.
- 4) Cases are dependent on information being reported through our reporting systems. Therefore, the outcomes only reflect the instances reported and developed through the CCU process.

■ **Prisoners' Release: Christmas**

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[109765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December to Question 101737 on Prisoners' Release: Christmas, what the offence was of each of the prisoners released on Friday 24 December 2021.

**Damian Hinds:**

The data requested is provided with the answer that I gave to the member for Croydon North on Thursday 15 December (PQ 108227).

■ **Prisoners: Exercise**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[109524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 5 September 2022 to Question 39794, Prisons: Exercise, whether the amount of time that prisoners must spend out of their cells in private prisons is set out in a contract.



**Damian Hinds:**

Time out of cell in private prisons is monitored through our performance measures and contract management arrangements. In cases where the requirement is not specified in the contract, it is set annually as part of the contract management process.

■ **Prisons****Grahame Morris:** [109521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his oral statement of 30 November 2022 on Prison Capacity, Official Report, column 914, what the (a) prison population and (b) operational capacity of the prison estate was on (i) 27 March 2020 and (ii) 2 December 2022.

**Grahame Morris:** [109522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his oral statement of 30 November 2022 on Prison Capacity, Official Report, column 914, how many out-of-use cells there were at each adult male prison on 2 December 2022.

**Grahame Morris:** [109523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his oral statement of 30 November 2022 on Prison Capacity, Official Report, column 914, what the (a) capacity and (b) population was at each adult male prison on 2 December 2022.

**Damian Hinds:**

The total population and capacity of the prison estate is published weekly at [Prison population statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/prison-population-statistics). The population and capacity of each individual prison is published monthly at the same link.

On 27 March 2020, the total population was 83,189 and the useable operational capacity of the estate was 85,583. On 2 December 2022, the total population was 82,896 and the useable operational capacity was 84,148.

A table showing the capacity, population and places out of use at each adult male prison on 2 December 2022 has been provided below. Prison capacity can be taken out of use temporarily for a number of reasons.

All new prison capacity is brought into use in a phased and controlled way, so only cells that are available for use are included below. With regard to places out of use, these have only been listed where the losses affect the deliverable operational capacity of the site, and so is limited to sites where losses are not mitigated by other means (e.g. temporary accommodation).

PRISON NAME	POPULATION	CURRENT OP CAP	PLACES OUT OF USE
Altcourse	1161	1164	0
Ashfield	406	412	0

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PRISON NAME	POPULATION	CURRENT OP CAP	PLACES OUT OF USE
Aylesbury	380	402	0
Bedford	370	400	21
Belmarsh	718	774	0
Berwyn	1817	1820	80
Birmingham	971	977	0
Brinsford	488	539	38
Bristol	563	566	0
Brixton	741	786	12
Buckley Hall	461	469	0
Bullingdon	902	921	191
Bure	621	643	0
Cardiff	739	777	2
Channings Wood	689	724	0
Chelmsford	695	720	30
Coldingley	481	494	19
Dartmoor	632	640	0
Deerbolt	311	323	206
Doncaster	1142	1145	0
Dovegate	1159	1160	0
Durham	968	985	0
Elmley	1129	1157	0
Erlestoke	434	468	0
Exeter	384	400	112
Featherstone	677	687	0
Feltham	313	322	208
Five Wells	871	876	0

PRISON NAME	POPULATION	CURRENT OP CAP	PLACES OUT OF USE
Ford	387	389	0
Forest Bank	1457	1460	0
Frankland	827	852	0
Full Sutton	581	594	0
Garth	795	845	0
Gartree	591	608	89
Grendon	163	188	45
Guys Marsh	476	511	0
Hatfield	298	334	0
Haverigg	306	400	99
Hewell	916	933	141
High Down	1092	1113	0
Highpoint	1259	1270	0
Hindley	590	600	0
Hollesley Bay	482	503	0
Holme House	1173	1179	0
Hull	947	958	86
Humber	997	1019	27
Huntercombe	460	480	0
Isis	615	628	0
Isle of Wight	1002	1035	104
Kirkham	483	699	0
Kirklevington Grange	177	197	0
Lancaster Farms	556	560	0
Leeds	1108	1110	0
Leicester	326	346	4

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PRISON NAME	POPULATION	CURRENT OP CAP	PLACES OUT OF USE
Lewes	612	618	0
Leyhill	438	461	0
Lincoln	662	664	0
Lindholme	932	932	78
Littlehey	1188	1188	0
Liverpool	816	820	0
Long Lartin	479	514	93
Lowdham Grange	842	856	32
Maidstone	587	600	0
Manchester	681	741	3
Moorland	958	1006	0
Morton Hall	254	333	20
Mount, The	1024	1048	0
North Sea Camp	243	300	0
Northumberland	1335	1348	0
Norwich	725	733	0
Nottingham	897	905	0
Oakwood	2084	2106	0
Onley	731	742	0
Parc	1641	1663	0
Pentonville	1141	1150	55
Peterborough Male	899	916	0
Portland	519	538	0
Prescoed	247	260	0
Preston	681	680	0
Ranby	1036	1084	14

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PRISON NAME	POPULATION	CURRENT OP CAP	PLACES OUT OF USE
Risley	1003	1016	98
Rochester	676	695	0
Rye Hill	647	664	0
Spring Hill	289	313	0
Stafford	751	752	0
Standford Hill	441	464	0
Stocken	1040	1071	0
Stoke Heath	760	781	1
Sudbury	536	610	0
Swaleside	924	950	140
Swansea	411	468	0
Swinfen Hall	614	624	0
Thameside	1201	1232	0
Thorn Cross	381	430	0
Usk	270	276	0
Verne. The	599	608	0
Wakefield	737	750	0
Wandsworth	1607	1628	0
Warren Hill	266	267	0
Wayland	747	762	161
Wealstun	846	856	0
Whatton	815	816	0
Whitemoor	315	333	126
Winchester	625	670	22
Woodhill	501	536	78
Wormwood Scrubs	1213	1280	0

PRISON NAME	POPULATION	CURRENT OP CAP	PLACES OUT OF USE
Wymott	1135	1144	0

## ■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

**Steve Reed:**

[\[109598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prison staff who required hospital treatment following a prisoner assault in each of the last three years.

**Damian Hinds:**

The number of incidents of a prisoner assault leading to a prison staff member requiring hospital treatment 2019-2021 can be seen in the below table.

YEAR	NUMBER OF ASSAULTS LEADING TO A STAFF MEMBER REQUIRING HOSPITAL TREATMENT
2019	1,335
2020	871
2021	951

Figures may include prison staff who have been hospitalised in assaults between prisoners.

Total number of prison staff may exceed total number of incidents as some incidents may include more than one prison staff member.

Consistent with National Statistics on these prison incidents, as published in *Safety in Custody*, figures do not include incidents in Secure Training Centres.

### **Data Sources and Quality**

These figures have been drawn from the HMPPS Incident Reporting System. Care is taken when processing and analysing returns but the detail is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. Although shown to the last case, the figures may not be accurate to that level.

The Prisons Strategy White Paper set out how we will improve safety and security in our prisons. Prison staff carry out a vital role in protecting the public and we will do all we can to protect them and prisoners from violence.

## ■ Prisons: Drugs

**Steve Reed:**

[\[109595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of drug overdoses at prisons in each of the last three years.

**Damian Hinds:**

YEAR	NUMBER OF SELF-HARM INCIDENTS DUE TO DRUG OVERDOSES
2019	2,295
2020	2,158
2021	2,273

We are committed to doing all we can to prevent deaths from drug overdoses in prison. We've outlined in both our Prisons Strategy Whitepaper and the Government's 10-year drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope' (2021) how we will achieve this. We have committed to opening Drug Recovery Wings in prisons, introduced Problem Solving Courts and we supply life-saving naloxone medication to staff in prisons and in Approved Premises to help prevent unnecessary opioid deaths.

Naloxone is a medication used to reverse or reduce the effects of opioids. It is currently carried by healthcare staff in prisons to administer where opiate overdose is suspected.

We propose to implement Naloxone in all prisons and probation sites in England and Wales and to train all new entrants and 30% of existing staff to administer Naloxone and to recognise the signs of overdose. Existing staff will be asked to volunteer to administer Naloxone.

Consistent with National Statistics on these prison incidents, as published in *Safety in Custody*, figures do not include incidents in Secure Training Centres.

In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self-harm incidents with absolute accuracy.

In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

Incidents where self-harm was due to a drug overdose can include multiple individuals; the figures in the table count the number of incidents where an overdose occurred rather than the number of individuals that overdosed.

Includes self-harm options listed as "illegal drugs", "own medication" and "other persons medication"

**Data Sources and Quality**

These figures have been drawn from the HMPPS Incident Reporting System. Care is taken when processing and analysing returns but the detail is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. Although shown to the last case, the figures may not be accurate to that level.

The data only includes self-harm incidents collated centrally; identifying any wider incidents that lead to a hospitalisation and have a connection to drugs would exceed the cost threshold as it would require reading through the text of each incident.

For a breakdown of Self Inflicted Deaths by method (including overdose), please see section 1.8 in the below published data from Safety in Custody:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1113633/Deaths\\_in\\_prison\\_custody\\_1978\\_to\\_2021.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1113633/Deaths_in_prison_custody_1978_to_2021.xlsx)

Table 1.1 in the above publication gives the number of other/non-natural deaths per year.

In the case of drug related deaths where no intent to self-harm has been discovered, the death has been classified as “Other: Non-natural”, however this category also includes other accidental deaths where drugs were not present.

‘Other: Non-Natural’ deaths include accidental and other difficult to classify deaths including those for which further information is awaited. Some of the most recent two years figures are expected to be reclassified as natural causes or self-inflicted deaths.

**Steve Reed:**

**[109596]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prisons where drugs have been found to be manufactured in each of the last three years.

**Damian Hinds:**

There have been no proven cases of prisoners manufacturing forensically identifiable substances in custody that would, under lab conditions, be proven to be a known drug. There is a remote chance of some prisoners experimenting with chemicals to produce substances that may/may not have a psychoactive effect, but this is unlikely to be undertaken in an organised manner or with the equipment required to produce the desired effects.

## ■ Prisons: Racial Discrimination

**Afzal Khan:**

**[110868]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of racial disproportionality in prisons.

**Damian Hinds:**

Racial and ethnic disparities are closely monitored across the justice system, and we continue to develop a wider, and deeper, range of factors that we monitor. The data, including analysis of relative differences between groups, helps give a detailed picture of where over-representation and disproportionality may be occurring. A comprehensive statistical assessment of these issues from across the system, including in prisons, can be found in [Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice system](#).

We are committed to understanding and tackling disparities that emerge in the outcomes for, and treatment of, ethnic minorities in prison. This is why in December 2020 we launched the Race Action Programme, which is focused on creating long-



term change through increasing the diversity of our workforce, addressing the risk of bias in our policies, and their implementation to tackle disparity in outcomes for ethnic minorities throughout the prison and probation service.

However, last week's thematic report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons is a sobering read and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will announce details early next year on the wide-ranging action we will deliver to bring about necessary changes.

## ■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Steve Reed:** [\[109594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of drone sightings at prisons in each of the last three years.

**Steve Reed:** [\[109600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of drones intercepted that were involved in drug dealing in each of the last three years.

**Damian Hinds:**

The number of drone sightings, interceptions and recoveries recorded in the immediate vicinity of prisons in each of the last three years is provided in the table below.

YEAR	2019	2020	2021
<b>Sightings, Interceptions and Recoveries</b>	122	134	248

We do not hold data centrally on the number of drone interceptions involved in drug dealing.

We are working hard to deter, detect and disrupt the illegal use of drones. We conduct assessments across the estate to understand risk and implement targeted countermeasures such as improved cell windows, netting and physical upgrades. Prisons and police work closely together on criminal drone activity – helping secure more than 51 convictions since June 2016. Those sentenced are serving a total of 159 years in prison. Recent joint operations with the police and HMPPS have resulted in more drone related arrests and the disruption of Serious and Organised Crime network activities.

## ■ Probate

**Sarah Green:** [\[109690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of probate applications submitted in the last 12 months were processed and received a response within 30 working days.

**Mike Freer:**

All applicants using the digital service receive confirmation of receipt at the point of submission and, if required, once we receive the original will or other supporting documents. In the last 12 months 56% (158,510) of all applications were either stopped or had their grant issued within 30 days of receipt of the documents needed to assess the case.

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

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

**■ Probate Service: Standards****Sarah Green:****[110831]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department is taking steps to help reduce the time it takes for the Probate Office to respond to applications.

**Mike Freer:**

Despite the unprecedented challenges faced by the probate service during the Covid 19 pandemic, and the increased volume of applications that there have been seen since, the average length of time taken for a grant of probate following receipt of the documents required has been maintained at between five and seven weeks – with the average responses being almost 2 weeks faster in quarter 3 of 2022 than the yearly average for 2020 and 2021.

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

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

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

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

**■ Property: Probate****Munira Wilson:****[107187]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what data his Department holds on the number of properties currently held in the probate process pending resolution of a dispute in a probate matter.

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[107220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many caveats have been entered with the Probate Registry in each year since 2017.

**Mike Freer:**

The information requested about the number of properties currently held in the probate process pending resolution is not held centrally.

The attached table shows the number of caveats that have been entered with the Probate Registry since 2017.

**Attachments:**

1. Table [2022-12-19 107220 Final Table v1.xlsx]

## ■ Sentencing

**Janet Daby:**

[\[110854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made on the White Paper entitled A smarter approach to sentencing.

**Edward Argar:**

The Ministry of Justice published a Sentencing White Paper – ‘A Smarter Approach to Sentencing’ - in September 2020, which set out the department’s plans for a system that protects the public, as well as one which the public can understand and have confidence in.

The reforms announced in the White Paper were about ensuring that the most serious and dangerous offenders are kept in prison for longer, while also tackling the underlying causes of criminal behaviour and improving the rehabilitation and supervision of offenders in the community.

The legislative measures in the White Paper formed the basis of the sentencing measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which was passed earlier this year, with most measures having commenced on 28 June 2022. Measures included abolishing automatic halfway release for certain serious offenders, making a Whole Life Order the default sentencing position for offenders who commit the premeditated murder of a child, and preventing the automatic early release for offenders who become of significant public protection concern while in custody. Other measures included a statutory duty to consult on the design and delivery of unpaid work, increasing the length and flexibility of electronically monitored curfew, and streamlining the out of court disposals framework. We also brought forward measures to allow the piloting of Problem-Solving Courts and we have announced three sites that we are working closely with to launch the pilots.

The White Paper also made a number of non-legislative commitments. We have made significant progress on these commitments and work on implementation is ongoing. Key areas of progress include the cross-government Action Plan on neurodiversity which we published in June this year, in response to the independent Evidence Review we commissioned. An update on the progress made on the Action

Plan is due to be published shortly. We also launched the Pre-Sentence Report Pilot in March 2021, with the initial findings from the process evaluation due to be published in 2023, and we are undertaking an evaluation of the national Community Treatment Sentence Requirement programme, with early feedback expected in 2023.

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: Tribunals**

**Munira Wilson:**

**[110865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time between registering an appeal and the date of the final hearing in the First-tier Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal was in each of the last 5 years for which data is available.

**Mike Freer:**

The judicial aim is that cases should be heard within 22 weeks of the date on which the appeal was registered. This timeframe can include, amongst other things, case management hearings and possible adjournments for further evidence to be obtained.

The average time between registering the appeal and the date of final hearing was:

In 2017 – 22 weeks

In 2018 – 24 weeks

In 2019 – 24 weeks

In 2020 – 23 weeks, and

In 2021 – 22 weeks

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ **Architecture: Higher Education**

**Hywel Williams:**

**[110599]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will conduct an impact assessment on the delivery of architecture courses across Welsh universities and in the Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology of the Architects Act 1997 (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Architects Act 1997 (Amendment) Regulations 2022 enable the Architects Registration Board, the regulator for architects, to have autonomy over which international architecture qualifications it recognises and with which overseas regulators it enters into recognition agreements.

Reciprocal recognition agreements with overseas regulators will not only mean that the UK can expand its talent pool, but UK architecture qualifications will also be recognised abroad making the UK a more attractive place to both study and practise. The Impact Assessment published alongside the Professional Qualifications Bill can be found [here](#).

**■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Vacancies****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[107123\]](#)

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

**Dehenna Davison:**

Total workforce size of the Department will be published as usual in the Departmental Annual Report and Accounts.

Data for divisional teams could only be collected at disproportionate cost.

**■ Derelict Land****Barbara Keeley:**[\[109502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2022 to Question 74774 on Land Use, whether land that is classed as recreation land can be used for any other activity if it becomes derelict.

**Barbara Keeley:**[\[109503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2022 to Question 86475, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the National Planning Policy Framework on the delivery of new allotments.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Our National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides protections to open spaces and recreation facilities. It sets out that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

We recognise through the NPPF the important role that allotments can provide in enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles within our communities.

**■ Disability: Employment****Stephen Farry:**[\[107211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to support disability employment within the Northern Ireland Investment Plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[107213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will set out the timescale for the (a) start and (b) finish of the competition for economic inactivity support under the People and Skills strand of the Northern Ireland Investment Plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Dehenna Davison:**

As set out in the Plan we intend to invest significantly in projects that support individuals furthest from the labour market into sustainable employment.

The Plan sets out £42 million for economic inactivity support, with projects supporting cohorts including people with a disability or health condition expected to be supported. Information regarding a competition for this economic inactivity support will be announced shortly.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Sarah Green:**

[\[109692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to assist Ukrainian refugees seeking to rent accommodation in the private sector following the end of their initial family placement under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[110799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support the Government is providing to (a) Ukrainians who are resident in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and (b) local councils to support individuals who find their six-month sponsorship is now coming to an end under that scheme.

**Felicity Buchan:**

I refer the Hon Member to the written statement made by my Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State ([HCWS447](#)) on 14 December 2022.

## ■ Housing: Energy

**Rachel Maclean:**

[\[107145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Whole Housing Approach pilot, which was funded by the Department from 2018 – March 2021.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Whole Housing Approach pilot was an innovative and transformative partnership project bringing together Stockton on Tees, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and three West London Boroughs - Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and the domestic abuse sector which helped ensure that victims of domestic abuse lived in accommodation that is safe and get the right support.

An independent evaluation report commissioned by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance after the first year found that “for every £1 invested the cost benefit ratio ranged from £3.39 to £59.27. This provided potential total savings of £68,545.80 to the public purse”.

■ **Housing: Mould**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[110658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December to Question 107087 on Housing: Mould, whether his Department is providing extra resources to local authorities to help ensure that they have the capability to address these issues.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The Secretary of State [wrote](#) to social housing providers alerting them to respond to the Regulator of Social Housing on damp and mould in their areas. The Regulator has since [written](#) asking for information to be provided by 19 December. This information should provide a clearer picture on the scale of the problem for the government to consider what action is needed.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Ombudsman**

**James Wild:**

[\[107210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the white paper entitled A fairer private rented sector, published on 16 June 2022, what recent progress his Department has made on establishing a single Government-approved ombudsman covering all private landlords who rent out property in England.

**Felicity Buchan:**

Provision for all private landlords to be members of a single ombudsman is an important part of our reforms set out in the White Paper. Work is underway to ensure an Ombudsman can deliver an effective and efficient service to tenants and landlords.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Abortion: Northern Ireland**

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[109696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, for what reason the Government has provided ring-fenced funding for abortion services in Northern Ireland.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The UK Government has a clear statutory duty under section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019 to ensure that the recommendations in the Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (“the CEDAW Report”), are implemented in Northern Ireland.

The Government's strong preference has always been for the Northern Ireland Department of Health to take responsibility for providing and funding abortion services.

Regrettably, the Department of Health failed to commission and fund abortion services in line with the framework set out in the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No. 2) Regulations 2020, despite being under a statutory obligation to do so since July 2021. The UK Government was left with no option but to commission services and ensure that funding is available to enable Health and Social Care Trusts to recruit and train staff to support the development of high-quality and sustainable services.

It remains the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive to fund abortion services in Northern Ireland. The UK Government will continue to ensure funding is made available until the Department of Health takes full responsibility for the provision of that funding.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Department for Transport: Carbon Emissions

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[108310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, by what date he expects his Department to be carbon neutral in its day to day operations.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department is in the process of developing its strategy to achieve Net Zero strategy by 2050. Its own trajectory is currently based on that target, but there may well be scope to achieve day to day carbon neutrality before that date in some of its operations.

### ■ Department for Transport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[107064\]](#)

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

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department spent £529,615.48 in 2021 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[109489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for July 2021, (a) for which ministers were car services from Network Executive Ltd. purchased for (i) £645 on 1 July 2021 and (iii) £567 on 15 July 2021, and (b) what were the journeys involved in each visit.



**Jesse Norman:**

1 July 2021 - Network Executive Ltd - £645.00

This visit covered a day in duration. Car service used by Baroness Vere as part of a Ministerial visit to Mason's Coaches and then National Highways Regional Operations Centre.

Route details: Kingston - Mason's Coaches, Tring, Herts - National Highways Regional Ops Centre, South Mimms, Herts – Kingston.

15 July 2021 - Network Executive Ltd - £567.00

Car service used by Minister Rachel Maclean as part of a Ministerial visit to Goodwood. Route details: Portsmouth – Chichester – Worcester.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[109490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for July 2021, for which minister was a car service from Bayliss Executive Travel purchased for £675 on a car on 21 July 2021; and what journey was involved in that visit.

**Jesse Norman:**

This service was for the Secretary of State, where a 32-seater coach was required for UK/French delegation to visit Eurotunnel and Dover. The journey was from Lydd to Folkstone and from Dover to Lydd.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[109494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's publication of electronic purchasing card spending over £500 for November 2021, what items of wellbeing sports equipment were purchased from Argos Ltd on 1 November 2021; and for what purpose those items were purchased.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has a small wellbeing budget to support the mental, emotional and physical health of its staff. It used part of this budget to purchase a rowing machine to supplement equipment donated by staff.

**■ Department for Transport: Energy****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[109701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which energy provider supplies energy to their Department; how much carbon dioxide was emitted by their Department in the latest period for which figures are available; whether the criteria their Department uses to select an energy supplier include how environmentally friendly that supplier is; and what recent steps their Department has taken to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from its energy use.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department for Transport (DfT) utilises the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Supply of Energy and Ancillary Services framework contract, with electricity supplied by EDF Energy Limited and natural gas supplied by TotalEnergies Gas & Power Limited.

In the 2021-22 financial year, the last fully reported annual data, DfT emitted 11,839 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalents) from its use of energy supplies.

As the Department utilises the CCS energy framework we rely on CCS to choose the most environmentally friendly supplier that is able to deliver the requirements of the framework.

To reduce Carbon Dioxide equivalent emissions from energy use, DfT has:

- Installed an Air Source Heat Pump at one site to replace an oil fired heating system
- Installed PV solar arrays to reduce grid electricity requirements
- Optimised Building Management Systems to match current building use and to minimise energy use during out of hours periods
- Conducted a site-by-site baselining exercise to identify energy inefficient sites, to better inform estate strategies and to assist in planning for emission reductions and identify a trajectory towards Net Zero

**■ Department for Transport: Ministerial Boxes****Emily Thornberry:**[\[107073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his Department's publication of spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card for July 2022, what the nature of the ministerial red box repairs were for which Eximedia UK Ltd. were paid £634.80 on 8 July 2022.

**Jesse Norman:**

The cost relates to a jammed lock and attendant repairs.

**■ Driving Tests: Waiting Lists****Justin Tomlinson:**[\[108205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the current average waiting time is for a driving test.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Car practical driving test waiting times are currently at 15.7 weeks (November average).

As at 12 December, there were over 81,000 available car practical test slots to book within the 24-week booking window.

Since April 2021, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has created an extra 595,000 car practical driving tests appointments to help reduce waiting times.

Actions already being taken by the DVSA include asking all those qualified to conduct tests but who do not do so as part of their current day job to return to conducting tests, conducting out of hours testing, and asking recently retired driving examiners to return.

To help increase practical driving test availability, the DVSA is recruiting more than 300 driving examiners across Great Britain. The DVSA's examiner recruitment campaigns continue to be successful but, like many employers, the DVSA is finding the job market extremely competitive. As it moves through each recruitment campaign, the DVSA will continually review and make changes and improvements to its recruitment and selection process, and training courses.

### ■ Driving under Influence

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[111538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has made an assessment of potential conflicts of interests related to alcoholic beverage company Diageo's sponsorship of the new THINK! drink drive campaign.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[111539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure there is no conflict of interest in the alcoholic beverage company Diageo's sponsorship of the new THINK! drink drive campaign.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

THINK! and Diageo have entered into a no-cost partnership to tackle drink driving over the festive period, following a successful partnership in winter 2021.

THINK! assessed that there would be no conflict of interest in this partnership due to its no-cost and educational nature.

### ■ East Coast Main Line

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[109708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the (a) cost to the public purse of and (b) projected revenue from long-distance high speed rail services on the East Coast Main Line to and from (i) London King's Cross, (ii) Leeds and (iii) Edinburgh in each year between 2023 and 2028.

**Huw Merriman:**

Draft forecasts for the period from 2023 to 2028 have just been received from train operators and are being reviewed. The information on costs and revenues is commercially confidential.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[110797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the forecasted return on investment for the (a) East Coast Upgrade and (b) East Coast Main Line fleet upgrades in each of the next five years.

**Huw Merriman:**

Draft forecasts for the period from 2023 to 2028 have just been received from train operators and are being reviewed. The information on costs and revenues is commercially confidential.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[111546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking with Network Rail to reduce instances of overhead line issues on the East Coast Mainline.

**Huw Merriman:**

We recognise that overhead line issues on the East Coast Main Line have a huge impact on passengers and freight operators. Network Rail has put in place a programme of work to replace overhead line components that have historically caused a high number of failures and are working with train operators to ensure their trains interact as sympathetically as possible with the infrastructure. Network Rail is also designing a series of specific upgrades for tunnels, where overhead line failures can be extremely disruptive, so that the infrastructure is as resilient as it possibly can be. Finally, Network Rail is working to improve the speed of its response when incidents do happen, making sure its teams get trains moving again as quickly as possible.

**■ East Coast Main Line: Timetables****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[110796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's intended date is for the introduction of the new East Coast Main Line timetable; and if he will make a statement.

**Huw Merriman:**

The feedback received through the East Coast Main Line timetable consultation in 2021 has now been reviewed and work is continuing to develop a revised timetable for implementation, one that more closely aligns with stakeholder views, ensures passengers experience the benefits of the £1.2 billion invested in the East Coast upgrade and is appropriate to meet passenger demand.

In order to address the concerns raised during the consultation, the major timetable change is now targeted for 2023.

**■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[109527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to take legislative steps to allow devolved administrations to implement smart road charging schemes.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Responsibility for roads is devolved and decisions about road charging are for the devolved administrations to make. Councils in Scotland and Wales already have the legislative powers required to introduce road charging schemes.

**■ Marine Environment Protection Committee****Mike Kane:**[\[107114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set out the Government's negotiating position ahead of the 79th session of the International Maritime Organisation's Marine Environment Protection Committee.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The 79<sup>th</sup> session of the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO's) Marine Environment Protection Committee runs from 12 to 16 December 2022.

The UK's position on the matters, such as Greenhouse Gas emissions and ballast water, that will be discussed during this session has been consulted on and agreed by Ministers.

It would not be appropriate to set out the UK's negotiation position while those discussions are taking place. The IMO will publish, on its website, a meeting summary after the session has concluded.

**Mike Kane:**[\[107115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, who the members were of the UK delegation to the 79th session of the International Maritime Organisation's Marine Environment Protection Committee.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The UK's delegation to the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO's) Marine Environment Protection Committee 79<sup>th</sup> session is led by Katy Ware, the UK's Permanent Representative to the IMO. She is supported by 15 officials from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, 12 from the Department for Transport, four from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, two from HM Treasury and five external maritime consultants.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Navendu Mishra:**[\[110881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to correspondence of 29 November 2022 from the hon. Member for Stockport relating to Avanti West Coast rail services.

**Huw Merriman:**

A response to this correspondence was sent on 19 December.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Noise****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[109674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) local authorities and (b) the police on ensuring those bodies have the resources to enforce rules on vehicles which create excessive noise.

**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[109675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the potential merits of training local police forces to become vehicle examiners so that they could purchase decibel meters to enable enforcement against vehicles that create excessive noise.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

It is for the Home Secretary to determine matters of police resourcing.

To support enforcement efforts, the Department for Transport has commenced further research to understand if the latest 'noise camera' technology can be an effective tool for the police and local authorities that will enable more targeted and efficient enforcement.

**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[109676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to progress the roadside noise camera trials; and what plans he has to extend the pilot to a wider rollout.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Department is working at pace to understand if noise camera technology can be used to automatically detect excessively noisy vehicles. The current roadside trials commenced on 18 October and will be completed in early 2023. If the trials prove to be successful, noise cameras may be considered for wider rollout, should funding be available.

**Beth Winter:**[\[110904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to restrict the customisation of motor vehicles to prevent excessive noise from (a) back firing and (b) other anti-social modifications.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The police already have powers to act if they suspect an exhaust has been altered to increase noise or if the machine is making excessive noise which could be avoided through reasonable driver care.

To support enforcement efforts, the Department has commenced further research to understand if the latest 'noise camera' technology can be an effective tool for the police and local authorities that will enable more targeted and efficient enforcement.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Safety****Stella Creasy:**[\[109543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace Regulation (EC) No 661/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**Jesse Norman:**

Many pieces of Retained EU Law give effect to international obligations, such as those set by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations. Whilst there will be opportunities to review and amend individual pieces of Retained EU Law, the Department will ensure that the UK's regulatory landscape fully adheres to international obligations and standards.

**■ Motorways****Sarah Champion:**[\[109583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data his Department holds on response times for providing support to vehicles stranded in live lanes on smart motorways; and what policies his Department has on the (a) collection and (b) use of such data.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

National Highways annual smart motorways safety publications include data about vehicles stopped in live lanes, which shows that a very small proportion of total journeys on any road result in live lane breakdowns. National Highways also monitor and manage the performance of traffic officer attendance times, where emergency areas are more than a mile apart, and stopped vehicle detection times where the system is in place.

The Department meets regularly with National Highways to review operational data and will continue to consider this alongside the wider safety and economic data during the current pause on the roll-out of new smart motorways.

As part of the stocktake action plan in 2020, National Highways committed to faster attendance by more traffic officer patrols where emergency areas are more than a mile apart, reducing the national average time it takes traffic officers to attend incidents from 17 to 10 minutes. In September 2022, National Highways successfully met its revised national target and averaged a response time of 9 minutes 49 seconds.

**■ Motorways: Safety****Damien Moore:**[\[110838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what further steps his Department are taking to improve safety on all lane running smart motorways.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Overall, in terms of serious or fatal casualties, smart motorways are the safest roads on the Strategic Road Network. We want all drivers to feel safe and we have paused the rollout of smart motorways not already in construction while we collect more data. During the pause, we have committed £900m for safety improvements across the network including building more emergency areas.

**■ Railways and Roads: Freight****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[\[109655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of the freight bottleneck at (a) Bramley in Hampshire and (b) along the Basingstoke to Reading branch line.

**Huw Merriman:**

A major upgrade to transport more freight by rail to and from Southampton Port unlocking more capacity at the country's second busiest container port was completed last year. Network Rail are considering the challenges for freight on the corridor with infrastructure assessments taking place at Basingstoke which is a follow up piece of work to the joint Network Rail/National Highways Solent to Midlands study. The output of this work could inform a decision to initiate further schemes into the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP).

**■ Railways: Japanese Knotweed****Afzal Khan:**[\[109753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the (a) prevalence of Japanese knotweed on (i) railway embankments and (ii) other railway land and (b) potential impact of such Japanese knotweed on nearby (A) homes and (B) businesses.

**Huw Merriman:**

Routine vegetation inspections are carried out by Network Rail on the full rail lineside estate on a three to four year cycle. Any Japanese knotweed identified on the estate is recorded, including details of how far the knotweed is from the railway tracks and from the boundary fence onto neighbouring land. For recording purposes, the lineside estate is broken down into eighth of mile sections. Records are currently held on file for 87,000 sections of lineside estate, knotweed was present in 1.12% of those sections when last inspected.

Network Rail has an established regime to deal with Japanese knotweed on the lineside estate, whether identified by a Network Rail inspection or reported by a neighbour or member of the public. Network Rail colleagues use the recorded information in line with its specific knotweed management guidance to prioritise locations for treatment and set up chemical treatment programmes that will run for three to five years or until the problem is controlled. Where knotweed is found on both sides of a boundary fence, processes are in place to enable Network Rail to work in



collaboration with the neighbouring landowner to set up the most effective treatment for that location.

■ **Shipping: Crew**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[108155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on seafarer welfare and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The UK is fully committed to the welfare of all seafarers regardless of their nationality. The Secretary of State and the Foreign Secretary regularly meet to discuss a range of issues.

**Grahame Morris:** [\[108156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to strengthen minimum seafarer welfare standards in the Maritime Labour Convention.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The UK Government supports seafarers and champions the importance of seafarer welfare and protections at every opportunity. We work closely with international partners, industry and unions to enhance seafarer welfare standards including regular attendance and leadership at the International Labour Organisation, the oversight body of the Maritime Labour Convention.

**Grahame Morris:** [\[108157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the extent to which employers in the shipping industry may have reduced seafarer welfare standards in the shipping industry to the minimum standards in the Maritime Labour Convention since March 2020 to date.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

We work closely with international partners including the International Labour Organisation, industry, and unions to monitor seafarer welfare standards through ongoing dialogue, and to collaborate in enhancing seafarer welfare standards. In July 2022, we published a report on seafarer suicide to support this work. This is in addition to our Nine-Point Plan for Seafarers, which will improve seafarer employment protections and welfare.

■ **West Coast Main Line: North Wales**

**Hywel Williams:** [\[109454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the impact of the reduction in Avanti West Coast's service since summer 2022 on the economy of North Wales.

**Huw Merriman:**

No assessment has been made of the specific impact but the Department recognises the importance of a high performing railway in contributing to growth and local economies. Avanti West Coast temporarily reduced its overall timetable to ensure a more stable and reliable service for passengers. It has now restored services to North Wales with five direct services between London and Holyhead per day, more than before the August timetable step-down. Crucially, this uplift in services is not dependent on driver rest day working.

**TREASURY****■ Cost of Living Payments: Children****Amy Callaghan:****[109786]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide additional cost of living support to families with seriously ill children.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises that the rising cost of living has presented additional financial challenges to many people, and especially to the most vulnerable members of society, such as children with serious health conditions and their families. That is why the Government is taking decisive action to support households while ensuring we act in a fiscally responsible way.

If a child or young person has extra-costs arising from their disability, then they may qualify for disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children or Child Disability Payment in Scotland. At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced that it will provide a further Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 in 2023/24 to people in receipt of extra-costs disability benefits such as Child Disability Payment or DLA for children. This is additional to the £150 payment for recipients of disability benefits in 2022 already announced as part of the Cost of Living package in May. The families and/or carers of disabled children will benefit from this payment if they live in the same household as a disabled child. These payments can also be received in addition to the other Cost of Living Payments for households on means-tested benefits (such as Universal Credit), namely the £650 payment announced in May and the additional £900 payment announced at Autumn Statement.

Disabled children and their families will also benefit from other forms of non-means-tested support which the Government is providing to assist with household energy bills. We have taken decisive action to support millions of households with rising energy costs through the Energy Price Guarantee, which limits the price suppliers can charge customers for units of gas and electricity. In addition to the Energy Price Guarantee, millions of the most vulnerable households will receive further support this year through the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme.

## ■ Credit Rating: Africa

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[108176\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of credit rating agencies in assigning sovereign credit ratings to African countries.

**John Glen:**

Credit rating agencies have an important role in rating the investment risk of sovereigns. This allows lenders to assess risk and therefore supports the functioning and development of financial markets.

The Credit Rating Agencies Regulation requires the ratings agencies to publish the methodologies used as well as the factors they have considered in producing the rating.

## ■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[109504\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme has concluded; when he plans to announce the Government's decisions on support for vulnerable non-domestic customers beyond March 2023; and if he will make a statement before the House rises for recess on 20 December 2022.

**John Glen:**

Through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), the government is providing a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic consumers. This is a temporary measure that will protect them from soaring energy costs and will apply to energy usage for six months from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The ongoing HMT-led review of the EBRS will determine support for UK non-domestic energy consumers beyond this six months, with the aim of reducing the public finances' exposure to volatile international energy prices from April 2023. The Chancellor will announce the outcome of this review in the New Year to ensure businesses have sufficient certainty about future support before the current scheme ends in March 2023.

## ■ Financial Services

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[109789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on consumers of the decision by UK banks and Building Societies to close the PayM mobile payments system.

**John Glen:**

On 29 September Pay.UK and fifteen of the UK's banks and building societies announced their decision that Paym, the mobile payments service, will close permanently on 7 March 2023.

Pay.UK have observed that payment volumes through Paym have diminished over the past three years as fewer people sign up to use the service. As an independent company limited by guarantee, Pay.UK has discretion over its decision-making, with oversight from the Bank of England and Payment Systems Regulator in relation to its recognised and designated payment systems.

Customers will continue to have access to a range of alternative payment methods. In addition, Pay.UK assures customers that the closure process will be carried out with the needs of Paym users front of mind and, to minimise any disruption, banks and building societies will engage with their customers ahead of their closure date to make them aware of the changes and what it means for them. Pay.UK advises that any Paym customers with concerns about the change should speak to their bank or building society.

For further information on the closure of Paym, please see the following webpage:

<https://newseventsinsights.wearepay.uk/media-centre/press-releases/paym-mobile-payments-service-to-close-in-2023/#:~:text=London%2C%20September%202022%3A%20Pay,customers%20on%207%20March%202023>

## ■ Financial Services: Regulation

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[109751\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on financial stability of the proposals to amend regulation of the financial sector announced in Edinburgh on 9th December 2022.

**John Glen:**

The Edinburgh Reforms, launched by the Chancellor on 9 December, take forward the government's ambition for the UK to be the world's most innovative and competitive global financial centre.

The government's approach recognises and protects the foundations on which the UK's success as a financial services hub is built: agility, consistently high regulatory standards, and openness. This approach will continue to ensure that the sector is resilient and able to support economic growth, while ensuring consumers and citizens benefit from high-quality services, appropriate consumer protection, and a sector that embraces the latest technology.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: VAT

**Justin Madders:**

[\[108457\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing VAT reductions or subsidies for businesses in the hospitality sector.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of around 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs

in the hospitality and tourism sectors, which were severely affected by COVID-19. The relief, which ended on 31 March 2022, cost over £8 billion.

All taxes are kept under review, but the Government has been clear that this was a temporary measure in response to COVID-19. It was appropriate that as restrictions were lifted and demand for goods and services in these sectors increased, the temporary VAT relief was first reduced and then removed in order to rebuild and strengthen the public finances.

## ■ Housing: Regulation

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[107218]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of his proposals to review financial sector regulation on house (a) prices and (b) supply.

**John Glen:**

The Edinburgh Reforms, launched by the Chancellor on 9 December, take forward the government's ambition for the UK to be the world's most innovative and competitive global financial centre. We are committed to an open, sustainable, and technologically advanced financial services sector that is globally competitive and acts in the interests of communities and citizens across all four nations of the UK.

The reforms will help to drive growth and competitiveness in this crucial sector, while retaining our commitment to high international standards. This is the first of a series of sectoral reforms to drive growth during challenging economic times.

HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for house prices, which are the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). In addition, the pricing and availability of mortgages is a commercial decision for lenders in which the Government does not intervene.

In its November 2022 forecast, the OBR expects house prices to fall by 1.2% and 5.7% in 2023 and 2024 respectively. The latest available data shows that UK average house prices increased by 9.5% over the year to September 2022. Further details can be found in the OBR's latest Economic and Fiscal Outlook published in November 2022: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2022/>

## ■ Off-payroll Working

**Sarah Green:**

**[109693]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to clarify IR35 guidance on whether (a) workers, (b) end clients or (c) umbrella companies are liable to pay Employer's National Insurance Contributions and the Employer's Training Levy.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Where a worker is engaged, via an intermediary, by a large- or medium-sized private or voluntary sector client or by a public body, and the off-payroll working rules apply to the engagement, it is the deemed employer who is responsible for deducting

income tax and employee National Insurance contributions (NICs) from the payment to the worker's intermediary. In this situation, the deemed employer is also responsible for paying employer NICs and Apprenticeship Levy, where applicable, on top of the payment to the worker's intermediary. Guidance on this is available on GOV.UK.

Where a worker is employed by an umbrella company, the off-payroll working rules do not apply and the umbrella company is responsible for paying any employer NICs and Apprenticeship Levy due. HMRC has published [guidance](#) to help workers engaged by umbrella companies to understand how these arrangements work, how they can expect to be paid and how to challenge if unauthorised deductions are made.

## ■ Refugees: Ukraine

**Harriett Baldwin:**

**[108206]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to tax Ukrainian nationals on their Ukrainian-source income such as pension payments while they reside in the UK as refugees.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The UK and the Ukraine have been signatories to a comprehensive Double Taxation treaty since 1993, which is available on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-tax-treaties>

This treaty specifies how the two countries should tax income paid between the two countries with a view to avoiding double taxation.

A key concept for interpreting the treaty is the residence of the person receiving the income. A Ukrainian national living in the UK may be resident in either the UK or Ukraine under each country's domestic legislation, or they may be resident in both. If the recipient is resident in both countries, the treaty sets out several tests to establish one single 'treaty residence'. These tests consider all the individual's facts and circumstances.

For pension income sourced in Ukraine, this will only be taxed in the country where the recipient is resident under the treaty, which could either be the UK or Ukraine depending on the circumstances.

The treatment of other types of income will vary, as set out in the treaty. HMRC has provided bespoke guidance (translated into Ukrainian) for situations where Ukrainians maintain their employment in Ukraine while present in the UK. This is also available on Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/paying-taxes-in-the-uk-if-you-work-for-an-employer-based-in-ukraine>

**■ Sanctions: Russia****Jim Shannon:**[\[109563\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to investigate whether the transfer of (a) funds and (b) properties in the UK by families of Russian oligarchs is done to evade sanctions.

**John Glen:**

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), part of HM Treasury, assesses all reported breaches of financial sanctions regulations. Regulations prohibit any person intentionally acting to circumvent prohibitions, or enabling and facilitating breaches of financial sanctions. Financial institutions and estate agents are considered relevant firms under the regulations and therefore have additional obligations, including to report frozen assets and any suspected breaches they are aware of.

OFSI is able to utilise a variety of enforcement powers should investigations prove a breach has occurred, including publicising breaches and imposing a civil monetary penalty where cases meet the threshold. The National Crime Agency investigates the most serious evasion of sanctions and associated money laundering.

**■ Small Businesses: Tax Allowances****Chi Onwurah:**[\[110682\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to Answer of 5 December to Question 99832 on Small Businesses: Tax Allowances, whether an impact assessment has been made on the introduction of potential restrictions on overseas spending within R&D tax credits on (a) the total investment of UK companies in R&D and (b) the total investment in R&D by international organisations with headquarters outside the UK.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[110693\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with small business organisations on the impact on start ups and scale ups of the changes to Research and Development tax credits.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[110694\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2022 to Question 90808 on Research: Tax Allowances, what estimate he has made of the annual financial impact of the lower SME R&D tax relief rate on genuine R&D intensive companies not believed to be submitting abusive or fraudulent claims; and if he will provide a sectoral breakdown.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[110697\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the 2021 business enterprise research and development statistics published on 22 November 2022 by the Office for National Statistics, what assessment he has made of the reasons for differences in



increases in expenditure on R&D by companies of 249 employees or less and companies of 250 or more since 2016.

**Victoria Atkins:**

As part of the ongoing R&D tax reliefs review, the Government is reforming the rates of the R&D tax reliefs. This reform ensures that taxpayers' money is spent as effectively as possible, improves the competitiveness of the Research and Development Expenditure Credit (RDEC) scheme, and is a step towards a simplified, single RDEC-like scheme for all.

For expenditure on or after 1 April 2023, the RDEC rate will increase from 13 per cent to 20 per cent, the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) additional deduction will decrease from 130 per cent to 86 per cent, and the SME credit rate will decrease from 14.5 per cent to 10 per cent.

Statistics relating to the R&D tax reliefs, including the distribution of R&D tax credit claims by industry sector, can be found

here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/corporate-tax-research-and-development-tax-credit/research-and-development-tax-credits-statistics-september-2022#industry-sector-analysis> .

The SME scheme costs twice as much as RDEC, and its cash value to loss-making firms is three times that of RDEC. Yet HMRC estimate that the RDEC scheme incentivises £2.40 to £2.70 of additional R&D for every £1 of public money spent, whereas the SME scheme incentivises £0.60 to £1.28 of additional R&D.

The UK provides a generous offer of support for R&D investment, and this will continue to increase, with R&D expenditure via tax reliefs estimated to increase from £37.2bn in 2020-21 to around £60bn by the end of the scorecard period, 2027-28, and direct funding for R&D will reach £20bn a year by 2024-25. The reform to the rates is estimated to leave the level of R&D related business investment in the economy unchanged.

Ahead of Budget the Government is working with industry to understand whether further support is necessary for R&D intensive SMEs, without significant change to the overall cost envelope for supporting R&D.

The Government is committed to refocussing the R&D reliefs towards innovation in the UK. At Autumn Budget 2021, the Government set out its intention to more effectively capture the benefits of R&D funded by the reliefs through refocusing support towards innovation in the UK. The Government will allow for some narrow exemptions where it is in some way unavoidable for the R&D activity to undertaken overseas.

■ **Solar Power: VAT**

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[109662]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2022 to Question 73093 on Solar Power: VAT, if he will make an assessment of the potential



merits of applying a zero per cent rate of VAT to batteries used for energy-storage purposes to supporting weather-dependant renewable energy sources, and whether he will provide and update on the review.

**Victoria Atkins:**

As set out in my previous response, at Spring Statement 2022, the Government announced the expansion of the VAT relief on the installation of energy saving materials (ESMs) to residential accommodation in Great Britain. The expansion of the relief, which includes the zero-rating of solar panel installations, represents an additional £280 million of support for investment in ESMs.

VAT is the UK's third largest tax, forecast to raise £157 billion in 2022/23, helping to fund key spending priorities such as important public services, including the NHS and policing. Extending the ESMs relief to battery storage as a standalone technology would have a fiscal cost and should be viewed in the context of over £50 billion of requests for relief from VAT received since the EU referendum.

However, the Government keeps all taxes under review, and recognises the importance of ensuring that policy remains in step with the rapid pace of technological development in the ESMs market and the changing policy context since this particular relief was introduced.

■ **Supermarkets: Alcoholic Drinks**

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[109707\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it mandatory for supermarkets to provide and publish data on alcohol sales.

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[109759\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to give the Scottish Parliament powers to impose a levy on the profits made by supermarkets on the minimum unit price for low-cost high-strength alcohol.

**James Cartlidge:**

As part of our alcohol duty review, the Government has confirmed that the UK will move to a taxation system which taxes all alcohol products according to strength to meet its public health objectives, whilst ensuring it does not increase administrative burdens on businesses. The reforms ensure that stronger products, which are associated with higher levels of harm, pay proportionately more duty.

We keep the alcohol duty rates under review through the yearly Budget process and aim to balance public health objectives with support for businesses.

■ **Tax Allowances: Disability**

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[107150\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2022 to Question 92309 on Tax Allowances: Disability, will he consider the potential merits of

introducing a Deaf Person's Tax Allowance that is equivalent to the Blind Person's Tax Allowance.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government recognises that the rising cost of living has presented additional financial challenges to many people, and especially to the most vulnerable members of society, including those who are deaf. That is why the Government is taking decisive action to support households while ensuring we act in a fiscally responsible way. This support includes a further Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 in 2023-24 to people in receipt of extra-costs disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance. This is additional to the £150 payment for recipients of disability benefits in 2022 already announced as part of the Cost of Living package in May.

These payments can be received in addition to the other Cost of Living Payments for households on means-tested benefits, namely the £650 payment announced in May and the additional £900 payment announced at Autumn Statement. Individuals who have limited or no ability to work because of their disability or long-term health condition, and are in receipt of means-tested benefits such as income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the Universal Credit Health top up, are eligible for this support.

The Government is also supporting households with rising energy costs through the Energy Price Guarantee, the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme, and the £150 Council Tax rebate.

Any new income tax relief would only benefit those who pay income tax, whereas Government support payments can be targeted and include those who earn below the Personal Allowance. The Government will continue to keep all income tax reliefs and allowances under review.

■ **Taxation**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[108160\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to forecasts from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of raising £37 billion in tax above that forecast's estimate for July 2022.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published an updated forecast on 23 November alongside the Autumn Statement, which is more recent than the Institute for Fiscal Studies analysis from the summer. The Government took steps at the Autumn Statement to put the public finances on a sustainable path. This required difficult decisions on both tax and spending. The OBR's forecast took on all changes to the economic and fiscal outlook, including the latest policy decisions by the government. In this forecast, they revised their forecast of Public Sector Current Receipts in 2024-25 to £1,096.0 billion from their March of £1,090.4 billion (up £5.6 billion).

**■ Treasury: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:** [\[107065\]](#)

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

**James Cartlidge:**

HM Treasury spent approximately £121,000 in total on transactions of less than £500 on Government Procurement Cards (GPC) in 2021.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[110629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for March 2021, what photographs were purchased from The Tate for £3,393 on 30 March 2021, and for what purpose.

**James Cartlidge:**

HM Treasury purchased fine art photographs from the Tate which were exhibited throughout HM Treasury's Horse Guards Road building.

**■ Unpaid Work****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:** [\[109656\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the value to the British economy of unpaid household work.

**John Glen:**

The ONS produce regular estimates of unpaid household labour. This data is currently up to date until 2016, when the total value of unpaid household service work was £1.24 trillion, equivalent to 63.1% of gross domestic product. Estimates for 2017 to 2021 are due to be released in Q4 2022.

The Government has provided the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with an additional £25 million to help implement the recommendations of Sir Charles Bean's 2016 Review of Economics Statistics, including through an initiative called 'Beyond GDP' that aims to address the limitations in GDP by developing broader measures of welfare and activity. Part of this work is looking to improve estimates of unpaid household work, and integrate them into extended measures of GDP such as Net Inclusive Income.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Access to Work Scheme****Lilian Greenwood:** [\[109528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications made to the Access to Work Scheme are outstanding as of 12 December 2022; and what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of outstanding applications.

**Tom Pursglove:**

We can confirm that as of 12 December 2022, 25,103 applications made to Access to Work are currently outstanding.

Access to Work has received a significant increase in applications over the last year and have recruited new staff to meet the increased demand and reduce the time it takes to make decisions. Customers making new applications, where they are starting work within the next 4 weeks or have a grant coming to an end that requires renewal, are prioritised to ensure customers are able to enter and remain in the labour market. We are also transforming the Access to Work service through increased digitalisation, which will make the service more efficient, the application process easier, and improve the time taken from application through to decision.

**■ Carer's Allowance****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[109578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has made an Equality Impact Assessment of the implications of raising the earnings threshold for Carers Allowance by a lower percentage than the percentage rise in the National Living Wage in 2023-24.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The weekly Carer's Allowance earnings limit will be increased from £132 to £139 net from April 2023 (subject to parliamentary approval). This increase of 5.5% is in line with growth in Average Weekly Earnings for the year to May-July 2022, as published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

DWP use the ONS Annual Average Weekly Earnings growth measure for benefit uprating purposes where appropriate, as it is regarded as the most robust and up to date estimate of earnings growth across the economy available at the time we review the earnings limit. This is consistent with the approach we have normally taken over the last few years and, as such, an Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken and we have no plans to do one.

**■ Child Maintenance Service****Owen Thompson:**[\[107176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps he has taken to (a) review and (b) improve the accuracy of the decision making process at the Child Maintenance Service.

**Mims Davies:**

The DWP manages quality through the DWP Quality Assurance Framework, conducting three separate tiers of quality assurance, allowing us to measure how well we are doing and identify any required improvements. Tier One checking is internal within the Child Maintenance Service and focuses checks on the more complex and high-risk decisions. The results provides both individual learning redressed through

coaching support, and organisational learning to help us improve decision-making through for example improved instructions and learning products.

There are 2 Tiers of independent assurance, reporting ultimately to NAO (National Audit Office). Learning from both these layers of quality assurance is routinely fed back into our organisation to help us determine product and process improvement.

In January 2022 we introduced a new Learning and Innovation approach, making continual learning for colleagues more accessible for point of need in our decision-making process. This brings together self-paced learning products, guidance, tools, and videos to assist colleagues with their continuous learning journey. This was followed in May 2022 with a new Learning and Innovation Panel, with a remit to identify and address learning needs, review and ratify learning products – resulting in several improvements delivered year to date as a result of their scrutiny.

This work and focus continues to deliver a high level of accuracy in the decision-making process conducted by the Child Maintenance Service, with the monetary value of error confirmed by NAO as less than 1% in the last operational year.

The Department's estimate of assessment accuracy for 2021/22 is 99.4%, which is unchanged from 2020/21 (99.4%). The Department expects automation to continue to have a positive impact on accuracy as the proportion of calculations carried out by the system rises relative to the manual activity of caseworkers. Whilst the risk of manual caseworker error cannot be removed, significant efforts are being made to reduce the likelihood of error.

Better Management Information (MI) has also contributed to improving accuracy through increased transparency of the CMS 2012 system. CMG operations has implemented targeted checking regimes, developed using this improved MI. This has allowed early identification of emerging trends, allowing greater focus on getting things right first time for the client. New and improved training materials have been developed and work is also being done to embed a culture of continuous improvement

## ■ Child Maintenance Service: Appeals

**Owen Thompson:**

**[107175]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of decisions by the Child Maintenance Service have been appealed against in each of the last five years; and how many appeals have been successfully upheld at Tribunal.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department publishes quarterly Child Maintenance Service (CMS) statistics, with the latest statistics available to September 2022, here: [Child Maintenance Service statistics](#)

The quarterly number of appeals and outcomes from April 2015 to September 2022 can be found in [Table 11](#) of the National Tables

The department does not track the number of appeals as a proportion of decisions that potentially carry rights of appeal. Initial calculations made on applications carry rights of dispute and appeal as do annual reviews carried out annually on every case as do some change in circumstances. Either parent may raise a dispute or appeal on a decision and one decision can therefore be subject to two requests to appeal. Volumes of applications, cases and changes can be found in [Table 1](#), [Table 4](#) & [Table 9](#). As we do not record how many changes in circumstances result in a new liability, we cannot give an accurate proportion of decisions made that leads to an appeal.

### ■ Cold Weather Payments

**Ben Lake:**

[\[110791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the locations of the Met Office Weather Stations used to determine eligibility for the cold weather payment to ensure that the measurements taken to activate those payments accurately reflect the temperatures where people live.

**Laura Trott:**

The Met Office review the Cold Weather Payment scheme each year to assess whether the linkages between postcode areas and weather stations remain the best available. The Met Office concluded this year's review on 18 July 2022, and the next review will take place in summer 2023.

### ■ Cold Weather Payments: Wales

**Ben Lake:**

[\[110790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in Wales were eligible for the Cold Weather Payment and lived in a postcode area where Cold Weather Payments were made in that year (a) overall and (b) by whether eligibility derived from (i) receipt of pension credit or (ii) universal credit or other legacy benefits for each of the last 10 financial years.

**Laura Trott:**

Please see below Cold Weather Payments for Wales, by year.

YEAR	COLD WEATHER TRIGGERS	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS ELIGIBLE	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS ELIGIBLE, IN RECEIPT OF PENSION CREDIT (AS A SUBSET OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS)	NUMBER OF PAYMENTS MADE	NUMBER OF PAYMENTS MADE TO HOUSEHOLDS IN RECEIPT OF PENSION CREDIT
21/22	0	245,000	81,000	0	0
20/21	8	250,000	87,000	140,000	47,000
19/20	0	228,000	91,000	0	0
18/19	2	240,000	96,000	64,000	24,000
17/18	18	244,000	101,000	330,000	135,000
16/17	0	251,000	111,000	0	0
15/16	0	252,000	117,000	0	0
14/15	2	230,000	128,000	8,000	5,000
13/14	0	<i>Data unavailable</i>	<i>Data unavailable</i>	0	0

- A household is classed as eligible for Cold Weather Payments if it satisfies eligibility criteria, such as receipt of a qualifying benefit
- A household will receive at least one Cold Weather Payment if it satisfies eligibility criteria and a cold weather trigger occurs in their postcode area, hence years with fewer cold weather triggers, fewer households were in receipt of at least one payment.
- Total Households eligible in receipt of UC or other legacy benefits is equivalent to total eligible households minus total eligible households in receipt of pension credit.
- For the year 2013/14, the estimated number of eligible households in Wales is not published.
- For year 2012/13 data broken down for Wales was not published, and therefore is not included here.
- Figures are rounded to nearest 1000

## ■ Cost of Living Payments

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[109577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Cost of Living Payment management information, published on 12 December 2022, by what date he expects the remaining second Cost of Living Payments to be made.

**Mims Davies:**

The vast majority of DWP customers in receipt of means tested benefits who were initially eligible to a Cost of Living Payment have received it. A process is in place for customers who believe they are eligible and have not yet received a payment to contact DWP and once eligibility is confirmed payment will be made as soon as possible. In addition, anyone who becomes eligible through retrospective awards of benefits will be paid through planned automated payment exercises through to March 2023.

**Liz Twist:**

[\[110787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who are eligible for both the (a) £650 Cost of Living Payment and (b) £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment.

**Mims Davies:**

I refer the honourable Member to the answer given to [PQ97604](#).

## ■ Cost of Living Payments: Low Incomes

**Beth Winter:**

[\[110905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Cost of Living Payment to low-income households receiving contributory or new style social security benefits.

**Mims Davies:**

No such assessment has been made in respect of the 2022/23 Cost of Living Payments.

The Cost of Living Payment is targeted at low income households who are in receipt of a means-tested income replacement benefits. Contribution-based and new style benefits are not means tested benefits and therefore do not qualify for the Cost of Living Payment.

Low income households may be entitled to Universal Credit and Contribution based or new style benefits at the same time, and therefore will be entitled to a cost of living payment.

We will be bringing forward legislation for the 2023/24 Cost of Living Payments in due course.



## ■ Cost of Living Payments: Pensioners

**Feryal Clark:**

**[110870]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the cost of living payments for pensioners who are in receipt of State Pension but not Pension Credit.

**Laura Trott:**

The Government understands the pressures people including pensioners are facing with the cost of living and has taken further decisive action to support people with their energy bills. The Government's Energy Price Guarantee, running from October 2022-March 2023, will save a typical British household around £900 this winter, based on what the energy price would have been under the current price cap – reducing bills by roughly a third. This is in addition to over £37bn of cost of living support announced earlier this year which includes the £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, the Government is providing a further £26bn in cost of living support for 2023/24.

The Government recognises the rising costs felt by all pensioners and therefore nearly 12 million pensioners will benefit from a 10.1% increase to their State Pension payments from April 2023, under the Triple Lock.

Pensioner households have received a £300 Cost of Living payment in 2022/23. In 2023/24 a further Cost of Living payment will be made. More than eight million pensioner households will receive an additional £300 to help with bills.

Pensioners can also benefit from the discretionary Household Support Fund for which the government has provided total funding of £2.5 billion. This is a substantial package of support which recognises the current additional costs faced by pensioners.

## ■ Cost of Living: Domestic Abuse

**Anneliese Dodds:**

**[110828]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing additional protections for survivors of domestic abuse during the cost-of-living crisis.

**Mims Davies:**

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and is providing £26bn in cost-of-living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable. In addition, the Home Office Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan invests over £230 million, including over £140 million to support victims.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have

already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

DWP recognises the pressures and challenges that this group face, which is why we have made Discretionary Housing Payments available to allow LAs to provide financial help with rental costs. These are aimed at a number of groups likely to be affected by welfare reforms, including individuals or families fleeing domestic violence and abuse. Discretionary Housing Payments may also be given to victims that have remained in their home, which has been adapted under a sanctuary scheme.

Jobcentres remain a safe place to share concerns and obtain advice and support for those impacted by domestic abuse.

**- Shared Accommodation Rate**

From 1 October 2022, up to 11,000 victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery on Universal Credit or Housing Benefit will be able to claim extra help towards their rental costs, as they will no longer be expected to share accommodation. These groups will be able to claim the higher one-bedroom rate of Local Housing Allowance. This is worth approximately £140 on average per month but the amount will vary depending on the area in which they live.

**- Benefit cap levels increase**

In April 2023, the government will also increase the benefit cap levels in line with inflation by 10.1%. The benefit cap levels will rise from £23,000 to £25,323 for families in Greater London and from £20,000 to £22,020 for families nationally. The levels for single households without children will rise from £15,410 to £16,967 in Greater London and from £13,400 to £14,753 nationally.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[107067]**

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

**Mims Davies:**

The total spent by the Department for Work and Pensions on items with a value of less than £500 on a Government Procurement card in 2021 was £36,488,921.81.

Source: GPC Transactions Folder - Discoverer

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[110642]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for August 2021, for

what purpose two payments totalling £11,987.74 were made to British Airways on 6 August 2021.

**Mims Davies:**

The purpose of the two payments totalling £11,987.74 was for overseas travel.

Both payments were for Business Class flights to the 2021 Paralympic Games.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Written Questions**

**John Healey:**

**[110571]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he will respond to Question 104134 tabled on 6 December 2022 by the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Deane.

**Guy Opperman:**

I refer the Right Honourable Gentleman to the answer given to his specific question given on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

For the avoidance of doubt please see the answer as follows:

Answered on 14 December 2022

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) started collecting data on the Armed Forces status of Universal Credit (UC) claimants in Great Britain (GB) in April 2021. At first only new claimants were asked about their Armed Forces status. From June 2021 onwards, other UC claimants reporting changes in their work and earnings have also been able to report their status. From July 2021 onwards, UC agents have also been able to record claimants' Armed Forces status if they are told about this via other means such as journal messages, face-to-face meetings or by telephone.

Data coverage continues to improve over time and by September 2022 data was held on the armed forces status of approximately 54% of the GB UC caseload (see table below). It should be noted that Armed forces status is self-reported by claimants and is not verified by the Ministry of Defence or Office for Veterans' Affairs. A claimant's status can be recorded as "currently serving", "served in the past", "not served" or "prefer not to say". Data is not collected on the specific branch of the Armed Forces that claimants are serving in or have served in in the past.

Data is not held on the total number of UC claimants who are currently serving in the Armed Forces or who have served in the past, but data is held on those who have identified themselves so far.

The way the data is collected means the claimants for whom an Armed Forces status is recorded are not representative of the UC caseload as a whole. This means it is not yet possible to produce reliable estimates of the overall number or proportion of UC claimants who are currently serving in the Armed Forces or who have served in the past.

Increases in the numbers of claimants with a recorded status of "currently serving" or "served in the past" do not necessarily mean the overall numbers of claimants who are currently serving or have served in the past have increased and may reflect

increases in the number of claimants for whom data is held as data coverage improves over time.

The table below shows the proportion of the GB UC caseload with a recorded Armed Forces status. It also shows how many claimants on the caseload had a recorded status of each type.

**GB UC caseload by recorded Armed Forces status**

UC CASELOAD MONTH	PROPORTION OF CASELOAD WITH A				
	RECORDED STATUS	CURRENTLY SERVING	SERVED IN THE PAST	NOT SERVED	PREFER NOT TO SAY
September 2022	54%	3,200	41,400	3,002,500	22,400

**Notes:**

1. Data is not collected on the Armed Forces status of UC claimants in Northern Ireland. The figures provided only relate to Great Britain.
2. Percentages are rounded to the nearest percent and numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Figures may be subject to retrospective changes as more up-to-date data becomes available or if methodological improvements are made.
4. Due to methodological improvements, these figures are based on the Official Statistics UC caseload definition. Some previous figures have used an alternative caseload definition based on assessment period end dates.
5. Further information on the caseload definition used for the UC official statistics can be found on Stat-Xplore: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/> ,

■ **Employment Services: Costs**

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[108218]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report from the National Audit Office on Employment Support, published on 9 June 2021, which estimated the cost of advisers and work coaches providing support to claimants in jobcentres in 2020-21 at £689 million, if he will make an estimate on the same basis of the cost of advisers and work coaches providing this type of support for the last five financial years for which data is available.

**Guy Opperman:**

The year end estimate for the cost of advisers and work coaches is £951m for 2021/22.

The costs for the previous four years were £689m, £570m, £564m, £542m.

**■ Financial Assistance Scheme**

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[109582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Minister for Pensions last met pensioners who are members of the the Financial Assistance Scheme.

**Laura Trott:**

The former Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, met with pensioners who are members of the Financial Assistance Scheme on 16 June 2021 during a meeting with former members of the Allied Steel and Wire pension scheme.

**■ Jobcentres: Finance**

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[109576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer 14 October 2022 to Question 54528 on Jobcentre Plus, what factors his Department took into account to determine the allocation of resources to Jobcentre sites.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department continually impacts and assesses the service being offered to customers. Staff numbers are reviewed on an ongoing basis, in line with the latest economic and benefit forecasts.

**■ Jobcentres: Operating Costs**

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[109575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the average annual running costs of a Jobcentre in the most recent financial year for which this data is available.

**Mims Davies:**

No estimate has been made of an average running cost for a Jobcentre. There are 639 traditional Jobcentres servicing different areas in size and scope. Annual IT and Estates costs for these locations are accounted for centrally and are not charged to individual job centres.

**■ Jobcentres: Pay**

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[109574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the average annual salary of a Jobcentre work coach in this financial year.

**Mims Davies:**

Jobcentre Work Coaches are recruited to DWP's Executive Officer (EO) grade.

Following DWP's 2022 pay award implemented in July, salaries for DWP's EO Generalist grade are as follows.

For employees on DWP's modernised Terms and Conditions:

EO	MIN	MAX
National	£28,117	£28,117
Special Location Pay Zones	£28,117	£30,121
Outer London	£31,284	£32,515
Inner London	£32,515	£32,515

For employees on DWP's legacy Terms and Conditions:

EO	MIN	MAX
National	£23,700	£26,647
Special Location Pay Zones	£24,735	£29,123
Outer London	£24,824	£29,635
Inner London	£26,329	£30,933

#### ■ Pension Credit: Liverpool

**Ian Byrne:** [109741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to increase public awareness on eligibility for and access to Pension Credit.

**Ian Byrne:** [109743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of pensioners in (a) Liverpool and (b) Liverpool, West Derby constituency who are entitled to Pension Credit and are not claiming it.

**Ian Byrne:** [109748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help pensioners in Liverpool, West Derby constituency to (a) have access to information about their eligibility for and (b) access Pension Credit.

**Laura Trott:**

Estimates for Pension Credit take-up are only available at the Great Britain level. The latest statistics (2019/20) are in the publication:

Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

Pension Credit provides vital financial support to pensioners on a low income. In Liverpool, West Derby some 3,600 pensioners already receive Pension Credit, but we want all those who are eligible to claim it. That's why the Department launched a

£1.2m nationwide communications campaign in April to raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up. The campaign included:

- promotion of Pension Credit on social media, via internet search engines and sponsored advertising on targeted websites that pensioners, their friends and family are likely to visit;
- information screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries across GB;
- advertising in regional and national newspapers and on national and local broadcast radio;
- advertising on the sides of buses, interior bus panels and digital street displays;
- leaflets and posters in Jobcentres, as well as digital versions which could be used by stakeholders and partners across local communities;
- engagement with Local Authorities nationwide through the Government Communication Service local network and promotional materials to enable them to support the campaign;
- an updated digital toolkit with information and resources that any stakeholder can use to help promote Pension Credit; and
- a second Pension Credit awareness media 'day of action' in June working in close collaboration with broadcasters, newspapers and other partners such as Age UK, Independent Age and the private sector to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels.

This month we undertook a further burst of communications activity, including press and radio advertising and social media to highlight to pensioners that if they applied for Pension Credit by 18 December, it would not be too late to qualify for a £324 Cost of Living Payment – subject to Pension Credit backdating rules.

On 7 December, around 40 MPs attended a Pension Credit event at Portcullis House which I hosted. I was pleased to hear about the work that a number of MPs are already doing to help their constituents make a claim and also that others pledged to help promote Pension Credit.

In the new year, DWP will again write to over 11 million pensioners as part of the annual uprating of State Pension. The accompanying leaflet has been updated to include this year's campaign messaging promoting Pension Credit.

Further spend of £1.8m has been approved for marketing activity until the end of this financial year.

## ■ Pension Credit: Married People

**Peter Grant:**

**[109627]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of altering pension credit eligibility to award pension

credit for couples where one partner is in receipt of state pension and the other is under state pension age.

**Laura Trott:**

Since May 2019, both members of a couple need to have reached State Pension age in order to be eligible for Pension Credit. This policy ensures that the same incentives to work and save apply to the younger partner as apply to other people of the same age. Pension Credit is intended to provide long term support for pensioner households who are no longer economically active due to age. It is not intended to support people of working age.

We have no plans to change this policy.

■ **Pension Credit: Redbridge**

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[111660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to improve take-up of Pension Credit in Ilford North constituency.

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[111661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are claiming Pension Credit in (a) Ilford North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Redbridge.

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[111662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of people eligible for but not claiming Pension Credit in (a) Ilford North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Redbridge.

**Laura Trott:**

Estimates for Pension Credit take-up are only available at the Great Britain level. The latest statistics (2019/20) are in the publication:

[Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK](#)

Pension Credit provides vital financial support to pensioners on a low income. In Ilford North some 2,300 pensioners and 6,200 in the London Borough of Redbridge already receive Pension Credit, but we want all those who are eligible to claim it. That's why the Department launched a £1.2m nationwide communications campaign in April to raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up. The campaign included:

- promotion of Pension Credit on social media, via internet search engines and sponsored advertising on targeted websites that pensioners, their friends and family are likely to visit;
- information screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries across Great Britain;
- advertising in regional and national newspapers and on national and local broadcast radio;
- advertising on the sides of buses, interior bus panels and digital street displays;



- leaflets and posters in Jobcentres, as well as digital versions which could be used by stakeholders and partners across local communities;
- engagement with Local Authorities nationwide through the Government Communication Service local network and promotional materials to enable them to support the campaign;
- an updated digital toolkit with information and resources that any stakeholder can use to help promote Pension Credit; and
- a second Pension Credit awareness media 'day of action' in June working in close collaboration with broadcasters, newspapers and other partners such as Age UK, Independent Age and the private sector to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels.

This month we undertook a further burst of communications activity, including press and radio advertising and social media to highlight to pensioners that if they applied for Pension Credit by 18 December, it would not be too late to qualify for a £324 Cost of Living Payment – subject to Pension Credit backdating rules.

On 7 December, around 40 MPs attended a Pension Credit event at Portcullis House which I hosted. I was pleased to hear about the work that a number of MPs are already doing to help their constituents make a claim and also that others pledged to help promote Pension Credit.

In the new year, DWP will write to over 11 million pensioners to notify them of the up-rating of their State Pensions. As last year, a leaflet accompanying the notification includes information promoting Pension Credit. This has been updated to include a more prominent 'call to action' using the Pension Credit campaign messaging to encourage eligible pensioners to make a claim.

Further spend of £1.8m has been approved for marketing activity until the end of this financial year.

## ■ Pensioners: Cost of Living

**Sir David Evennett:**

**[109451]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help pensioners with the rising cost of living.

**Laura Trott:**

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and that pensioners are more likely to suffer disproportionately from adverse health effects from living in a cold home and many low-income pensioner households do not claim the means tested benefits they are entitled to. That is why, in addition to the £37 billion of support we have provided for cost of living pressures in 2022/23, we are acting now to ensure support continues throughout 2023/24.

There are currently around 1.4 million pensioners claiming Pension Credit, through which they will be entitled to receive up to £650 in Cost of Living Payments in

2022/23. These payments are targeted at low income households in receipt of an eligible means-tested benefit.

Eight million pensioner households are receiving a £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment as a top-up to their Winter Fuel Payment, and pensioners in receipt of an eligible disability benefit should have received the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment

All pensioners in England who pay Council Tax in bands A to D should have received a £150 rebate.

The Secretary of State announced on 17 November that State pensions and benefits will be up-rated from April 2023 by 10.1%, in line with the increase in the Consumer Prices Index in the year to September 2022.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, in the Autumn Statement the Government announced £26 billion in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable households, an additional £1 billion to help with the cost of household essentials next year and the amended Energy Price Guarantee, which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

## ■ Pensions Ombudsman

**Sarah Green:**

[\[109691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the capability of the Pensions Ombudsman in meeting service demand within the Office's existing levels of funding.

**Laura Trott:**

The Department works closely with TPO and so recognises the pressures increasing demand for its services has brought. This is why, as part of the 2021 Spending Review, the Department has committed additional funding of over £3 million to TPO (2022/23 to 2024/25), to enable it to improve its operating model and better manage service demand. The requirement for further additional funding will be kept under review.

**Sarah Green:**

[\[110832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time was for the Pensions Ombudsman to respond to enquiries in the latest period for which data is available; and if he will set a timetable for reducing those waiting times.

**Laura Trott:**

The Pensions Ombudsman (TPO) has seen an increase in demand for its services in recent years from people with complaints about their occupational or personal pension schemes. The organisation has continued to perform strongly against its key performance indicators, as set out in the 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts.

In 2020/21 TPO resolved 99 per cent of its general enquiries within 28 days of being logged on TPO's system, compared to a target of 90 per cent, and closed 74 per cent of total pension complaints within 12 months, against a target of 70 per cent.

Additional funding was provided to TPO as part of the 2021 Spending Review to recruit additional staff to clear adjudication cases. Data shows TPO productivity increased by 14% across the last two years and it is working to bring down waiting times further.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals****Kate Osamor:**[\[110774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2022 to Question 63289 on Social Security Benefits: Appeals, how many mandatory reconsiderations have been requested following a decision made under the Risk Review Process; and of those how many have (a) been completed and (b) resulted in a change of decision.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Since 4th July 2022, when collation of mandatory reconsideration figures commenced under the Risk Review process, there have been 499 mandatory reconsiderations.

346 of which have been completed to outcome, with 2 resulting in a change of decision, which includes 1 being partially revised and 1 being fully revised.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Married People****Peter Grant:**[\[109626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the benefit cap on couples where one partner is in receipt of state pension and the other is a Universal Credit applicant.

**Peter Grant:**[\[109628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the adequacy of the benefit cap for couples where one partner is in receipt of state pension and the other is a Universal Credit applicant.

**Guy Opperman:**

No assessment has been made.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Overpayments

**David Linden:**

[\[108329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the total amount recovered in benefit overpayments as a result of claimants dying in financial year 2021-22.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The estimated amount recovered in benefit overpayments as a result of claimants dying in the financial year 2021-22 was £63 million.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Mary Glendon:**

[\[109556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of universal credit payments on working claimants who are paid by their employers on a four-weekly basis; and whether his Department has plans to change Universal Credit payments to four-weekly instead of monthly.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department has no plans to change either Universal Credit assessment periods or payment structures.

## ■ Universal Credit: Disability

**Sarah Green:**

[\[109689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the increasing cost of living does not disproportionately impact disabled people receiving Universal Credit.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken further decisive action to support people with their energy bills. The Government's Energy Price Guarantee, running from October 2022- March 2023, will save a typical British household around £900 this winter, based on what energy prices would have been under the current price cap – reducing bills by roughly a third. This is in addition to the over £37bn of cost of living support announced earlier this year, which includes the £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households, provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

In 2023/24, the Government is protecting the most vulnerable in society, many of whom face the biggest challenge making their incomes stretch, by increasing benefits in line with inflation. This means that they will rise by September Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation – 10.1%. Up-rating working age and disability benefits will cost £11bn next year. More than 10 million working age families will see their benefit payments rise from April 2023.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, the Government is providing £26bn in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the

most vulnerable. In 2023/24, households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to a further £900 in Cost of Living Payments. Individuals in receipt of eligible disability benefits will also receive a £150 payment. Also included is the amended Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England, this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

### ■ **Universal Credit: Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

**[110559]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2022 to Question 87733 on Universal Credit: Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme, if he will extend Universal Credit disregards to bereaved next of kin recipients of VDPS payments; if he will enable bereaved recipients to establish a personal injury trust or annuity to benefit from Universal Credit disregards; whether there are other means bereaved recipients can benefit from such disregards; and what steps he is taking to enable bereaved recipients to have similar disregards to those who are directly injured.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department has no current plans to extend the disregards which apply in Universal Credit to people who receive Vaccine Damage Payments to next of kin recipients.

### ■ **Women's Centres: Capital Investment**

**Ellie Reeves:**

**[109818]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the Women in Prison's report on the Value of Women's Centres which noted that investing in Women's Centres could generate a nearly triple return on investment; and if his Department would contribute to a cross-departmental fund for such an investment.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government appreciates the important role women's centres play in supporting women in the community with complex needs, including supporting ex-offenders to address the underlying causes of their behaviour, as set out in this report.

The benefits of work for ex-offenders are far reaching and that is why DWP already invests significant funding for over 200 prison Work Coaches who provide employment and benefit support in prisons. Our extensive network of Jobcentre Work Coaches also provide tailored employment support to ex-offenders in the community.

The Ministry of Justice is investing up to £24 million in women's community services that aim to both support the sector in delivering vital services and to promote better local integration in how those services are delivered. The effectiveness of their funding for women's community services will be evaluated and inform future funding decisions across Government.

■ **Work Capability Assessment: Redbridge**

**Wes Streeting:**

**[110771]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time was for a Work Capability Assessment in (a) Ilford North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Redbridge in the latest period for which data is available.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

DWP publishes Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessment (WCA) national processing times for initial claims on GOV.UK, which can be found [here](#). We are currently unable to provide Universal Credit (UC) WCA statistics as these could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### JUSTICE

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

**Steve Reed:**

[\[102864\]](#)

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 December 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Mike Freer:**

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

The table below shows the number of grievances raised by MoJ staff where the grievance reason includes "Bullying" or "Harassment - sex", and the outcome is either "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld", and the member of staff's office location is either 102 Petty France or Clive House, by year.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Grievances where the reason includes "Harassment - sex" and the outcome is either "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld" and the member of staff's office location is either 102 Petty France or Clive House	0	0	0	0
Grievances	Less than 5	0	Less than 5	7

	2018	2019	2020	2021
where the reason includes "Bullying" and the outcome is either "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld" and the member of staff's office location is either 102 Petty France or Clive House				

#### Notes and caveats:

- Please note: grievance data only accounts for staff grievances raised about other members of staff. Any complaints against Ministers or Special Advisers are registered in a separate system run by the Cabinet Office.
- Data suppression is applied where the number of cases is less than 5.
- Grievances can be raised for multiple reasons; cases are selected where the relevant reason is cited.
- Year is based on year the grievance was opened on the case management system.
- Grievances are included where the outcome was "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld".
- If an appeal on the original case outcome has been made, the appeal outcome is used rather than the original case outcome.
- In a small number of cases multiple outcomes are recorded, these have been included if "Upheld" or "Partially Upheld" is one of the outcomes.
- Data covers employees in Ministry of Justice Head Quarters, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Legal Aid Agency, Office of the Public Guardian and Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.
- Cases are selected if the member of staff's HR database Employee Location field is either 102 Petty France or Clive House.



## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Energy Schemes Update

**Minister of State (Minister for Energy and Climate) (Graham Stuart):**

[\[HCWS466\]](#)

#### **Help with household energy bills – Widening the support**

On 29 July the government announced details of the Energy Bills Support Scheme which is now providing a £400 discount on electricity bills to households across Great Britain, delivered over six months. On the same date we announced Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding would be developed to deliver the same level of support to households without a domestic electricity account.

The Government announced further support in September with the Energy Price Guarantee which is reducing energy bills for households across the United Kingdom. It currently brings a typical household energy bill in Great Britain for dual-fuel gas and electricity down to around £2,500 per year, and at an equivalent level of support in Northern Ireland to around £1,950 per year.

Energy policy is devolved in Northern Ireland and it would normally be the responsibility of Northern Ireland Ministers to put in place support for households with energy costs. In the absence of a functioning Executive but in consultation with Northern Ireland Ministers, the UK Government committed in August to develop and deliver a scheme comparable to that being delivered in Great Britain.

I am now able to update you on both the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding process in Great Britain and a scheme for Northern Ireland to ensure payments reach all eligible households this winter.

#### **Energy Bill Support Scheme - Alternative Funding**

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is for households in Great Britain who are not eligible for the Energy Bill Support Scheme which started delivering in October, as they do not have a direct relationship with a domestic electricity supplier. This includes many of the most vulnerable in our society. Those set to benefit include residents of park homes, some care home residents, tenants in certain types of private and social rented homes, homes supplied by private wires, residents of caravans and houseboats on registered sites, farmers living in domestic farmhouses without a domestic electricity connection, and households off-grid.

It is important to note that most households who don't have a direct relationship with a domestic energy supplier benefit from a discount on their energy bills through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which is already providing support to intermediaries such as landlords and park home operators. The Energy Prices Act legislation passed earlier in the year

ensures those benefits are passed on to consumers who do not pay their energy bills directly to an energy supplier.

In January we will publish details on eligibility and open a portal on gov.uk offering a short online application process for those eligible households to apply for Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding. A helpline will be available for those unable to apply online. Applications will be validated, and payments processed by the relevant local authority. The £400 government credit will be paid this winter to all eligible households who apply.

### **Northern Ireland Energy Bill Support Scheme**

For Northern Ireland we have developed and will deliver a separate and bespoke Energy Bills Support Scheme, working with the separate Northern Ireland electricity suppliers, and respecting the very different nature of the energy market in that part of the United Kingdom. This scheme will also deliver for households this winter, with payments starting in January.

The payment will be for £600, comprising £400 for the Energy Bills Support Scheme and £200 for the Alternative Fuel Payment, which all Northern Ireland households will receive, given the high level of alternative fuel use. The single payment will reach customers through their supplier, either direct to the relevant electricity bill payer's bank account, or as a voucher which will need to be redeemed into a bank account or as cash.

We are making funds available to suppliers for this purpose by the end of this year, so suppliers will be able to start paying customers in January.

A further announcement will be made in respect of Alternative Funding support for those in Northern Ireland without a domestic electricity supply.

I have also written to Northern Ireland energy suppliers setting out expectations for them to suspend all debt recovery and enforcement activity until the end of January, as well as provide payment holidays until the end of January when customers are struggling to pay their bills.

### **Alternative Fuel Payment Scheme**

I can also set out today our intended timings for the £200 Alternative Fuel Payment scheme for households in Great Britain who use fuels such as heating oil, LPG or biomass to heat their homes. Payments will commence in February, with most payments being made that month through electricity suppliers. More details about how we will target the scheme will follow soon in the new year. Households which will not receive automatic payments will be able to apply to the same gov.uk portal used for the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Fund from February.

The Treasury has approved these extensions to the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

I will continue to update Parliament.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Update on National Resilience****The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Oliver Dowden):****[\[HCWS464\]](#)**

I wish to inform the House that I am publishing the UK Government Resilience Framework further to the commitment made in the Integrated Review for greater strategic planning in this vital area. With the increasing volatility and interconnectedness of risks and hazards, a strong resilience system is more important than ever. In March 2021, the Integrated Review committed the government to developing a new resilience strategy to strengthen our approach to preparedness and civil protection. This new Framework delivers on that commitment and takes a systemic approach to all national threats.

The UK Government's Resilience Framework articulates our ongoing plan to strengthen the systems and capabilities that underpin the UK's resilience to all civil contingencies risks, from extreme weather to supply chain challenges or public health emergencies. It is ensuring that as well as managing immediate crises, we maintain a greater collective focus on preparation and preventing crises from happening in the first place.

The Framework is built around three core principles:

- A shared understanding of the risks we face is essential: it must underpin everything that we do to prepare for and recover from crises;
- Prevention rather than cure wherever possible: resilience-building spans the whole risk cycle so we must focus effort across the cycle, particularly before crises happen; and
- Resilience is a 'whole of society' endeavour: so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.

Work is already underway across government to deliver on these principles and act on lessons from recent crises, but the Framework outlines our further ambition on priorities such as:

- Becoming more transparent on the risks we face so that businesses, charities, individuals and all levels of government can prepare.
- Protecting the most vulnerable in our communities and helping responders to target support effectively before, during, and after emergencies.
- Strengthening accountability on resilience within government and externally, including through an annual statement to Parliament on civil contingency risk and resilience.
- Ensuring that Local Resilience Forums have the resources, capacity, information, and capability needed to plan for and respond to the risks that we face.
- Incentivising and supporting businesses, including operators of Critical National Infrastructure, to strengthen their resilience to real world risks.

Implementation of the proposals in the Framework has already started. We have already made changes at the centre of government to strengthen our approach to long-term resilience and short-term crisis management, and to embed a culture of resilience in all government departments. We have refreshed the classified National Security Risk Assessment and will update the public version, the National Risk Register, in the new year.

The Prime Minister has approved a new sub-committee of the National Security Council on resilience which I will chair. I look forward to establishing the committee in the new year, when the Terms of Reference and membership will be published in the usual way.

I have requested that a copy of the Resilience Framework be deposited in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Annual Report 2022.

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

**[HCWS468]**

Today, I am pleased to lay before Parliament the Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Annual Report 2022. This year has thrown into sharper focus the importance of our Armed Forces as standard bearers for the values we hold dear as a nation. This includes the support the Armed Forces have provided to Ukraine to defend its sovereign territory against Russian aggression, the role the Armed Forces played during the ten days of national mourning and State Funeral of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and in this year's commemorations of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. More than ever, our Armed Forces community is central to our national life, and about who we are as a country.

The UK's promise to support our Armed Forces community and to ensure they are treated fairly is as important as ever. We owe them a vast debt of gratitude and have a duty to ensure that those who serve, or who have served in our Armed Forces, and their families, suffer no disadvantage in comparison to other citizens. In some cases, special consideration is appropriate, particularly for those such as the injured or the bereaved. This is what the Covenant sets out to do. In the same vein, this Government has committed to making the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran, acknowledging veterans' service to this country and setting out our plans in the Strategy for Our Veterans.

Never has the Armed Forces Covenant and support to veterans been more vital, and we recognise that partners across the UK, at all levels of the public, private and charitable sectors, have been working hard to support those who serve or have served, and their families. I am proud to lay this report before Parliament as a demonstration of that work.

Highlights from this year's report include:

The Government has fulfilled its 2019 Manifesto commitment to 'further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law'. A new Armed Forces Covenant Duty has been

created, that places a new legal obligation on specific public bodies to have due regard to the Covenant principles when delivering certain services, or deciding certain policies, in healthcare, education and housing, that could impact the Armed Forces Community.

Armed Forces Covenant signings are rapidly approaching 10,000, with 1,634 signing over the last 12 months alone.

The inclusion of veterans' health in the GP training curriculum and national GP licensing assessment in England and Scotland, and the launch of a Veterans' Health Innovation Fund.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs published the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan 2022-24, setting out over 60 commitments, with over £70m of additional funding, from across Government to further improve the lives of our veteran community.

A Servicewomen's Health Improvement Team worked on an eight-month sprint to address issues related to Servicewomen's health, resulting in ground-breaking new policies and guidance to support Servicewomen throughout the Armed Forces.

There were record levels of investment in Service Family Accommodation in financial year 2021-22, with £179 million invested overall.

The Ministry of Defence has published its new UK Armed Forces Families Strategy, which provides the framework for an ambitious ten-year programme. Delivery of initiatives under each workstream has begun.

This report is a collaborative effort with input from service providers and professionals from a diverse array of backgrounds. I would like to thank colleagues across central Government, the Devolved Administrations and Local Authorities, and those at every level and from every sector who are continuing to drive forward the work of the Covenant and the Strategy for Our Veterans in support of our Armed Forces community. We are also grateful to the external members of the Covenant Reference Group who provided their independent observations.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Education Funding Update

**The Minister of State for Schools (Nick Gibb):**

**[\[HCWS457\]](#)**

My Noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System and Student Finance (Baroness Barran) has made the following statement.

The Department for Education has announced the next 239 schools to be provisionally selected for the School Rebuilding Programme and has also confirmed schools, high needs and early years revenue funding allocations for 2023-24 across England.

The School Rebuilding Programme was launched in June 2020 and will rebuild or significantly refurbish buildings at 500 schools and sixth form colleges over the next decade. Including the 161 projects previously announced, this announcement means that

400 schools have now been selected for the programme. Projects will enter delivery at a rate of approximately 50 per year, and will transform the educational environment for hundreds of thousands of children in the poorest condition schools.

To ensure we are delivering the greatest improvement to the school estate, each school in the programme has been selected from nominations based on the condition and safety of its buildings. Selected schools include primary, secondary and special schools and sixth form colleges.

Construction of new buildings at some of the previously announced schools is already underway, with a number of projects almost completed. These projects are supporting jobs and skills in local communities and driving productivity and innovation in the construction sector. New buildings will be net zero carbon in operation, incorporating modern designs and technologies, contributing to our sustainability commitments.

In addition to the School Rebuilding Programme, we are continuing to invest in the school estate with annual capital funding. We have allocated over £13 billion since 2015 to maintain and improve school facilities across England, including £1.8 billion in financial year 2022-23. We have also allocated an additional £500 million in capital funding to schools and colleges this financial year for energy efficiency upgrades, helping to reduce energy use during the winter months and beyond.

Details of the schools selected for the programme and more information about the methodology used have been published on GOV.UK.

On funding, we are allocating the additional net £2 billion for schools announced at the Autumn Statement.

Overall, core schools funding is increasing by £3.5 billion in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. School funding will be at its highest ever level in real terms per pupil by 2024-25, totalling £58.8 billion.

This includes an increase in mainstream school funding, for the 5-16 age group, of over £2.5 billion in 2023-24, compared to 2022-23. High needs funding is increasing by almost £1 billion in total.

As part of this increase, mainstream schools will receive a new, Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) for primary and secondary provision in the 2023-24 financial year. This equates to a 3.4% increase in per pupil funding for mainstream schools, on top of the allocations through the Dedicated Schools Grant, which we are also publishing.

The detailed methodology for allocating this new grant is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mainstream-schools-additional-grant-2023-to-2024>

The Dedicated Schools Grant allocations are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2023-to-2024>

Maintained special and alternative provision schools and academies will also receive supplementary Autumn Statement funding, delivered by placing a new condition of grant on local authorities' use of their high needs allocations.

Pupil premium per pupil rates in 2023-24 will increase by 5%. This will increase pupil premium funding to £2,865 million in 2023-24, an increase of £180 million from 2022-23. This increase will ensure that this targeted funding continues to support the most disadvantaged children in our schools.

Finally, for Early Years, we have published the Government response to the Early Years Funding Formulae consultation launched on 4 July 2022, confirmed the hourly funding rates for the free early education entitlements in 2023-24 for each local authority, and announced their indicative allocations.

Reflecting the recently announced National Living Wage increases, we are investing an additional £20 million into the early years entitlements. This is on top of the £180 million for 2023-24 announced at the Spending Review. Taken together, this will mean at national level, early years providers are supported with the additional National Living Wage costs associated with delivering the free childcare entitlements next year.

We have updated the data underpinning the early years funding formulae, and have confirmed the approach to protections set out in the consultation to ensure the transition to new funding levels implied is manageable. The minimum funding floor for the three- and four-year-old funding rate will therefore increase from £4.61 per hour in 2022-23 to £4.87 per hour in 2023-24. All local authorities will see at least a 1% increase in their funding rates in 2023-24, and up to a maximum of 4.9% for the three and four-year-old rate and up to 10% for the two-year-old rate. We will also increase the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF) rates, from 60p to 62p per hour for the EYPP, and from £800 to £828 per child per year for DAF.

For Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS), we are confirming the additional £10 million announced on 4 July 2022, providing for a minimum hourly rate of £3.80 per hour for MNS supplementary funding for all local authorities in 2023-24, and a £10 cap on the hourly rate, with transitional arrangements for the most affected local authority. We intend to maintain the cap at that level in 2024-25.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Environment Update

**Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**  
[\[HCWS456\]](#)

I am repeating the statement made by my noble friend the Minister for Biosecurity, Marine and Rural Affairs, Lord Benyon, on Friday 16 December.

### **Final Environmental Targets under the Environment Act 2021**

This government is committed to leaving the environment in a better state than we found it. Following our consultation earlier in the year, we are confirming an ambitious suite of targets to deliver on that commitment.

These targets will tackle some of the biggest pressures facing our environment. They will ensure progress on clean air, clean and plentiful water, less waste and more sustainable



use of our resources, a step change in tree planting, a better marine environment, and a more diverse, resilient natural environment.

The thirteen targets that will be laid through statutory instruments are as follows:

#### **Biodiversity on land**

- To halt the decline in species abundance by 2030
- To ensure that species abundance in 2042 is greater than in 2022, and at least 10% greater than 2030.
- Improve the Red List Index for England for species extinction risk by 2042, compared to 2022 levels.
- To restore or create in excess of 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042, compared to 2022 levels.

#### **Biodiversity in the sea**

- 70% of the designated features in the MPA network to be in favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in recovering condition.

#### **Water quality and availability**

- Abandoned metal mines target: Halve the length of rivers polluted by harmful metals from abandoned mines by 2038, against a baseline of around 1,500 km.
- Agriculture target: Reduce nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline.
- Wastewater target: Reduce phosphorus loadings from treated wastewater by 80% by 2038 against a 2020 baseline.
- Water Demand Target: Reduce the use of public water supply in England per head of population by 20% from the 2019/20 baseline reporting year figures, by 2037/38.

#### **Woodland cover**

- Increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050.

#### **Resource efficiency and waste reduction**

- Reduce residual waste (excluding major mineral wastes) kg per capita by 50% by 2042 from 2019 levels.

#### **Air quality**

- An Annual Mean Concentration Target for PM2.5 levels in England to be 10 µg m<sup>-3</sup> or below by 2040.
- A Population Exposure Reduction Target for a reduction in PM2.5 population exposure of 35% compared to 2018 to be achieved by 2040.

The suite of targets that we consulted on was the result of significant scientific evidence collection and development over preceding years that included input from evidence



partners and independent experts, supported by over 800 pages of published evidence. We have full confidence in the final suite of targets, which represents the robust analysis already undertaken.

**These targets are stretching and will be challenging for us to meet, whether that is through Government, through business or indeed at home in our individual lives through choices we make. In turn this will support action to tackle climate change, restore our natural capital and protect our much-loved landscapes and green spaces.**

We will set out more details about our plans to deliver them in our Environmental Improvement Plan: our manifesto for the environment for the next 5 years. We will publish this by 31 January, as required by law.

The government response to the consultation will be published on gov.uk.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ British Council Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (David Rutley):** [\[HCWS461\]](#)

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. It does this by uniquely combining the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language, its global presence and relationships in over 100 countries and its unparalleled access to young people and influencers around the world. In 2021/22 the British Council received £183m grant-in-aid from the FCDO. With a total reach of 648 million people in 2021/22, the British Council creates mutually beneficial relationships between the people of all four nations of the UK and other countries. Such connections, based on an understanding of each other's strengths and shared values, build an enduring trust. This helps strengthen the UK's global reputation and influence, encouraging people from around the world to visit, study, trade and make alliances with the UK. Copies of the British Council's Annual Report and Accounts for the 2021-22 financial year have been placed in the Library. The Annual Report can also be found at the British Council's website: [www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/corporate-reports](http://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/corporate-reports)

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Health Update

**Minister of State (Minister for Health and Secondary Care) (Will Quince):**

**[\[HCWS459\]](#)**

The NHS Workforce is the key component of the NHS. It is one of the largest single employers in the country and globally. Around 5% of the England workforce is employed by the NHS, so the way in which we value the workforce matters, both in ensuring delivery of health services and as a role model for other employers.

The Autumn statement has made up-to £14.1bn available to Health and Social Care service over the next two years. This funding will help enable us to continue to support the NHS in England. I am therefore pleased to report that there are a record number of people working in the NHS. Latest data for September 2022 shows almost 1.4 million full time equivalent staff working across NHS hospital trusts and primary care in England.

Within this workforce there are a record number of over 168,000 full time equivalent doctors across hospitals and general practice. This includes over 131,000 in NHS hospitals and over 37,000 in general practice. There are also a record number of over 333,000 nurses across the NHS, with over 316,000 working in NHS hospital and over 16,000 across primary care.

We now have over 32,000 more nurses now than we had in September 2019, putting us well on the way to meeting the Government's commitment of 50,000 more nurses across hospital and general practice settings by March 2024. Over the last three years, this speed of growth in nursing numbers is faster than we have seen since 2009 when current recording began.

Internationally trained staff are an important component of the 50,000 nurse target. They have been an integral part of the NHS since its inception in 1948 and continue to play a vital role. We hugely value their contribution to providing excellent care. Whilst we are working hard to increase our homegrown supply of health and social care staff, ethical international recruitment remains a key element of achieving our workforce commitments.

I am also pleased to see that other key NHS hospital workforce groups continue to grow, such as the now almost 18,000 professionally qualified ambulance staff, 12% more than in 2019 and over 81,000 allied health professionals, 20% more than 2019. These staff work hand in hand with the over 380,000 clinical support staff who are so vital to the effective delivery of patient care.

We are also growing new professions to support patient care and I am pleased to see over 2,500 physician associates and over 4,600 nursing associates working across hospitals and primary care.

We also have a very healthy pipeline of people training to work in the NHS. There are record numbers of medical students in undergraduate training and graduates from recent expansion in medical school places and schools are starting to enter foundation training. Large numbers of candidates also continue to choose courses in nursing and midwifery in

England, and since September 2020 all eligible nursing, midwifery and allied health profession students have received a non-repayable training grant of a minimum of £5,000 per academic year.

For the third consecutive year we have seen over 26,000 acceptances to undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery programmes. There were 3,700 more acceptances in 2022 than in 2019 – a 16% increase. This is alongside substantial expansion of nursing apprenticeships, with over 3,000 people starting in 2021/22 compared to less than 1,000 in 2019/20.

However, in spite of the growth we are seeing, we know health and care staff are facing ongoing challenges. The rising demand for services due to the pandemic, service recovery and an ageing population means that staff continue to work under pressure.

Therefore, alongside expanding the workforce we must therefore work to retain the staff that we have and ensure NHS is an attractive place to work.

The NHS People Plan and the NHS retention programme are focused on improving the experience of staff working in the NHS, as well as seeking to address the reasons that they leave. This means ensuring we support staff health and wellbeing, improve the leadership and workplace culture of NHS organisations, and increase opportunities to work flexibly.

To help with flexible working, we are making changes to NHS pension rules to help retain experienced doctors and nurses, and remove barriers for retired staff who want to return. We have therefore launched a consultation on detailed proposals to enable staff to work more flexibly up to and beyond retirement age, and protect them from unintentionally higher annual allowance pension tax charges driven by inflation.

Looking to the future, we must ensure that the future workforce is both large enough to meet the challenges it will face and has the right people with the right skills working in the right places to address future demand.

To that end, we have commissioned NHS England to develop a Long -term Workforce Plan for the NHS workforce for the next 15 years. This will look at the mix and number of staff required across all parts of the country and will set out the actions and reforms that will be needed to reduce supply gaps and improve retention. We have committed to independently verifying this report, and publishing it next year.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Homeland Security Policy Update

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman):**

**[[HCWS462](#)]**

Today I am pleased to announce the foundational policy elements that will form the basis of this Government's upcoming Protect Duty Bill, also known as Martyn's Law. These proposals have been developed in response to feedback received to the Government's 2021 consultation on policy, where seven in ten respondents supported the concept that

businesses should protect the public, and in partnership with key stakeholders. Government will continue to work closely with business stakeholders to ensure that guidance and support is bespoke, accessible and easy to understand, enabling Martyn's Law to be implemented successfully in an effective and proportionate manner.

As you will be aware, the Chair of the Manchester Arena Inquiry recommended the introduction of a Duty in June 2021. This was further to the 2017 London Bridge Prevention of Future Deaths Report, which recommended introduction of legislation setting out the duties of public authorities. Martyn's Law has been championed by the Martyn's Law Campaign (led by Figen Murray, the mother of Martyn Hett killed in the Manchester attack) and the Survivors Against Terror network, whom I would like to pay tribute to today. It is also supported by expert security partners such as the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) within Counter Terrorism Policing.

### **Overview**

The proposed Martyn's Law will seek to improve the safety and security of our citizens so they can enjoy public premises without fear of terrorism by improving protective security and organisational preparedness at a wide range of locations across the UK. It is emphatically in the public interest for the Government and business to work together to ensure people are protected when visiting venues, retail areas, and other publicly accessible venues without introducing undue burden. Those responsible will be required to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate, proportionate mitigation measures. The two primary objectives for Martyn's Law will be to i) clarify who is responsible for security activity at locations in scope, thereby increasing accountability; and ii) improve outcomes UK-wide so that security activity is delivered to a consistent level. An inspection and enforcement regime will seek to educate, advise, and ensure compliance with Martyn's Law.

### **Proportionate requirements**

In developing Martyn's Law policy, I have been clear that proportionality and clarity are fundamental to successful delivery. Legislation will therefore establish a tiered model, introducing a requirements framework that is linked to the type of activity that takes place at eligible locations and the number of people (occupancy) that the location can safely accommodate at any time. Wherever possible and appropriate the policy has been aligned to wider regimes designed to keep the public safe (e.g., Health and Safety and Fire Safety) to increase ease of understanding. The distinct requirements for each tier are:

- **Standard-** will drive good preparedness outcomes. Locations with a maximum occupancy of greater than 100 people at any time will be required to undertake low-cost, simple yet effective activities to improve protective security and preparedness. This will be achieved by accessing free awareness raising materials and development of a basic preparedness plan considering how best a location can respond to a terrorist event in their locale.

- Enhanced- focussed on high-capacity locations in recognition of the potential consequences of a successful attack. Locations with an occupancy of 800+ at any time will additionally be required to take forward a risk assessment and subsequently develop and implement a security plan. Enhanced Duty holders will be required to meet a reasonably practicable test.

Locations with a maximum occupancy at any time of less than 100 will fall out of scope, however, they will be encouraged to adopt good security practices on a voluntary basis. This will be supported by free guidance and training materials. To ensure that Martyn's Law is agile and responsive, Government will have the ability to adjust capacity thresholds in response to changes in the nature of the terrorist threat.

### **Definitions**

Premises will fall within scope of Martyn's Law where "qualifying activities" take place. This will include activities such as entertainment and leisure, retail, food and drink, museums and galleries, sports grounds, public areas of local and central Government buildings (e.g., town halls), visitor attractions, temporary events, Places of Worship, health, and education. It is proposed that Martyn's Law will apply to eligible locations which are either: a building (including collections of buildings used for the same purposes, e.g., a campus); or location/event (including a temporary event) that has a defined boundary, allowing capacity to be known. Eligible locations whose maximum occupancy meets the above specified thresholds will be then drawn into the relevant tier. This would include, for example, music festivals, where there are known and controlled boundaries in place.

### **Responsible Parties**

To deliver clarity of responsibility and accountability, Martyn's Law will define parties obliged to meet its requirements. This will be a simple formulation to establish persons in control of a premise. Where there are multiple parties at a location, Martyn's Law will primarily place obligations on a lead party whilst placing requirements on others to co-operate with that party, such as in the development of risk assessments and security plans. Martyn's Law Guidance will detail how and where it would be envisaged that parties will need to co-ordinate on assessments and plans and provide examples of good practice.

### **Exemptions**

I intend that there will be some limited exclusions and exemptions from the Duty. This includes locations where transport security regulations already apply; and those that are vacant over a reasonable period or are permanently closed. Those with a large floor space and low occupancy in practice (e.g., warehouses and storage facilities) as well as offices and private residential locations, will not be in scope.

As a unique cohort, Places of Worship (PoW) will receive bespoke treatment under Martyn's Law. All PoW will be placed into the standard tier, with a small cohort of locations that charge for entry placed into the enhanced tier. Similarly, given the existing safety and safeguarding policies in place at under 18 educational settings, such sites will

be placed into the standard tier regardless of their occupancy. However, due to the accessible nature of higher educational settings I consider there is no case for any special treatment. I also consider that given their iconic status, with many locations operating as high-footfall visitor attractions, there is no case to provide any exemption for publicly accessible Defence, Royal and Crown Estate sites.

### **Regulation**

To limit burdens on the Criminal Justice System (CJS), avoiding unnecessary criminalisation of individuals, enforcement will predominantly be delivered via a civil sanctions regime (to a civil standard). In all but the most serious cases a civil monetary penalty is likely to be issued to provide a backstop to the civil sanctions. However, in the case of the most egregious breaches a limited number of criminal offences will be available. It is not my intention for a failure to comply with standard Martyn's Law requirements to result in criminal prosecution. In line with recent, comparable regimes, to disincentivise financial benefit from non-compliance, variable monetary penalties will be available. A maximum penalty of up to £18m or 5% of worldwide turnover will be available for Enhanced sites. Standard locations will be subject to a maximum £10,000 penalty. Civil liability for failure to comply with the requirements will be precluded by way of express provision for all duty holders.

### **Sensitive Information in Licensing Applications (SILA)**

I intend to introduce the Sensitive Information in Licensing Applications (SILA) protocol (by way of an amendment to the Licensing Act 2003 (LA2003)) to align to the similar system already in place within planning legislation (Sensitive Information in Planning Applications (SIPA)), to reduce the risk of misuse of sensitive information in the public domain.

### **Bill preparation and Government support**

I am pleased to have set out the above elements of Martyn's Law, on the basis of which Government will introduce measures to the House as soon as parliamentary time allows. Statutory guidance to support duty holders in fulfilling Martyn's Law requirements will also be developed. This will encourage a culture of continuous improvement. In addition, a range of initiatives are already in train to support understanding of Martyn's Law and its requirements. ProtectUK will be a key tool for the effective delivery of support to all owners and operators of PALs, providing guidance and advice, training options and, engagement opportunities through webinars and forums.

An impact assessment has been developed to robustly assess the expected impact on organisations in scope.

## ■ **Licensing Hours Extension Consultation**

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp):**

**[\[HCWS460\]](#)**

On 6 May 2023, the Coronation of King Charles III will take place. To celebrate this historic occasion, events will likely be taking place throughout the weekend, both in the UK and across the Commonwealth.



The Government has already announced an additional Bank Holiday on 8 May and celebrations will include public events and local community activities.

I am pleased to launch a consultation on extending licensing hours throughout the Bank Holiday weekend to allow those who wish to make the most of this opportunity. The consultation proposes that an extension would take place on 5, 6 and 7 of May to 1am the following day on each day.

Opportunities to gather with our families, friends and local communities were severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. His Majesty the King's Coronation provides an opportunity to come together and celebrate this great nation and enjoy our renewed ability to spend time together in marking this historic occasion.

A copy of the consultation will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and also made available on GOV.UK.

### ■ **Response to public consultation on the Draft Statutory Guidance on the Serious Violence Duty (the Duty) and publication of the finalised Statutory Guidance**

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp):** [\[HCWS463\]](#)

On Friday 16 December 2022, my Noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom) made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and it includes provisions for the Serious Violence Duty.

The Duty requires, specified authorities, namely police, fire and rescue services, health, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services to work collaboratively, share data and information and put in place a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. Educational authorities and prisons/youth custodial institutions are also under a separate duty to co-operate with specified authorities. As announced in the then Crime and Policing Ministers statement of 9 June 2002, the Government held a formal public consultation on a Draft Statutory Guidance. This guidance is issued by the Secretary of State under Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC 2022 and supports the specified authorities across England and Wales in exercising their functions under the Duty prior to its commencement on 31 January 2023.

Via the consultation, we sought views on the contents of the guidance including policy intentions for the secondary legislation, which were laid on 12 December, and we also requested separate feedback on what support partners might find beneficial to enable them to implement the Duty effectively. This insight has helped finalise our plans for a local support offer. Further case studies were also requested which will form part of this package of local support. We would like to thank all those who contributed to the consultation, including those who officials engaged with directly through a series of sessions. The views received covered a range of issues but there was clear consensus on key areas that needed clarifying. This included clearer local accountability and responsibilities for local partnerships and Police and Crime Commissioners and additional clarity on the inclusion of domestic abuse and sexual offences under the Duty. These are

set out in the Government's consultation response along with our plans for commencement of the Duty and addressed in the revised statutory guidance which are both published today.

A copy of the consultation response and the statutory guidance will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and also made available on GOV.UK.

## ■ Work of the Home Office

### **The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman):** **[\[HCWS467\]](#)**

Today I am updating Parliament on Home Office delivery since the previous Written Ministerial Statement of 5th September 2022. In the face of an increasingly complex operational context, the Home Office continues to make a significant positive impact. We have faced substantial external pressures which have continued over the last three months, including the ongoing arrival of small boats and war in Ukraine. The department remains committed to delivering better outcomes for the public and continues to work to deliver a safer, fairer and more prosperous United Kingdom.

Following the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Home Office successfully delivered departmental responsibilities and assurance of police and security plans for Operation London Bridge from 8th-19th September 2022. Keeping the capital safe during an event on this scale - the equivalent of 160 state visits within three days – was a major achievement. This was the largest no-notice policing operation of a generation which included over 12,000 police officers deployed on the day of the state funeral.

### ***Reducing Crime***

The first job of any government is to keep its people safe, which is why we have put more police on our streets, are cutting crime and protecting the public. Over the last three months, the Home Office has worked hard to achieve these priorities. Overall crime has fallen by 10% since December 2019, equivalent to 1m fewer crimes.

#### **Neighbourhood Crime**

Neighbourhood crime is down 20% since December 2019, and burglary has fallen by 30% over the same time period. Since the Safer Streets Fund was established, we have awarded £120 million to local projects in high-crime areas across England and Wales through four rounds of funding, supporting over 250 projects. I am pleased that the NPCC has announced that all Police chiefs in England and Wales committed in September to attend all home burglaries. An example of this in action is Operation Tenacity, which saw the Metropolitan Police attend most burglaries, resulting in 1,700 arrests in just 6 weeks during October and November this year.

#### **Serious Violence**

Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object among under 25s – our primary metric for measuring serious violence - have fallen by 22% since December 2019. Our Violence Reduction Unit programme alongside targeted police enforcement activity has prevented over 49,000 violent offences since funding for the programmes began in March 2019. In



addition, 260,000 vulnerable young people have been supported through Violence Reduction Units in their second year alone, and 90,000 weapons have been taken off our streets since 2019.

The 'Grip' police enforcement programme is supporting the police to take targeted action in parts of England and Wales most affected by serious violence. Grip is helping to drive down violence by using a highly data-driven process to identify violence hotspots – often to individual street level – to target operational activity in those areas.

We are seeing impact in areas we are funding: for instance, hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object amongst under 25s in the Metropolitan Police Force area fell from 465 in 2020/21 to 410 in 2021/22.

**Drugs** We know that the drugs trade is at the heart of much of the homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime that blight our communities. Our 10-year cross-Government Drug Strategy published in December 2021 includes £300 million of dedicated investment over the next three years, to drive work on tackling drug supply. We are breaking drug supply chains: our work to tackle the supply of drugs through county lines is already making an impact. Through the County Lines Programme since launching in 2019, Police have closed down more than 2,900 deal lines (including over 500 lines since April 2022) and made over 8,000 arrests. Dedicated specialist services are supporting children and young people and their families to escape county lines exploitation and rebuild their lives. Drug data from Project ADDER (Addiction, Disruption, Diversion, Enforcement and Recovery), a programme trailblazing a whole system response to combatting drug misuse, shows positive early signs. Between January 2021 and September 2022, the ADDER programme has supported over 1,600 Organised Crime Group disruptions, over 20,500 arrests, and over £7m cash seized. We are also diverting people into treatment and wider support. For example, 12,400 Out of Court Disposals have been offered and over 8,000 naloxone kits distributed in the community.

**Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls** Between January 2021 and August 2022, a team of academics conducted sequential deep dives on the police response to rape in 5 police forces: Avon and Somerset Police, the Metropolitan Police Service, Durham Constabulary, West Midlands Police and South Wales Police. A wide range of data and information was gathered and examined during the deep dives - including reviews of case files, observations of investigations and training, focus groups with support services and victims. Following the deep dives, the forces have developed tailored improvement plans to address the findings; which has led to the roll out of Operation Soteria.

We continue to implement the Rape Review Action Plan, investing £6.65 million in Operation Soteria to deliver the national operating model for the investigation of rape for all forces to adopt from June 2023; introducing new powers to stop unnecessary and intrusive requests for victims' phones; and continuing to work with police forces to ensure they have the capability to return victims' devices within 24 hours. In the year-ending June 2022, the police recorded 196,889 sexual offences, the highest level recorded within a 12-month period. This is a 21% increase compared to year ending March 2020.

On 15 December, the Government published its third six monthly Rape Review Progress Update, which showed that – although there is still more to do - the Government is on track to meet its Rape Review ambition to more than double the number of adult rape cases reaching court by the end of this parliament. In the most recent data for 2022, the number of cases referred by the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) was up 95 percent; the volume of cases charged was up by two-thirds; and the number of cases reaching the Crown Court was up 91 percent compared to 2019 averages.

We have continued to implement the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, and have enshrined into law the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We have introduced new offences relating to non-fatal strangulation, hymenoplasty and virginity testing. We have strengthened protections and support for victims of domestic abuse and the response to perpetrators through the provisions in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We have made the regime for managing sex offenders and those that pose a risk of sexual harm more robust through provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022.

In January 2020 we introduced Stalking Protection Orders to protect victims of stalking at the earliest possible opportunity; 456 orders were issued in their first year. Extensive work is also under way to launch the pilot for the new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders early next year.

On 25th October, we launched the second phase of our multimedia ‘Enough’ national campaign which promotes safe ways for bystanders to intervene if they witness VAWG. The campaign has reached millions of individuals across England and Wales, with thousands of clicks through to organisations offering support for victims of VAWG.

### **Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation**

We received the final report of the independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse after seven years of investigation into institutional failings to properly safeguard children from this most horrific abuse. I commend the bravery of the thousands of victims and survivors for sharing their testimonies and perspectives with the inquiry. We will continue doing everything we can to combat this crime, pursue these vile offenders, bring them to justice, and ensure supports are in place for all victims and survivors to help them build their lives.

### **Public Order**

The Public Order Bill will further enhance the police’s ability to deal with disruptive protests that prevent ordinary people going about their daily lives and divert police resources from communities where they are needed most to prevent serious violence and neighbourhood crime. So far disruptive protests in London alone have taken up over 12,500 police officer shifts. The Metropolitan Police Service have made over 750 arrests since the beginning of October.

### **Fraud**

My department is launching a new fraud strategy including stepping up our response to pursuing and disrupting fraudsters, working with industry to stop frauds, and empower and support victims.

This Government is delivering the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill which will deliver the largest reform to Companies House in recent history. It will give law enforcement and industry the tools to bear down on the use of UK companies as vehicles for economic crime, including fraud. It will also better protect personal information and addresses provided to Companies House.

We have seen the success of the National Crime Agency's Operation AGADE where we have recovered £54 million of criminal proceeds using a first of its kind Civil Recovery Order.

We have seen Operation Elaborate, the largest anti-fraud operation in the UK to date dismantling a website which was responsible for 3.5 million fraudulent calls in 2022. Involving many agencies and forces, and led by the Metropolitan Police there have been over 100 arrests made across the country so far.

### **Policing**

**Police Uplift** The Police Uplift Programme continues to support forces with additional police officers, and we remain on-track to recruit 20,000 additional officers by March 2023. Data published on 30th September 2022 shows that 15,343 additional officers have already been recruited, accounting for 77% of our target. There are now 11 forces with the highest number of officers they have ever had – Cheshire, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Kent, City of London, the Metropolitan, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, South Wales, Suffolk and Thames Valley.

The police workforce is more representative than ever before. For the first time ever, there are over 50,000 female officers (50,364), as at 30th September 2022, 34.9% of all officers in post. There were 11,477 ethnic minority officers, as at 30th September 2022, 8.2% of all officers in post the highest figures on record.

### **Police Performance**

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) continues to shine a light on force performance. Humberside received an excellent report from their latest inspection, with six "outstanding" grades. Humberside was awarded the "outstanding" grade for preventing crime, treatment of the public, protecting vulnerable people, managing offenders, developing a positive workplace and good use of resources. It received a further two "good" grades and one "adequate" grade.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has made great strides in getting the basics right. Under strong leadership they are responding faster to emergency calls and halved the number of open investigations since 2021. HMICFRS removed GMP from their "engage" phase in October 2022. I am pleased to see GMP working so constructively with HMICFRS and others to act on their inspection findings. I encourage others to learn from their experience.

Six police forces remain 'engaged' by HMICFRS and I expect all forces to make the necessary improvements and work towards restoring public trust and confidence in the police.

**Police Culture** We recognise that police culture and standards need to improve to rebuild public trust and confidence. We are bringing forward part two of the Angiolini Inquiry to focus on these issues and are reviewing the process of dismissals to ensure that policing can swiftly remove officers who fall well short of the standards expected of them.

We have commissioned the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to conduct a review of operational productivity in policing, led by Sir Stephen House. This will address issues which may affect the anticipated outcomes from our investment in policing.

We believe that a policing career must be open to talented and committed people from across our communities, including those who do not have a degree or want one. That is why I have commissioned the College of Policing to develop options for a new non-degree entry route. The current transitional non-degree entry route will be kept open in the meantime.

### ***Reducing the risk to homeland security***

The Home Office has continued to focus relentlessly on reducing risk across the full range of threats to our homeland security. In October, counter-terrorism police responded swiftly to an attack on a migration facility in Dover that was declared as terrorism.

On 30th October we announced a refresh of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. This will ensure we are able to best protect the public from the enduring threat of terrorism. The refresh will maintain clarity and consistency of purpose, and ensure the necessary tools are in place to tackle terrorist hatred and violence.

Our counter-terrorism system never stops learning. Volume 2 of the Manchester Arena Inquiry was published on 3rd November 2022. This covered the emergency services' response on the night of the attack. The Government will respond fully when all three volumes have been published. However, we are already enhancing our response using the learning from the attacks – for example, in improving joint working between the emergency services - which will feed the refreshment of CONTEST. We have also received the Independent Review of Prevent, which we will look to publish next year alongside the HMG response. We will reflect the lessons and learning from the Shawcross Review, along with those from the numerous inquests, Inquiries and other reviews from recent years through the CONTEST refresh.

I have today issued a further written ministerial statement updating on our progress developing Martyn's Law, also known as the Protect Duty. This is a significant milestone in the development of this first of its kind piece of legislation, which will keep people safe by scaling up preparedness for, and protection from, terrorist attacks. This legislation will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time allows. This is a recommendation in Volume One of the Manchester Arena Inquiry. this duty has been tirelessly campaigned for by Figen Murray who tragically lost her son, Martyn, in the Manchester Arena attack. I would

like to pay tribute to her alongside all other victims, survivors and those affected by these heinous events.

Access to data is fundamental to the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes. The UK-US Data Access Agreement entered into force on 5th October 2022. This world-first capability will fundamentally change the way we are able to fight serious crime across the UK, including terrorism, organised immigration crime, and child abuse. The Agreement permits certain UK public authorities to obtain data directly from US-based communications service providers. This will allow us to access vital data more quickly than ever before. Operational benefits are already being derived from the Agreement.

Earlier in the year, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Home Office delivered a transformative package of work through emergency legislation to strengthen financial sanctions legislation, creating new Register of Overseas Entities and reforming Unexplained Wealth Orders.

We are building on that work through the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill that was introduced in Parliament on 22nd September 2022. This cracks down even further on kleptocrats, criminals, and terrorists who abuse our open economy and ensures we drive out dirty money from the UK. It strengthens the UK's reputation as a place where legitimate businesses can thrive and enhances our ability to tackle new and emerging threats like the use of crypto-assets, ransomware and the growth of cyber-enabled fraud.

The National Crime Agency's Combatting Kleptocracy Cell is also delivering significant success, with nearly 100 disruptions against Putin-linked elites and their enablers. It has frozen over £18 billion worth of assets in the UK. On 1st December 2022 it conducted a major operation to arrest a wealthy Russian businessman on suspicion of offences including money laundering, conspiracy to defraud the Home Office and conspiracy to commit perjury.

The National Security Bill, which is now at its Committee Stage in the House of Lords, represents a fundamental reform of our framework for tackling state threats. It includes a suite of new measures to tackle the full range of modern-day state threats, from sabotage and spying to foreign interference and economic espionage. It will ensure our world-class law enforcement and intelligence agencies have the modern tools, powers, and protections they need to counter those who seek to do the UK harm.

The first meeting of the new Defending Democracy Taskforce took place on 28th November 2022. The Taskforce's primary focus will be to protect the democratic integrity of the UK from threats of foreign interference. The Taskforce will work across government and with Parliament, the UK Intelligence Community, the devolved administrations, local authorities, and the private sector on the full range of threats facing our democratic institutions.

***Tackling illegal migration, removing those with no right to be here, and protecting the vulnerable***

This year has been challenging for our efforts to tackle illegal migration due to pressures on the system, particularly due to consistently high numbers of arrivals by small boats and pressures on available accommodation, which have been exacerbated by responding to the war in Ukraine and continued instability in Afghanistan. I will continue to protect the public and keep our borders secure and the British people safe from harm.

The Prime Minister recently set out a range of significant new steps the Government is taking to tackle the challenge of illegal migration including:

- A new deal with Albania and changes to our approach to speed up the removal of Albanians with no right to be here. This includes assurance from Albania that they can offer the required protection, in line with our international obligations, to genuine victims of modern slavery, embedding Border Force officers in Tirana Airport, increasing the threshold for people referred to the modern slavery system, establishing a unit to expedite Albanian claims with 400 specialist staff and new country guidance for our caseworkers making it clear that Albania is a safe country.
- Establishing a new, permanent unified Small Boats Operational Command with 700 additional dedicated staff to deliver a more coordinated response to tackling crossings, bringing together military, civilian and NCA expertise to coordinate our intelligence, interception, processing, and enforcement.
- Clearing the initial asylum decision backlog of legacy cases by the end of next year. We will make an initial decision in all cases that have been outstanding since before 28th June 2022
- Plans to bring forward legislation next year to prevent abuse of our legal framework which will make it unambiguously clear that people entering illegally should have no right to stay here, and will be returned to their home country or a safe country for their asylum claim to be considered
- Due to the unprecedented number of small boat arrivals and the pressure from COVID-19 on the asylum system it has been necessary to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers. This is only ever a short-term solution and we are working with our accommodation providers to find appropriate dispersed accommodation across the UK.

The new UK-French agreement I agreed with my counterpart lays the foundations for deeper co-operation to tackle illegal migration and marks the next step for the close operational partnership between the two countries which has prevented over 31,500 crossings, nearly 50% more than to this point in 2021.

The arrangement means, for the first time, specialist UK officers will also be embedded with their French counterparts, which will increase information-sharing, improve understanding of the threat, and ensure UK expertise is at the heart of efforts to disrupt crossings and clamp down on people-smugglers. This more integrated approach will also include strengthened operational co-operation, including joint UK-France analysis teams supporting the co-ordination and exchange of information by French-command HQ. We have signed the biggest small boats joint bilateral deal with France, we have put the



Calais group on a permanent footing showing the importance of this issue to our European partners and we have agreed new levels of intelligence co-operation with our European neighbours.

These measures build on the progress we have made through the year. We have introduced Part 5 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which provides legislative clarity to victims and decision-makers on victims' rights, including the entitlement to a recovery period and the circumstances in which it may be withheld.

We continue to return foreign national offenders (FNOs) by scheduled and charter flights. From January 2019 to March 2022, we have removed 11,532 FNOs. Since April 2020, we have chartered 156 flights to Europe and around the World. In the year ending June 2022, there were 3,250 enforced returns, of which 1,600 were to EU countries.

### **Safe and Legal Routes**

We have continued to support those fleeing conflicts abroad, granting Indefinite Leave to Remain to over 11,300 individuals from Afghanistan under ARAP or ACRS Pathway 1.

As of 24th November, 202,710 visas have been granted and 146,222 have arrived in the UK from Ukraine. 59,480 have been granted and 41,093 people have arrived under the Ukraine Family Scheme. 143,230 visas have been granted and 105,129 arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme

Through the Hong Kong British National Overseas route, there have been a total of 150,600 applications since its introduction on 31st January 2021 up to the end of September 2022 of which there were 144,576 grants (96%).

### ***Enabling the legitimate movement of people and goods***

Passports are about to enter the busy period in January, and plans are well advanced in preparation for that and for a high level of demand forecast across 2023. There was record demand for passport applications this year – with approximately 7.4 million applications processed by the end of October. Service standards have remained high since November and 99.9% of UK standard applications were completed within the 10-week service standard in the week ending 20th November. Every effort is being made to return to the three-week service standard.

The visa service has faced significant demands post-pandemic and following Ukraine and higher than forecast levels of demand. Considering this, it is performing well under pressure, and through supportive contingency measures, standard applications have returned to service standards and we are on track for complex applications to also return to service standards in December.

Despite these challenges staff productivity has remained high, and we continue to manage staff flexibly across services to reduce work in progress to minimal levels for passport and deliver the visa recovery by the year end.

Border Force have seen passenger numbers increase to near pre-pandemic levels by the end of summer and also managed the introduction of post EU exit goods checks and the first full year of EU citizens requiring passports and additional checks. eGates have

performed well and IT resilience has been strong enabling over 90% of passengers to cross borders within tolerance levels.

Border Force also reached its annual Target for Cigarette and Tobacco seizures within 7 months of 2022-23/ In October, £35 million in cigarettes and tobacco were seized bringing the YTD total to £255 million (101%) of the annual target of £252 million. On alcohol, Border Force seized £4.3 million, bringing the YTD total to £25.1 million (63%) of the annual target of £40 million.

The FBIS programme has built-up the expertise and capability to reduce significantly the time taken to launch a brand-new visa route or to amend criteria for existing visa applications.

We have made significant progress in digitising the immigration system. We are increasingly replacing physical and paper-based products and services with accessible, easy to use online and digital services. This has provided applicants with an easy online application process, including providing biometrics and establishing or verifying identity using their smartphones. A fully digital application process has been delivered for the BN(O) route and some points-based system routes and now for Ukraine schemes.

All these achievements have been delivered against a challenging background and represent a significant effort across the Home Office in continuing to deliver on the people's priorities. The Home Office remains committed to keeping the public safe, protecting our borders, and countering hostile state threats.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Local Government Finance

**Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove):**

[\[HCWS469\]](#)

#### **Introduction**

On 12 December, I published a Policy Statement outlining proposals for the 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement and details of funding in 2024/25. Today, I have set out the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 and launched our formal consultation on the proposals. This Settlement provides a 9% increase in national level Core Spending Power, making available almost £5 billion in additional resources, demonstrating how Government stands behind councils up and down the country.

Together, the Policy Statement published on 12 December, and this proposed Settlement:

- Give multi-year certainty to local authorities, allowing them to plan ahead with more confidence over the rest of the Spending Review period.



- Ensure stability by introducing a one-off Funding Guarantee to ensure that every council sees at least a 3% increase in Core Spending Power next year before any local decisions on council tax rates.
- Provide around £2 billion in additional grant for children's and adult social care in 2023/24.
- Maintain a balance on Council Tax, protecting residents from excessive increases while allowing councils to generate income to deliver local services.

### **Certainty**

Local government has long called for greater certainty on funding following repeated one-year settlements. In the Policy Statement published on 12 December, the Government has provided this certainty by setting out clearly our intentions and proposals for the 2024/25 Settlement.

### **Stability**

Government recognises that all local authorities are facing pressures. In this proposed Settlement we are taking action to provide stability for all local authorities, across all tiers of local government, to support the vital work they undertake for communities across the country.

We are introducing a new, one-off Funding Guarantee that ensures every local authority will see a minimum 3% increase in their Core Spending Power, before taking any local decisions to increase council tax rates.

### **Social Care**

Adult and children's social care services provide crucial support to care users and young people in need, and this proposed Settlement provides significant additional funding for this key area of concern. Government has listened, and we know that many local authorities are already facing difficult decisions brought on by inflationary and demand pressures. This is why we are providing around £2 billion in additional grant for social care, compared to 2022/23. Additionally, for social care authorities, we are consulting on a 2% precept for 2023/24. The council tax referendum provisions are not a cap, nor do they force councils to set taxes at the threshold level. When taking decisions on council tax levels, local authorities should recognise the pressures many households are facing

We have also listened to councils' concerns about implementing adult social care charging reform in light of these pressures. That is why Government has made the difficult decision to delay these reforms, and to prioritise core pressures rather than risk destabilising the market. The funding intended for implementation will be retained in local authority budgets.

### **Council Tax**

The Government's manifesto commits to continuing to protect local taxpayers from excessive council tax increases. This is an additional local democratic check and balance to avoid the repeat seen under the last Labour Government when council tax more than doubled. Government intends to proceed with a core referendum principle of 3% for

2023/24. Furthermore, we are proposing a bespoke council tax referendum principle of up to 3% or £5, whichever is higher, for shire districts. On top of this, we intend to proceed with a £5 referendum principle on Band D bills for all fire and rescue authorities and a £15 referendum principle on Band D bills for police and crime commissioners.

This proposed package of referendum principles strikes a fair balance. The council tax referendum provisions are not a cap, nor do they force councils to set taxes at the threshold level.

The Mayor of London has requested flexibility to levy an additional £20 on Band D bills to the Greater London Authority (GLA) precept to provide extra funding for Transport for London (TfL). The Government has expressed ongoing concern about the management of TfL by this Mayor, and it is disappointing that London taxpayers are having to foot the bill for the GLA's poor governance and decision-making. Whilst the Government will not oppose this request, any decision to increase the precept is solely one for the mayor, who should take into account the pressures that Londoners are currently facing on living costs and his decision to raise his share of council tax by 8.8% last year.

We are also today announcing £100 million of additional funding for local authorities to support the most vulnerable households in England. This funding will allow councils to deliver additional support to the 3.8 million households already receiving council tax support, whilst also providing councils with the resources and flexibility to determine the local approaches to support other vulnerable households in their area.

### Conclusion

These proposals will provide councils with the support they need. It gives certainty, ensures stability, provides significant additional resources for social care, and maintains balance on Council Tax.

I welcome representations from all interested parties on the consultation we have launched today. The consultation will run until 16 January. The Local Government Minister will also be holding engagement sessions for Members of Parliament in the week commencing 9 January 2023.

## TREASURY

### ■ HM Revenue and Customs Update

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Victoria Atkins):**

**[[HCWS465](#)]**

Across the globe, digitalisation of tax is increasingly the norm. Modernisation of UK businesses and the tax system remains of crucial importance to the UK.

Making Tax Digital (MTD) for VAT is already demonstrating the benefits to businesses that digital ways of working can bring.

MTD for Income Tax Self-Assessment (ITSA) will follow, with businesses, self-employed individuals, and landlords keeping digital records and using MTD-compatible software to submit updates to HM Revenue and Customs.

The government understands businesses and self-employed individuals are currently facing a challenging economic environment, and that the transition to MTD for ITSA represents a significant change for taxpayers, their agents, and for HMRC.

That means it is right to take the time needed to work together to maximise those benefits of MTD for small business by implementing gradually.

The government is therefore announcing more time to prepare, so that all businesses, self-employed individuals, and landlords within scope of MTD for Income Tax, but particularly those with the smallest incomes, can adapt to the new ways of working.

The mandation of MTD for ITSA will now be introduced from April 2026, with businesses, self-employed individuals, and landlords with income over £50,000 mandated to join first.

Those with income over £30,000 will be mandated from April 2027.

The government will now review the needs of smaller businesses, and particularly those under the £30,000 threshold. This will look in detail at whether and how the MTD for ITSA service can be shaped to meet the needs of smaller businesses and the best way for them to fulfil their Income Tax obligations. Once that review is complete - and in consultation with businesses, taxpayers, agents, and others - the government will lay out the plans for any further mandation of MTD for ITSA.

Following the phased approach, the government will not extend MTD for ITSA to general partnerships in 2025. It remains committed to introducing MTD for ITSA to partnerships at a later date.

The new penalty system, harmonising late submission and late payment penalties for Income Tax Self-Assessment with those for VAT, will come into effect for taxpayers when they become mandated to join MTD. This makes penalties fairer and simpler for taxpayers. The government will introduce the new penalty system for Income Tax Self-Assessment taxpayers outside the scope of MTD after its introduction for MTD taxpayers.

The government anticipates that most taxpayers within the scope of MTD for ITSA will be able to sign-up voluntarily before they are mandated to do so. HMRC will keep this under review to ensure all taxpayers using the MTD for ITSA service receive a high-quality service.

## ■ Treasury Update

**The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Jeremy Hunt):**

**[\[HCWS458\]](#)**

Today I can inform the House that I have asked the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to prepare a forecast for 15 March 2023 to accompany a Spring Budget.

This forecast, in addition to the forecast that took place in November 2022, will fulfil the obligation for the OBR to produce at least two forecasts in a financial year, as is required by legislation.