

Daily Report

Monday, 16 January 2023

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 January 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:35 P.M., 16 January 2023). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	11	■ Electric Vehicles	17
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	11	■ Electricity Generation: Biofuels and Coal	17
■ Alternative Fuel Payments: Biofuels	11	■ Electricity: Prices	18
■ BGI Group: National Security	11	■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood	18
■ Business: Coronavirus	11	■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Leisure and Swimming Pools	18
■ Business: Dulwich and West Norwood	12	■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Swimming Pools	19
■ Business: Kingston upon Hull	12	■ Energy Bills Rebate	19
■ Carbon Emissions	13	■ Energy Bills Rebate: Kingston upon Hull	21
■ Carbon Emissions: Capital Investment	13	■ Energy Company Obligation: Dulwich and West Norwood	21
■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries	13	■ Energy: Billing	21
■ Coal: Cumbria	14	■ Energy: Disconnections	22
■ Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013	14	■ Energy: Housing	23
■ Copyright: EU Law	15	■ Energy: Meters	23
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: EU Law	15	■ Financial Services: Employment	23
■ District Heating: Fees and Charges	16	■ Flexible Working	24
■ ECO+: Low Incomes	16	■ Geothermal Power: Finance	25
		■ Green Deal Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood	25

■ Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood	25	■ Technology: Investment	36
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood	26	■ Transport: Industrial Disputes	36
■ Heating: Hydrogen	27	■ Utilities: Insolvency	36
■ Hinkley Point C Power Station: Costs	27	■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access	37
■ Industry: Environment Protection	27	■ Warm Home Discount Scheme	37
■ Insolvency: Costs	28	■ Wind Power: Migrant Workers	37
■ Intellectual Property: Regulation	28	■ Zero Hours Contracts	38
■ Iron and Steel	28	CABINET OFFICE	39
■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions	29	■ Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	39
■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Finance	30	■ Civil Servants: DNA	39
■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Regional Planning and Development	31	■ Government Departments: Security	39
■ Natural Gas: Storage	31	■ Imports: Russia	39
■ New Businesses: Dulwich and West Norwood	32	■ Infrastructure: Genomics	40
■ Offshore Industry: Licensing	32	■ Migration: Statistics	40
■ Post Offices: Closures	32	■ National Security: Genomics	40
■ Postal Services: Lancaster	33	■ Prime Minister: Leeds	41
■ Renewable Energy: Dulwich and West Norwood	34	■ Prime Minister: Sign Language	41
■ Sizewell C Power Station	34	DEFENCE	42
■ Small Businesses: Dulwich and West Norwood	34	■ Ajax Lessons Learned Review	42
■ Social Housing		■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement	42
■ Decarbonisation Fund: Dulwich and West Norwood	35	■ Armed Forces: Housing	42
■ Social Rented Housing: Insulation	35	■ HMS Collingwood: Repairs and Maintenance	48
		■ Kosovo: Peacekeeping Operations	49
		■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft	49
		■ Military Aircraft: Helicopters	49
		■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement	50
		■ Warships: Procurement	50
		■ Watchkeeper WK450	50

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ 11 Downing Street: Government Art Collection	50
■ Afghanistan: Cricket	51
■ Betting Shops: Greater London	51
■ Broadband: Prices	52
■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation	53
■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	53
■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: ICT	54
■ Emergency Services: Voluntary Work	54
■ Food Poverty	55
■ Football: Females	56
■ Football: Safety	56
■ Gaming: Investment	57
■ Hillsborough Stadium: Safety	57
■ Holiday Accommodation	57
■ ICT: Innovation	58
■ Semiconductors	58
■ Semiconductors: Investment	59
■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure	59

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Standards	60
■ Apprentices: Taxation	60
■ Childcare	61
■ Children: Social Services	61
■ Department for Education: Energy	62

■ Foster Care	63
■ Foster Care: Asylum	63
■ Foster Care: Higher Education	64
■ Foster Care: Recruitment	64
■ Free School Meals	64
■ Multi-academy Trusts: Pay	65
■ National School Breakfast Programme	66
■ Pre-school Education: Bristol North West	67
■ Pre-school Education: Teachers	67
■ Primary Education: Mental Health Services	67
■ Pupils: Disadvantaged	68
■ School Rebuilding Programme	69
■ School Rebuilding Programme: Solihull	69
■ Schools: Buildings	70
■ Schools: Energy	71
■ Schools: Finance	72
■ Schools: Inspections	72
■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance	72
■ Schools: Staff	73
■ Teachers: Qualifications	75
■ Teachers: Working Hours	75
■ Universities: Business	76

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Fertilisers	77
■ Air Pollution	78
■ Air Pollution: Pollution Control	78
■ Air Pollution: Standards	79
■ Allotments	79

■ Animal Welfare: Labelling	80	■ Marine Environment: North East	88
■ Avian Influenza: Eggs	80	■ Marine Protected Areas: Fisheries	89
■ Clean Air Zones: Bristol	81	■ Milk	90
■ Climate Change: USA	81	■ Packaging: Recycling	90
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Alcoholic Drinks	81	■ Plastics: Packaging	90
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Chief Scientific Advisers	81	■ Poultry: Animal Housing	91
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Pens	82	■ Recycling	91
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Publications	82	■ Recycling: Small Businesses	91
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Trade	82	■ Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare	91
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Written Questions	82	■ Sustainable Farming Incentive	92
■ Eggs: Prices	83	■ Total Allowable Catches	92
■ Electronic Cigarettes	83	■ World Trade Organization: Trade Agreements	93
■ Electronic Cigarettes: Waste Disposal	83	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	93
■ Fisheries: China	84	■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences	93
■ Food	84	■ Baradine Berdei Targuio	95
■ Food: Community Development	85	■ Bulgaria: Visits Abroad	95
■ Food: Cooperatives	86	■ Burkina Faso: Economic Situation and Politics and Government	95
■ Food: Inflation	86	■ Central Asia: Foreign Relations	96
■ Food: Prices	86	■ China: Biotechnology	96
■ Food: Trade Agreements	87	■ China: Diplomatic Service	96
■ Foreign Relations: Australia	87	■ China: Nepal	97
■ Foreign Relations: France	87	■ Climate Change: Finance	98
■ Horticulture: Seasonal Workers	88	■ Colombia: Human Rights	98
		■ Development Aid: Racial Discrimination	99
		■ East Africa: Development Aid	99
		■ East Africa: Food Aid	99

■ Eswatini: Diplomatic Service	100	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	112
■ Eswatini: Politics and Government	100	■ Accident and Emergency Departments	112
■ European Parliament Members: Lobbying	100	■ Accident and Emergency Departments and Ambulance Services: Standards	113
■ Fiji: Foreign Relations	101	■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Staff	113
■ Food Supply	101	■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Addictions	114
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	101	■ Ambulance Services	114
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ethnic Groups	102	■ Ambulance Services: Staff	114
■ Horn of Africa: Droughts	102	■ Ambulance Services: Strikes	115
■ India: Property	103	■ Autism and Learning Disability	115
■ Iran: Politics and Government	103	■ Autism and Learning Disability: Restraint Techniques	116
■ Japan: Diplomatic Service	103	■ Breast Cancer: Chemotherapy	117
■ Members: Correspondence	104	■ Cancer: Diagnosis	117
■ Pakistan: Diplomatic Service	105	■ Cancer: Health Education	118
■ Palestinians: Detainees	106	■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments	118
■ Republika Srpska: Russia	106	■ Care Homes: Visits	118
■ Russia: EU Countries	107	■ Carers: Medical Equipment	119
■ Seán Rooney	107	■ Catapult Centres	120
■ Somalia: Press Freedom	107	■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination	120
■ Somaliland: Politics and Government	108	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	120
■ South Korea: Diplomatic Service	108	■ Defibrillators: Public Places	123
■ The Gambia: Politics and Government	109	■ Dental Services: Children	123
■ Transcaucasus: Roads	109	■ Dental Services: Databases	124
■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict	110	■ Dental Services: Ipswich	124
■ Vietnam: Diplomatic Service	110	■ Dental Services: Newcastle upon Tyne	125
■ War Crimes	111	■ Dentistry	125
■ West Bank: Weapons	111	■ Dentistry: Contracts	126
■ World Health Organization	112	■ Dentistry: Higher Education	126

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Edenred	127	■ Mental Health Services: Secondary Education	143
■ Draft Mental Health Bill	128	■ Middle East Respiratory Syndrome	144
■ Elective Recovery Taskforce	128	■ Naltrexone	144
■ Evusheld	129	■ NHS and Social Services: Protective Clothing	145
■ Functional Neurological Disorder	129	■ NHS: Agency Workers	145
■ Health Professions: Training	129	■ NHS: Drugs	146
■ Health Services	130	■ NHS: Finance	146
■ Health Services: Mental Illness	130	■ NHS: ICT	147
■ Health: Females	130	■ NHS: Industrial Disputes	148
■ Health: Research	131	■ NHS: Labour Turnover and Recruitment	148
■ Heating: Health Hazards	131	■ NHS: Pay	149
■ HIV Infection: Clinics	132	■ NHS: Pay Settlements	149
■ HIV Infection: Health Services	132	■ NHS: Preventive Medicine	150
■ HIV Infection: Mental Health Services	132	■ NHS: Staff	150
■ HIV Infection: Screening	133	■ NHS: Waiting Lists	151
■ HIV Infection: Standards	134	■ Nurses: Apprentices	152
■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages	134	■ Paediatrics: Autism	152
■ Hospitals: Discharges	135	■ Pancreatic Cancer: Health Services	153
■ Incontinence: Health Services	136	■ Pregnancy Loss Review	153
■ Influenza: Vaccination	137	■ Prostate Cancer	154
■ Liothyronine	139	■ Prostate Cancer: Screening	154
■ Medical Equipment: Manufacturing Industries	140	■ Social Prescribing	154
■ Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	140	■ Social Services	155
■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review	141	■ Three Counties Medical School	156
■ Members: Correspondence	142	■ Tobacco	156
■ Mental Health	142	■ Travel: Coronavirus	156
■ Mental Health Services: Safety	143	■ UK Health Security Agency	157
		■ Vaccination: Disinformation	157

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme: Coronavirus	158	■ Slavery	169
■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access	158	■ Violent and Sex Offender Register	170
HOME OFFICE	159	■ Visas: Students	170
■ Action Fraud	159	■ Wind Power: Migrant Workers	171
■ Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986	159	■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review	171
■ Asylum	159	HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	172
■ Asylum: EU Law	160	■ Queen Elizabeth II: Death	172
■ Asylum: Northern Ireland	160	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	172
■ Bail	161	■ Trade Agreements: Dispute Resolution	172
■ Biometric Residence Permits: Standards	161	■ Trade Agreements: Gulf Cooperation Council	173
■ Charities: Finance	162	■ Trade Agreements: India	173
■ Domestic Abuse: Gender Recognition	162	JUSTICE	174
■ Horse Racing: Crime	163	■ Bail	174
■ Immigration and Visas	163	■ Children: Separated People	174
■ Immigration and Visas: Appeals	164	■ Convictions	174
■ Immigration Controls: Industrial Disputes	164	■ County Courts: Wales	175
■ Immigration Controls: Students	164	■ Crimes of Violence: Sentencing	175
■ Mears Group and Migrant Help: Contracts	165	■ Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board	176
■ Members: Correspondence	165	■ Criminal Proceedings: Wales	176
■ Migrants: Electronic Tagging	166	■ Energy: Meters	176
■ Motor Vehicles: Glass	166	■ Judiciary: Equality	177
■ Nurses: Migrant Workers	167	■ Legal Aid Scheme: Asylum	177
■ Offences against Children	167	■ Members: Correspondence	178
■ Police: Staff	168	■ Powers of Attorney	178
■ Refugees: Hotels	168	■ Prison and Probation Service: Staff	179
■ Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme: Conditions of Employment	168	■ Prisoners: Cost of Living	179
		■ Prisons: Ethnic Groups	179

■ Prisons: Mental Health Services	180	■ Housing: Hornsey and Wood Green	194
■ Prisons: Wales	181	■ Housing: Older People	194
■ Probate	181	■ Landlords: Databases	194
■ Rape: Trials	182	■ Leasehold	195
■ Rape: Victims	183	■ Leasehold Advisory Service	195
■ Reoffenders	184	■ Leasehold: Sales	196
■ Treatment of, and Outcomes For, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System Independent Review	184	■ Local Government Finance	196
■ Victims' Commissioner: Public Appointments	185	■ Local Housing Allowance	196
LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	186	■ Members: Correspondence	197
■ Antisemitism	186	■ Night Shelter Transformation Fund: West Midlands	197
■ Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	186	■ Planning Permission	197
■ Buildings: Insulation	186	■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions	198
■ Capital Investment	187	■ Private Rented Housing: Greater London	198
■ Community Housing Fund	187	■ Regional Planning and Development	198
■ Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Solihull	188	■ Rents: Greater London	199
■ Council Tax: Shared Housing	188	■ Social Rented Housing: Inspections	199
■ Domestic Abuse: Solihull	188	■ Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance	199
■ Domestic Violence: Refugees	188	■ Social Services: Solihull	200
■ Elections: Proof of Identity	189	NORTHERN IRELAND	201
■ Empty Property: York	189	■ Integrated Schools: Northern Ireland	201
■ Exercise	190	■ Voluntary Organisations: Northern Ireland	201
■ Ground Rent	191	TRANSPORT	202
■ Hinduism: Hate Crime	192	■ A1 (M): Repairs and Maintenance	202
■ Holiday Accommodation: Change of Use	192	■ A5: Road Traffic	202
■ Homelessness	193	■ Air Routes: Belfast	202
■ Homelessness: Solihull	193		

■ Buses and Pedestrians: Accidents	203	■ Energy: Disability	219
■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions	204	■ Energy: VAT	220
■ Department for Transport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	206	■ Excise Duties (Deferred Payment) Regulations 1992	221
■ Department for Transport: Remote Working	206	■ Gold and Foreign Exchange Reserves: Venezuela	221
■ Electric Scooters	207	■ Goods Vehicle Movement Service	221
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	207	■ Health Services: Pay	222
■ Electric Vehicles: Greater London	211	■ Housing: Disability	222
■ Jet Zero Council	211	■ Large Goods Vehicles: Customs	223
■ Large Goods Vehicles: Dorset	212	■ Members: Correspondence	223
■ Motor Vehicles: Lighting	212	■ National Income	223
■ Motorways	212	■ Orchestras and Theatre: Tax Allowances	223
■ Parking: Private Sector	213	■ Personal Income	224
■ Railways: Chester	213	■ Private Equity	225
■ Railways: Lockerbie	213	■ Public Sector: Borrowing	225
■ Railways: Strikes	214	■ Solar Power: VAT	226
■ Removal Services and Storage	214	■ VAT: Registration	226
■ Roads: Accidents	214	■ Wind Power	227
■ Roads: Construction	215	WALES	228
■ Speed Limits	215	■ Wales Office: Remote Working	228
■ Trailers: Driving Instruction	216	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	228
TREASURY	217	■ Civil Partnerships and Marriage	228
■ Beer: Regulation	217	WORK AND PENSIONS	228
■ Blockchain: Innovation	217	■ Access to Work Programme: Disability	228
■ Customs (Import Duty) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018	218	■ Confined Spaces Regulations 1997	229
■ Economic Growth	218	■ Cost of Living Payments	229
■ Electricity Generation: Taxation	219		
■ Energy Bills Rebate: Billing	219		

■ Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit: Work Capability Assessment	229	■ Unemployment: Disability	237
■ Employment Schemes	232	■ Unemployment: Health	238
■ Employment Schemes: Disability	233	■ Universal Credit: Deductions	240
■ Employment Schemes: West Midlands	233	■ Universal Credit: Disqualification	241
■ Jobcentres: Disability	234	■ Universal Credit: Equality	241
■ Jobcentres: Pay	234	■ Universal Credit: Young People	241
■ Older Workers	235	■ Work Capability Assessment: Expenditure	241
■ Pension Credit: Females	235	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	243
■ Pensions	235	HOME OFFICE	243
■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals	236	■ Reform of the Clandestine Entrant Civil Penalty Scheme	243
■ Social Security Benefits: Disability	236	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	244
■ State Retirement Pensions: Females	236	■ Green Freeports in Scotland	244

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Alternative Fuel Payments: Biofuels**

Liz Twist:

[\[121055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 99945 on Alternative Fuel Payments: Biofuels, when the fixed payment of £150 to off-grid non-domestic consumers will be made.

Graham Stuart:

The Government will deliver support this winter. The UK is in discussions with electricity suppliers and will set out the timings for payments as soon as possible.

■ **BGI Group: National Security**

Catherine West:

[\[121003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made a recent assessment of whether there are potential national security implications of allowing Beijing Genomics Institute Group to operate in the UK.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government takes the importance of security in the handling of genomic data seriously. Any company working in the UK does so under the provisions of the Human Tissue Act 2004 and individuals, companies or agencies would be liable to criminal prosecution should they contravene those provisions.

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Stephen Farry:

[\[117959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of funds lost due to fraud and error in covid-19 loans schemes have been recovered; and what steps his Department is taking to (a) recover lost funds and (b) investigate fraudulent companies.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The delegated nature of the schemes places primary responsibility on lenders to recover money lost to fraud under the lender guarantee agreement.

Government continues to work with lenders, law enforcement, and partners to recover fraudulently obtained loans and protect taxpayers. £320 million worth of Bounce Back Loan facilities have been removed from guarantee cover by lenders to date, including £113 million due to facilities being ineligible for the scheme.

As of October 2022, Insolvency Service action has resulted in 391 director disqualifications and 2 criminal prosecutions, most relating to Bounce Back Loans. The National Investigation Service (NATIS) have also recovered £5.8 million to date.

■ **Business: Dulwich and West Norwood**

Helen Hayes: [\[117711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with businesses in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency on the potential impacts of the cost of living crisis on those businesses.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government recognises the impact rising prices are having on businesses, including those in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, and is engaging with businesses across the UK to understand these challenges and explore ways to mitigate them. The Government has reversed the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs approximately £4,200 on average, the cut to fuel duty for 12 months and raising the Employment Allowance to £5,000. The Energy Bill Relief Scheme will protect SMEs from high energy costs over the winter. In addition, at the Autumn Statement, my Rt Hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years, reducing the burden of business rates for SMEs.

■ **Business: Kingston upon Hull**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[117522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of businesses are owned by women in Kingston upon Hull North constituency.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In the UK in 2021, 19% of SMEs with employees (a three-percentage point increase on 2020) and 20% of firms with no employees (21% in 2020) were female-led. The government does not hold regional data relating to the proportion of female-led business.

The Rose Review is supported by the industry-led 'Rose Review Council for Investing in Female Entrepreneurs' that aims to coordinate industry-led action to increase investment into female-led businesses.

The Government has set an ambition to increase the number of female entrepreneurs by half by 2030, equivalent to 600,000 new entrepreneurs.

■ Carbon Emissions

Fleur Anderson:

[\[120182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Prime Minister on reducing national carbon emissions and tackling the climate emergency.

Graham Stuart:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions on a range of issues with my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister and Ministerial colleagues across Government. Our net zero target remains a Government priority and the net zero transition will provide huge opportunities for jobs, investment, innovation and exports. The Prime Minister is committed to addressing climate change and leaving behind an environment which is better for future generations. At COP27, the Prime Minister pledged to speed up the transition to renewables, to create new high-wage jobs, protect UK energy security and deliver on net zero.

■ Carbon Emissions: Capital Investment

Alexander Stafford:

[\[117798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to improve (a) procurement and (b) delivery of Net Zero project investment.

Graham Stuart:

The Procurement Policy Note PPN06/21 requires suppliers bidding for major government contracts to commit to Net Zero by 2050 and publish a 'Carbon Reduction Plan'. Over 120 procurements have applied the policy, with a total contract value of over £180billion.

The Government has committed £30billion of public green investment and is putting in place regulatory frameworks to spur green private investment, such as through the Energy Bill. These policies are expected to drive over £100billion of private investment and support 480,000 jobs by 2030.

■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Claire Hanna:

[\[117899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help (a) tackle exploitation and (b) improve sustainability in the UK garment supply chain sector.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In 2015 we introduced the Modern Slavery Act which requires businesses with a turnover of £36m or more to publish an annual modern slavery statement stating the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. Since October 2020, a wide group of stakeholders comprising retailers, manufacturers and non-profit organisations have been working with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority under the Apparel and General Merchandise Public

Private Protocol to address poor working, pay, and purchasing practices in the UK supply chain.

The Government is committed to reducing waste and improving sustainability in the UK textiles industry, which is why textiles was identified as a priority waste stream in the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy for England. In 2021 Defra funded WRAP's new ambitious voluntary programme, Textiles 2030. Signatories represent over 62% of all clothing placed on the UK market and commit to ambitious, science-based targets including a 50% reduction in carbon footprint of new products and 30% reduction in water footprint, both by 2030.

■ Coal: Cumbria

Rachael Maskell:

[117697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 92266 on Climate Change Convention, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of opening a new coal mine in Cumbria on the Government's priorities for COP28.

Graham Stuart:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has agreed to grant planning permission for a new coking coal mine in Cumbria, The reasons for the Secretary of State's decision are set out in full in his published letter, which takes into account matters like the demand for coal, climate change and impact on the local economy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/called-in-decision-former-marchon-site-pow-beck-valley-and-area-from-the-former-marchon-site-to-st-bees-coast-whitehaven-cumbria-ref-3271069-7>.

The UK remains committed to playing a leadership role on the global stage on tackling climate change, including through implementing its ambitious net zero commitment and NDC; both of which align with the Paris temperature goal, and in delivering the Glasgow Climate Pact to keep 1.5 in reach.

■ Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013

Stella Creasy:

[120938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Retain EU Law Bill, whether he intends to (a) retain, (b) revoke or (c) replace the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation & Additional Charges) Regulations 2013.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government is committed to a consumer rights framework that protects consumers and drives consumer confidence, while minimising unnecessary costs to business.

We will bring forward proposals to address REUL that impacts consumer protection using the powers in the bill or other available legislative instruments in due course.

■ Copyright: EU Law

Stella Creasy:

[\[119962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, whether he has plans to (a) revoke, (b) replace or (c) retain the Duration of Copyright and Rights in Performance Regulations 1995.

George Freeman:

The Government is reviewing all REUL, including the Duration of Copyright and Rights in Performance Regulations, to decide whether to repeal, replace or preserve it and will communicate more in due course.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: EU Law

Darren Jones:

[\[119202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to assess the EU retained law it wishes to (a) keep, (b) amend and (c) reject at the end of 2023.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The public Retained EU law (REUL) dashboard can be accessed through GOV.UK. To support transparency the dashboard will document the government's progress in accelerating regulatory reform and reclaiming the UK statute book. The government is committed to maintaining high standards across the UK and ensuring that vital protections continue to be upheld in all areas, including compliance with our international obligations. All departments including BEIS are reviewing their REUL to determine whether to repeal, replace or preserve it.

Darren Jones:

[\[119203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill on the effectiveness of parliamentary scrutiny of the Government.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring legislation undergoes the appropriate level of scrutiny.

The Bill contains robust mechanisms that will enable the appropriate scrutiny of any amendments or repeals of retained EU law made by the powers in this Bill. This includes a sifting procedure that will apply to regulations proposed to be made by the negative procedure under the powers to restate and the powers to revoke or replace.

■ District Heating: Fees and Charges

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[121009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of rising energy bills on residents affected by communal heating charges.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[121011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of issuing a rebate for residents affected by rising energy prices due to communal heating charges.

Graham Stuart:

The Government recognises the impact of rising prices on heat network customers, which is why it has implemented measures to support them this winter. This includes the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), which provides support for heat network operators and requires them to pass through support to heat network customers. In addition, heat network consumers with domestic electricity contracts will receive capped electricity rates through the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) for their domestic electricity consumption and will be receiving the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) payment.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[121010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that energy prices are affordable for residents affected by communal heating charges.

Graham Stuart:

The Government recognises the impact of rising prices on heat networks, which is why it has implemented measures to support them this winter. This includes the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), which provides support for heat network operators and requires them to pass through support received to heat network customers. In addition, heat network consumers with domestic electricity contracts will receive capped electricity rates through the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) for their domestic electricity consumption and will be receiving the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) payment.

■ ECO+: Low Incomes

Jim Shannon: [\[121014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the allocated percentage of ECO+ funding was targeted at the low-income eligibility group; and if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of targeting all ECO+ funding at low-income households on the Government's ability to meet its fuel poverty targets by 2030.

Graham Stuart:

The Government published a consultation on the design of ECO+, which proposed a requirement for a minimum of 20% of the obligation to be delivered to low-income households. The Government has not restricted the amount of low-income households that can be supported through the scheme. The remaining obligation is available to both low-income households and a wider customer base who are not eligible for any support through other government energy efficiency schemes.

The Government is analysing responses to the consultation and will publish a response in due course.

■ Electric Vehicles**John Redwood:**[\[117399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the planned transition to electric vehicles on the capacity of local power cable networks.

John Redwood:[\[117400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much extra capacity needs to be created in the high voltage electricity grid for to accommodate planned levels of electric heating and transport.

Graham Stuart:

Government analysis suggests that peak electricity demand could increase from 58GW in 2020 to between 130-190GW by 2050, with approximately 40-50% of this demand coming from electrified heat and 5-10% from electrified road transport. As set out in the Electricity Networks Strategic Framework, published last year, the onshore electricity network could require an additional £100-£240bn of investment to meet net zero by 2050, including £40-60bn in the high-voltage transmission network and £60-180bn in local distribution networks. This investment could directly support 50,000-130,000 jobs across Great Britain and contribute £4-£11bn of Gross Value Added to the economy.

■ Electricity Generation: Biofuels and Coal**John Redwood:**[\[117398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what is the maximum electricity output from all coal and biomass generating plants in the UK that would be able to operate if needed.

Graham Stuart:

As of the end of September 2022, the installed capacity of coal and bioenergy plants in the UK totalled 14.1 GW of electrical power. This comprised 5.9 GW for coal-fired plants (Digest of UK Energy Statistics, DUKES 2022, [Table 5.11](#)) and 8.1 GW for bioenergy plants (Energy Trends, December 2022, [Table 6.1](#)). The latter comprises 4.7 GW for solid (animal and plant) biomass and 3.4 GW for other bioenergy.

■ Electricity: Prices

Duncan Baker:

[\[120176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he expects to announce the outcome of the Government's review of electricity market arrangements (REMA).

Graham Stuart:

The first Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) consultation, which closed in October 2022, sought views gathered from across the energy sector on the UK's objectives and options for reform. A summary of the responses will be published early this year, with further consultation expected in 2023.

■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood

Helen Hayes:

[\[117714\]](#)

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

Graham Stuart:

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme provides a discount on the wholesale element of gas and electricity bills to ensure that all eligible small and medium sized businesses are protected from excessively high energy costs over the winter period. Non-domestic customers do not need to take action or apply to the scheme as support is automatically applied to bills.

■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Leisure and Swimming Pools

Munira Wilson:

[\[120195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review the list of Energy and Trade Intensive Industries eligible for increased support under the Energy Bills Discount Scheme to include swimming pools and leisure centres.

Graham Stuart:

There are currently no plans to review the list of Energy and Trade Intensive Industries eligible for support under the Energy Bill Discount Scheme. The Government has taken a consistent approach to identifying the most energy and trade intensive sectors, with all sectors that meet agreed thresholds for energy and trade intensity eligible for Energy and Trade Intensive Industries support. These thresholds have been set at sectors falling above the 80th percentile for energy intensity and 60th percentile for trade intensity, plus any sectors eligible for the existing energy compensation and exemption schemes.

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[121110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason (a) sports and leisure centres and (b) swimming pools were not included in the list of sectors eligible for the Energy and Trade Intensive Industries scheme.

Graham Stuart:

The Government recognises that some businesses are particularly exposed to energy cost increases and are less able to pass these costs through to their customers. The Government has therefore decided to provide a more generous level of support to certain businesses for a further year starting from April 2023. The firms eligible for the Energy and Trade Intensive Industries scheme are those operating within sectors that fall above the 80th percentile for energy intensity and 60th percentile for trade intensity, and those within sectors eligible for the existing Energy Intensive Industries schemes. These sectors have been published on GOV.UK.

■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Swimming Pools**Sir Desmond Swayne:**[\[120834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to include public sector swimming pools within the scope of the energy and trade intensive industries which will receive additional government support with energy bills through the Energy Relief Discount Scheme.

Graham Stuart:

There are currently no plans to review the list of Energy and Trade Intensive Industries eligible for support under the Energy Bill Discount Scheme. The Government has taken a consistent approach to identifying the most energy and trade intensive sectors, with all sectors that meet agreed thresholds for energy and trade intensity eligible for Energy and Trade Intensive Industries support. These thresholds have been set at sectors falling above the 80th percentile for energy intensity and 60th percentile for trade intensity, plus any sectors eligible for the existing energy compensation and exemption schemes.

■ Energy Bills Rebate**Sir Geoffrey Cox:**[\[117510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to make further funding available to households who do not qualify for the Energy Bill Support Scheme, including off grid households.

Graham Stuart:

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will provide £400 support for around 900,000 households without a domestic electricity supply, including off-grid households. Those eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will need to submit a short online form via the Government's GOV.UK pages, with the application portal due to open later in January.

Martyn Day:[\[117708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that eligible households are aware of (a) how and (b) when to apply for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding.

Graham Stuart:

On 19 December, the Government publicly announced the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding on Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vital-help-with-energy-bills-on-the-way-for-millions-more-homes-across-great-britain-and-northern-ireland>. The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will open for applications in Great Britain in January 2023. In addition to this announcement, the Government has been engaging with stakeholders in order to provide communications to the groups that would be eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding.

David Linden:**[120025]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Written Statement of 19 December 2022 on Energy Schemes Update, HCWS466, when he plans to (a) publish details on eligibility and (b) open the portal on gov.uk for Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding.

Graham Stuart:

On 19 December, the Government publicly announced the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vital-help-with-energy-bills-on-the-way-for-millions-more-homes-across-great-britain-and-northern-ireland>. The application portal for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is due to open on gov.uk later this month and will include an overview of eligibility.

Tonia Antoniazzi:**[120034]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding scheme will open.

Graham Stuart:

The application portal for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is due to open later this month.

Sarah Olney:**[121062]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding, when the online portal for applications for that scheme will open on gov.uk; and when draft guidance on that scheme will be issued to local authorities

Graham Stuart:

The application portal for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is due to open later this month. In addition, the guidance on the scheme is expected to be issued to Local Authorities shortly.

■ **Energy Bills Rebate: Kingston upon Hull**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[117523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an estimate of the total funding provided through the Energy Bill Support Scheme in Kingston upon Hull.

Graham Stuart:

The Government publishes monthly data about the payments made under the Energy Bills Support Scheme in England, Wales and Scotland. The EBSS payment data is collected from suppliers and broken down by energy supplier and payment type, but the Government does not collect or hold data relating to specific regions. The latest data were published on 20 December and monthly updates can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-support-scheme-payments-made-by-electricity-suppliers-to-customers>.

■ **Energy Company Obligation: Dulwich and West Norwood**

Helen Hayes:

[117717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have had Energy Company Obligation scheme measures installed in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Department publishes information on the number of households in receipt of Energy Company Obligation scheme measures by Parliamentary Constituency in Table 4.5 accompanying the latest Household Energy Efficiency Statistics release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-statistics-headline-release-december-2022>).

■ **Energy: Billing**

Rachael Maskell:

[119999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure energy companies notify customers before increasing direct debit payments.

Graham Stuart:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to energy companies on 26 November asking them to make their systems more responsive so that direct debits better reflect the amount of energy being used. It is also an area of focus for Ofgem's Market Compliance Reviews where Ofgem have taken steps to ensure credit balances are kept at an appropriate level and that direct debits are not set too high. The latest review can be found here: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/ofgem-launches-new-proposals-strengthen-energy-market-and-protect-consumers>.

Drew Hendry: [\[120100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of energy company compliance in instances when customers ask for a positive account balance to be refunded.

Drew Hendry: [\[120101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has (a) made an assessment of and (b) holds any data on the length of time it takes for customers requesting that an energy company repay a positive account balance for that balance to be repaid.

Graham Stuart:

Regulatory compliance is a matter for Ofgem. The Department does not hold data on this issue.

Under existing rules set by Ofgem, suppliers must automatically refund outstanding credit balances within 10 days of issuing a final bill. Suppliers must also refund accumulated credit on request by an existing customer in a timely manner unless they have reasonable grounds not to. They must explain the reason to the customer.

Drew Hendry: [\[120103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with Ofgem on any actions they plan to take to prevent energy companies from increasing direct debit payments for customers when those customers have not been informed of those increases occurring.

Graham Stuart:

Ministers and officials regularly meet with Ofgem to discuss a range of energy retail issues.

In 2022 Ofgem undertook a market compliance review and told a number of energy suppliers to take immediate and urgent action, after finding a range of weaknesses or failings with direct debits.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has also written to domestic suppliers setting out his expectations on consumer direct debits.

■ Energy: Disconnections

Dan Carden: [\[120142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 114793 on Health: Energy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of expected levels of self-disconnection of prepayment meters in winter 2022-23.

Graham Stuart:

The Government remains committed to protecting consumers from high energy costs, especially the most vulnerable. In the 2022 Autumn statement, the Government announced that households on means-tested benefits will receive an additional £900

Cost of Living payment in 2023-24. Pensioner households will receive an additional £300 Cost of Living payment, and individuals on disability benefits will receive an additional £150 Disability Cost of Living payment in 2023-24. This is additional to the £37 billion support package announced earlier in 2022, with millions of the most vulnerable households receiving at least £1,200 of one-off support to help with the cost of living.

■ **Energy: Housing**

Helen Hayes:

[\[117712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase the rate of energy efficiency measure installations in homes in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is committed to improving the energy performance of homes across the country, including in Dulwich and West Norwood.

The Government is already investing £6.6 billion over this parliament on decarbonising heat and energy efficiency measures.

An additional £6 billion of new Government funding, announced in the Autumn Statement, will be made available from 2025 to 2028. This provides long-term funding certainty, supporting the growth of supply chains, and ensuring the Government can scale up delivery over time.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Matt Rodda:

[\[117793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an estimate of the numbers of consumers switched to prepayment meters without consultation in 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Department does not collect this data. Moving a customer to a prepayment meter without consultation is a breach of Ofgem's regulation and should be reported. Ofgem rules set out clear guidance on how suppliers need to consult customers before switching them to prepayment meters, and the processes suppliers have to go through before such a switch.

■ **Financial Services: Employment**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[117594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to implement the recommendations of the report by the Socio-Economic Diversity Taskforce entitled Breaking the Class Barrier: Recommendations for Building a More Socio-Economically Diverse Financial and Professional Services Sector, published in November 2022.

Seema Malhotra:[\[117595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help increase socio-economic diversity in the leadership of (a) financial and (b) professional service companies.

Seema Malhotra:[\[117596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of increased socio-economic diversity in the (a) financial and (b) professional services industry on the wider economy.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy alongside HM Treasury commissioned the City of London Corporation to set up an industry led Socio-Economic Diversity Taskforce in 2020. The report presented a powerful case for the benefits to business of such diversity and BEIS welcomes the recommendations of the report. BEIS has set up an action plan following the recommendations and will work with industry through the Professional & Business Services Council membership and other Government Departments to support progress.

BEIS will promote the recommendations through the Professional & Business Services Council Skills and Inclusion working group. This group is focused on access to skills, understanding future skills needs and career development for the sector including social mobility and economic diversity.

■ Flexible Working

Justin Madders:[\[117655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106436, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the rate of acceptance for flexible working requests.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In December, the Government published its response to a consultation that considered changes to the right to request flexible working. The response commits to a range of measures that will help to maintain and increase acceptance rates. These include:

- making the right to request flexible working a day one right;
- introducing a new requirement for employees to consult with the employer when they intend to reject their flexible working request; and
- allowing two statutory requests in any 12-month period (rather than the current one).

The response also commits to developing guidance on how to make and administer temporary requests for flexible working.

■ **Geothermal Power: Finance**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[119866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has considered introducing a floor mechanism for the development of geothermal energy schemes as part of pot 2 arrangements with Allocation Round 5 of Contracts for Difference.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is currently developing auction parameters for Allocation Round 5, including any for 'Pot 2' technologies such as geothermal, taking into account evidence from stakeholders. Full auction parameters will be published in a Budget Notice ahead of the round opening in March this year.

■ **Green Deal Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood**

Helen Hayes:

[\[117718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many energy-saving home improvement projects have been completed through the Green Deal in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The Department estimates that in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, between one and five projects are live (all measures installed but not yet paid off), and between one and five projects have been completed (all measures installed and paid off). To manage the risk of revealing personal or commercial data, non-zero counts of less than five for a small geographic area are not released.

Data covers the period from May 2013 to October 2022.

■ **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood**

Helen Hayes:

[\[117719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have been retrofitted as a result of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, as of 31 October 2022.

Helen Hayes:

[\[117724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have been retrofitted through the Green Homes Grant in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

Information on the number of households upgraded by parliamentary constituency under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme can be found in table 11 accompanying the latest Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) release

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/green-homes-grant-local-authority-delivery-lad-and-home-upgrade-grant-hug-release-december-2022>).

Information on the number of households with at least one measure installed by parliamentary constituency under the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme can be found in table 4.4 accompanying the latest Green Homes Grant Voucher release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/green-homes-grant-voucher-release-october-2022>).

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Dulwich and West Norwood

Helen Hayes: [117721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of jobs supported by the Green Homes Grant support in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Graham Stuart:

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the voucher scheme, including analysis of scheme outcomes and evidence collected from scheme applicants and other stakeholders, is being undertaken by an independent research organisation. The evaluation includes an assessment of the effect of the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme on jobs at national level with findings available in Summer 2023.

Helen Hayes: [117722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what was the average grant given to homeowners with successful applications under Green Homes Grant voucher scheme in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Helen Hayes: [117723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications for the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme were successful in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Graham Stuart:

The Department estimates that the average government contribution per successful household application to the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency was £3,580 for the main scheme and £5,990 for the low-income scheme.

Information on the number of applications by application stage for the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme by parliamentary constituency can be found in table 4.4 accompanying the latest Green Homes Grant Voucher release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/green-homes-grant-voucher-release-october-2022>).

■ Heating: Hydrogen

Justin Madders:

[\[117986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of delivering the hydrogen village trial.

Graham Stuart:

The early planning and detailed design work for the hydrogen village trial is being funded by Ofgem, with contributions from gas network shareholders. The Government anticipates that later stages will be funded by BEIS, Ofgem and the private sector. The final trial location and level of public funding will be decided later this year, following the submission of funding applications from the gas networks in March.

■ Hinkley Point C Power Station: Costs

Alan Brown:

[\[117668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cost of the Hinkley Connection Project.

Alan Brown:

[\[117669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress has been made on the construction of the Hinkley Connection Project; if he will make an estimate of the completion date for that project; and if he will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

The Hinkley Connection Project is led by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET), the electricity transmission owner in England and Wales. Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, is responsible for the regulation of network projects. NGET sets the associated allowances, timelines and incentives through the electricity transmission network price control.

■ Industry: Environment Protection

Alexander Stafford:

[\[117799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) engage with regulators on and (b) develop a market for investment in green industry.

Graham Stuart:

The Net Zero Strategy set out examples of how the Government is working with different regulators, for example on the publication of the Strategic Policy Statement for Ofgem.

The Government is working with regulators including FCA, the Bank of England, and IFRS to roll out climate related disclosures.

Driving investment into UK green energy and industries is a priority for this Government. Since March 2021, the Government has committed £30 billion of domestic green investment. The Government is working to put in place the regulatory frameworks that will spur investment into green projects – such as through the Energy Bill.

■ **Insolvency: Costs**

John Spellar: [\[117441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he will review trends in the level of costs charged by insolvency practitioners.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government currently has no plans to review trends in the fees charged by Insolvency Practitioners.

The insolvency regime provides for the regulation of Insolvency Practitioners including the fees they charge. The Insolvency Rules 2016 require Insolvency Practitioners to provide creditors with an upfront estimate of costs that acts as a cap on fees and gives a process for challenge, including through the courts if necessary.

Insolvency Practitioners are regulated by Recognised Professional Bodies who apply the regulatory standards contained in the Insolvency Practice rules to ensure fees are fair and reasonable reflections of the work undertaken in an insolvency appointment.

■ **Intellectual Property: Regulation**

Hilary Benn: [\[117468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason it is his Department's policy that intellectual property practitioners who represent businesses before the Intellectual Property Office are not required to be regulated in the UK.

George Freeman:

The Government supports appropriate regulation of intellectual property practitioners where this is necessary to ensure that applicants and rights holders are effectively represented.

We have not seen a need to change the current regulatory framework. The Government continues to welcome evidence from practitioners and consumers if they consider there to be deficiencies in the current system.

■ **Iron and Steel**

Bill Esterson: [\[119979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) level of strategic importance of the UK steel sector as a British sovereign capability and (b) the role of the UK steel sector in (i) national and (ii) economic security.

Bill Esterson:

[\[119981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of steel production in the UK compared to countries in the EU.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government recognises the importance of a strategic steel industry to the UK. We remain committed to a decarbonised and sustainable sector which supports local economic growth and boosts national security and industrial resilience.

The Government closely monitors the level of steel production in the UK. Global economic conditions continue to be challenging for the industry and the Government is working with the sector, the unions and devolved regions to support its transition to a globally competitive, sustainable, and low-carbon future.

Bill Esterson:

[\[120909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of declines in the amount of steel produced in the UK on the (a) manufacturing, (b) rail and (c) automotive sectors.

Bill Esterson:

[\[120910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which stakeholders he has met with to discuss trends in the level of production of steel in the UK.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has met with executives from Tata and British Steel on a number of occasions, most recently in December. I meet regularly with representatives from the steel sector to discuss industry matters and how to secure the best outcomes for the UK economy, including sectors with dependencies on steel such as manufacturing, rail and automotive.

■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions

Bill Esterson:

[\[119980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the level of carbon emissions from the steelworks in (a) Scunthorpe and (b) Port Talbot.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government holds carbon emissions data as part of the UK Emission Trading Scheme (ETS). However, ETS emissions are not necessarily the emissions for a whole site – they only cover the site's activities which are regulated under the ETS. The Government does not hold data on any non-ETS emissions. ETS emissions data at site level are public information and can be found in the UK ETS Registry data website, in the "Compliance Reports" section.

The UK ETS data for the Scunthorpe and Port Talbot steelworks is:

- a) The verified emissions in 2021 for Scunthorpe Integrated Iron & Steel Works site were 4,679,901 tonnes CO₂e.
- b) The verified emissions in 2021 for Port Talbot Steelworks site were 6,643,839 tonnes CO₂e.

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Finance

Darren Jones:

[117860]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Government has provided to Local Enterprise Partnerships in each financial year since 2011.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The following table shows total allocations since the financial year 2011/12. These figures do not include wider programme spending on which Local Enterprise Partnerships provided strategic advice, but where funding was provided to another accountable organisation.

2011/12	£4,994,658
2012/13	£4,875,000
2013/14	£20,372,850
2014/15	£20,385,150
2015/16	£20,678,000
2016/17	£19,578,000
2017/18	£19,078,000
2018/19	£25,787,500
2019/20	£25,678,000
2020/21	£19,078,000
2021/22	£19,078,000
2022/23	£13,953,000

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Regional Planning and Development

Darren Jones: [\[117861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding his Department has provided to each Local Enterprise Partnership to finance the development of local economic plans since 2011.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government first commissioned Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to submit local Strategic Economic Plans by March 2014. Since 2013/14, the Government has provided £4.625m in core funding to LEPs to facilitate, amongst other things, the development and delivery of these plans.

Darren Jones: [\[117862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of the 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships submitted local economic plans; and how many and what proportion of these were subsequently approved by his Department.

Darren Jones: [\[117863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of the local economic plans drafted by Local Enterprise Partnerships have been implemented.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In March 2014, all Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) submitted Strategic Economic Plans. These plans have been updated from time to time in response to changes in economic circumstances. The Government's current [national local growth assurance framework](#) highlights that LEPs will determine their own specific priorities and develop an evidence-based strategy that identifies local strengths and challenges, future opportunities and the action needed to boost productivity, earning power and competitiveness across their area.

These plans are not specifically approved by Government, although we work with each LEP to identify and develop investment opportunities arising from the strategies, and ensure that any public funding has monitoring and evaluating plans in place. This includes an annual financial statement and a rolling schedule of funded projects.

■ Natural Gas: Storage

Andrew Rosindell: [\[117497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to improve gas storage capacity in the UK.

Graham Stuart:

Energy Security is a priority for this government. Gas storage has been an effective source of system flexibility.

The Government works with storage operators, as well as the regulatory community, to explore options around the role storage can play in supporting future gas system resilience.

The Government welcomes the decision taken by Centrica to reopen the Rough gas storage site at its own cost and has engaged with the company to understand its plans. Rough, at current capacity, will provide an approximately 50% increase in British gas storage capacity over this winter.

■ **New Businesses: Dulwich and West Norwood**

Helen Hayes: [\[117716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with the Minister for Women and Equalities on improving accessibility to entrepreneurship and business ownership for people with protected characteristics in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government is fully committed to supporting businesses and creating the best conditions for enterprise so that everyone, whatever their background, has the means and know-how to start and grow a business. We are supporting early-stage entrepreneurs from all backgrounds through the Start-Up Loans Company which provides funding and intensive support to new entrepreneurs. Since 2012, 40% of Start Up Loans have gone to women, worth over £341m and 20% of loans worth 183m have gone to Black, Asian, and Ethnic-minority business (as at October 2022). 411 SMEs in Dulwich and West Norwood have received loans to the value of £3,364,909 as of November 2022.

■ **Offshore Industry: Licensing**

John Redwood: [\[117397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new gas and oil fields in the UK have received production licences in the last six months.

Graham Stuart:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 28 December 2022 to Question [112036](#), the answer to which applied to both oil and gas fields.

■ **Post Offices: Closures**

Catherine West: [\[117767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of (a) whether the Post Office is providing and (b) the potential impact of the temporary closure of Post Offices on the provision of a convenient and accessible service to all customers.

Kevin Hollinrake:

Almost 93% of the population live within one mile (and over 99% within three miles) of their nearest Post Office. The branch network is subject to impact from external changes which are normally outside the control of the Post Office, such as postmasters retiring or moving on, or the loss of access to buildings due to lease arrangements expiring. In such instances the time it takes to restore service will vary depending on the individual local circumstances in each case. The Government-set Access Criteria ensures that however the network changes, services remain within local reach of all citizens.

■ Postal Services: Lancaster

Tim Farron: [117543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of letters bearing first class stamps were delivered by Royal Mail within three days in the LA postcode area in the last year.

Tim Farron: [117544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of letters bearing first class stamps were delivered by Royal Mail the following day in the last year.

Tim Farron: [117545]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of letters bearing second class stamps were delivered by Royal Mail within three days in the LA postcode area in the last year.

Tim Farron: [117546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of letters handled by Royal Mail in England were not delivered within 5 days in the last year.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government does not hold this information.

Royal Mail, as the universal service provider, is required to publish quarterly statistics reports, and an annual overview, on its quality of service performance against targets set and reviewed by Ofcom, the postal industry regulator.

Ofcom has powers to investigate and take enforcement action where Royal Mail fails to achieve the regulated standards, without sufficient justification.

Royal Mail's reports are available to view on its website:

www.internationaldistributionsservices.com/en/about-us/regulation/quality-of-service/.

■ Renewable Energy: Dulwich and West Norwood

Helen Hayes: [\[117713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase funding to renewable energy sources in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Graham Stuart:

Local authorities and private investors can bid for grant funding for renewable innovation or community-based renewable schemes. The Contract for Difference (CfD) scheme, the Government's main mechanism for supporting low carbon generation, is awarded through a competitive process, ensuring that the most cost-effective projects are supported regardless of their location. Future rounds will run annually to help accelerate deployment of renewable power.

■ Sizewell C Power Station

Alan Brown: [\[117670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of whether the transmission grid would be capable of handling the proposed output from Sizewell C power station.

Graham Stuart:

Network companies are responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient network capacity to support generation and demand on the grid. Ofgem, as the independent regulator, is responsible for incentivising them to do so efficiently through the electricity network price control.

■ Small Businesses: Dulwich and West Norwood

Helen Hayes: [\[117710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many small and medium sized enterprises in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency have received Government funding for support with the cost of living crisis.

Kevin Hollinrake:

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

Businesses in Dulwich and West Norwood will have benefitted from the Government's reversal of the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs approximately £4,200 on average, the cut to fuel duty for 12 months and raising the Employment Allowance to £5,000. The Energy Bill Relief Scheme will protect SMEs from high energy costs over the winter. In addition, at the Autumn Statement, my Rt Hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years, reducing the burden of business rates for SMEs.

Support is also available to SMEs across the UK through the Recovery Loan Scheme and the Start Up loan scheme which has provided 411 SMEs in Dulwich and West Norwood loans to the value of £3,364,909 as of November 2022.

■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Dulwich and West Norwood

Helen Hayes:

[117715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of homes that have been retrofitted through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Graham Stuart:

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period. The SHDF Demonstrator and Wave 1 awarded a combined total of around £240m of grant funding to Local Authorities, with data held on local authority-led projects rather than at a constituency level. The SHDF Wave 2.1 competition, which closed on 18th November 2022, will allocate up to £800m of grant funding, with successful projects likely to be notified in March 2023.

Helen Hayes:

[117720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have been retrofitted as a result of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, as of 31 October 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period. The SHDF Demonstrator and Wave 1 awarded a combined total of around £240m of grant funding to Local Authorities, with data held on local authority-led projects rather than at a constituency level. The SHDF Wave 2.1 competition, which closed on 18th November 2022, will allocate up to £800m of grant funding, with successful projects likely to be notified in March 2023.

■ Social Rented Housing: Insulation

Alexander Stafford:

[117797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to UK100's report entitled End the wait. Insulate. Social housing energy efficiency and the energy crisis, published November 2022, what assessment he has made of the impact on his Department's policies of that report's recommendations on a place-based approach to allocating funding for social housing energy efficiency measures.

Graham Stuart:

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period to improve the energy performance of social homes. Grant funding allocated to SHDF has totalled over £1bn.

In the Autumn Statement the Government announced £6 billion of new Government funding that will be made available from 2025 to 2028 for energy efficiency. The

design of future waves of the SHDF will consider all relevant evidence to ensure effective delivery.

■ Technology: Investment

Carol Monaghan:

[120084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to encourage more UK-based late-stage investment in (a) semiconductor manufacturing and (b) other deep technology.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government recognises the importance of scale-up finance for breakthrough technology firms. Since launch in 2018, British Patient Capital (BPC) has committed more than £1.6bn into innovative later stage firms, with a further £9.1bn invested alongside it by private investors.

Future Fund: Breakthrough, launched by BPC in 2021, is a £375m programme enabling direct co-investment into promising later stage R&D-intensive UK businesses. The programme has made twelve investments totalling over £80m, including six investments into deeptech companies, making BPC the UK's most active late-stage investor in deeptech in rounds above £30m. BPC recently invested £10m in Cambridge-based manufacturer PragmatIC Semiconductor.

■ Transport: Industrial Disputes

Justin Madders:

[117652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 16 December 2022 to Question 106432 on Zero Hours Contracts, which stakeholders considered the regulations to be an important deterrent and an effective and proportionate means of realising the policy objective.

Kevin Hollinrake:

As part of the Exclusivity Terms in Zero Hours Contracts (Redress) Regulations post implementation review we contacted a range of business representatives, worker representatives, employment agencies and legal representatives. We also contacted organisations in sectors where zero hours contracts are most common, including the health and social care sector. The publication of the review can be found [here](#).

■ Utilities: Insolvency

Drew Hendry:

[120099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure customer deposits with energy companies are protected in the event of energy company insolvency.

Graham Stuart:

Customer deposits with energy suppliers are already protected in the event of supplier insolvency through the Supplier of Last Resort process and Special Administration Regime.

Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[119885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of changes to the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing Access rebate on (a) foreign direct investment into UK research and development, (b) employment levels and (c) the size of the life sciences industry.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 10th January 2023 to Question [113163](#).

Warm Home Discount Scheme**Emma Hardy:**[\[117922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing people to choose whether to receive the Warm Home Discount from their gas supplier rather than their electricity supplier.

Graham Stuart:

Households eligible for a Warm Home Discount rebate receive their payment on their electricity supply by default to ensure it is clear which supplier is accountable for providing the rebate. This also reduces the risk of rebate payments being duplicated or missed between different suppliers.

Where a customer is eligible for a rebate and receives both electricity and gas from one supplier, known as a dual fuel supply, they may request for the rebate to be provided on their gas supply. This is at the discretion of the energy supplier.

Wind Power: Migrant Workers**Karl Turner:**[\[120950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has held with the Home Office on the offshore wind labour market following the introduction of the Offshore Wind Workers Immigration Rules concession 2017.

Graham Stuart:

The Department has not had any discussions with the Home Office on this topic.

■ Zero Hours Contracts

Justin Madders: [117653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 16 December 2022 to Question 106432 on Zero Hours Contracts, if he will make an assessment of the reasons why there have been very few claims related to the regulations.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Exclusivity Terms in Zero Hours Contracts (Redress) Regulations post implementation review concluded that having a route of redress had improved the functioning of the labour market. Stakeholders representing workers stated that if a worker is raising an issue in this area, then it is often alongside a range of other concerns such as a reduction in shifts, short notice cancellation of shifts, or payment below National Minimum Wage, therefore, individuals may be more likely to raise a dispute in relation to another point of law rather than these regulations specifically.

Justin Madders: [117654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 16 December 2022 to Question 106433, if he will estimate how many workers who have a zero-hour contract in their main job have taken a second job since the introduction of the Exclusivity Terms in Zero Hours Contracts (Redress) Regulations 2015.

Kevin Hollinrake:

BEIS published a post-implementation review for the regulations in 2021. The review includes analysis of the Labour Force Survey of people on zero-hour contracts in their main job who have a second job. The publication of the review can be found [here](#).

Justin Madders: [117656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 106439, if he will make an assessment of the reasons for the rise in the number of people recorded as looking for an additional job between (a) April and June and (b) July and September 2022.

Kevin Hollinrake:

Zero-hour contracts provide workers with greater flexibility to adjust their working hours and take on multiple jobs if they wish to do so. The Government introduced a ban on exclusivity clauses for zero-hour contracts in 2015.

We monitor the available data on zero-hours contracts on an on-going basis. According to the ONS published data, the estimate of the number of people on zero-hour contracts looking for an additional job in July – September 2022 is based on a small sample size and should be used with caution. The ONS also caution against comparing consecutive three-month periods when data is not seasonally adjusted.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:**[\[114582\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is his Department's policy that government procurement cards should not be used for purchases (a) of alcohol and (b) that could be made via an alternative compliant purchasing route.

Alex Burghart:

The Pan-government procurement card policy does not itself prohibit the purchase of alcohol using a procurement card; however it does state that procurement cards must never be used to make purchases contrary to departments' strategies and purchasing policies.

Guidance is provided to departments on the consumption of alcohol in the workplace and departments must ensure that they have policies in place to implement this.

■ Civil Servants: DNA**Catherine West:**[\[121006\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he is taking steps to protect genetic data of civil servants from potential security threats posed by surveillance technology companies.

Jeremy Quin:

Genetic data of Civil Servants is very rarely held by Government. There are a range of measures in place to protect the personal data of Civil Servants in addition to the UK's robust data protection laws.

■ Government Departments: Security**Catherine West:**[\[121002\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government Security Group's recommendation to protect government's systems, people and estate from Chinese surveillance technology companies applies to genetic surveillance companies, including Beijing Genomics Institute.

Jeremy Quin:

On 24 November, the Government issued a Written Ministerial Statement on surveillance equipment. However, the instruction relates solely to visual surveillance systems on the government estate.

■ Imports: Russia**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[117938\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value of imports from Russia was in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 6 January is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to 117938 [UKSA_Response_to_PQ117938 (1).pdf]

■ Infrastructure: Genomics**Catherine West:**[\[120065\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is his policy that the genomics industry is critical national infrastructure; and whether that industry should be included within the UK Government Resilience Framework, published on 19 December 2022.

Catherine West:[\[121004\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure the government's new resilience framework focuses on the genomics industry in the context of the Government's strategic approach to economic and societal resilience and privacy, ethical and national security risks facing the industry, including from systemic competitors based in China.

Jeremy Quin:

While the genomics industry is not designated as critical national infrastructure in the UK, the UK Government Resilience Framework sets out the Government's ambition to work in partnership across sectors to ensure they are able to fully contribute to national resilience whilst strengthening their own.

■ Migration: Statistics**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[117791\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Office for National Statistics plans to publish detailed migration data from the 2021 Census.

Jeremy Quin:

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 6 January is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ 117791 [UKSA_Response_to_PQ117791 (1).pdf]

■ National Security: Genomics**Catherine West:**[\[121005\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Genomic Surveillance on UK national security.

Jeremy Quin:

The UK Government believes that sharing biodata with all bona fide researchers focused on human health is essential to fostering innovation and enabling the rapid development of safe and effective medical countermeasures.

However, we recognise the dual-use potential of new and emerging technologies. This is why the Cabinet Office has conducted a thorough assessment of associated risks through the ongoing refresh of the biological security strategy. In implementing the strategy, we will engage with key organisations such as Genomics England to ensure the UK maintains effective policies which protect National Security while fostering innovation as science and technology evolve.

■ Prime Minister: Leeds

Louise Haigh: [\[120061\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was of the Prime Minister's flight to and from Leeds on 9 January 2023.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[120144\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons he took a private jet on a journey to Leeds on 9 January 2023 instead of other forms of transport.

Daisy Cooper: [\[120150\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was for the Prime Ministerial visit by private aircraft to Chapel Allerton on 9 January 2023; and for what reason an alternative sustainable form of transport was not used.

Fleur Anderson: [\[120181\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was of the flight taken by the Prime Minister and officials from London to Leeds on 9 January 2023.

Jeremy Quin:

All Ministerial travel is undertaken using efficient and cost-effective travel arrangements.

As a whole, domestic flights within the United Kingdom allow Ministers to visit more parts of the United Kingdom in the time available, particularly areas further away from London, and reduce the need for overnight accommodation for Ministers and accompanying staff. Security considerations are also taken into account.

Details of departmental business travel are published in the Cabinet Office audited annual report and accounts.

■ Prime Minister: Sign Language

Lilian Greenwood: [\[119938\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what guidance his Department provides on the sizes of the audience at (a) his and (b) other official media events that require British Sign Language interpretation under the Equality Act 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to [PQ 59318](#).

There is no minimum audience size for which British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation must be provided. However, BSL interpretation is provided for the vast majority of No.10 press conferences through the BBC. Speeches from the Prime Minister outside of Parliament are also made available in transcript form on GOV.UK.

The Government Communication Service continues to ensure cross-government teams comply with the Equality Act 2010 when undertaking any form of public communication, including making early decisions on reasonable adjustments and the provision of accessible formats such as BSL.

DEFENCE**■ Ajax Lessons Learned Review****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[120885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the AJAX Lessons Learned Review will include reference to the role of contractual weaknesses which may have contributed to the delayed delivery of the platform.

Alex Chalk:

Clive Sheldon KC was formally appointed on 19 May 2022 to lead the independent Ajax Lessons Learned Review within the scope set out in his terms of reference, published on the Government website at the below link:

[The Ajax Lessons Learned Review – Terms of Reference - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ajax-lessons-learned-review-terms-of-reference)

■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[120886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse was of legal advice sought by his Department in relation to the Armoured Cavalry programme.

Alex Chalk:

I will write to the right hon. Member with the requested information shortly.

■ Armed Forces: Housing**John Healey:**[\[118818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution by the Minister for Defence Procurement on 20 December 2022, Official Report, column 150, how he is measuring improvement.

John Healey:[\[119902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place in the Library of the House copies of the daily briefings his Department is receiving from (a) Pinnacle, (b) Vivo and (c) Amey.

Alex Chalk:

Ministers have required daily dashboards to be provided which detail response rates to heating loss in Service Family Accommodation.

These are being used to measure performance improvements and hold contractors to account to deliver against their Acceptable Level of Performance target of resolving heating loss within 48 hrs.

A copy of the latest dashboard will be placed in the Library of the House.

John Healey:[\[118824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 111519 on Armed Forces: Housing, for what reason the Regional Accommodation Maintenance Service contract for Northern and Central regions does not record information on the number of investigations into (a) damp and (b) mould.

Alex Chalk:

The Regional Accommodation Maintenance Service contractor for Northern and Central regions does record information on the number of investigations into (a) damp and (b) mould. However, the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 111519, stated that Amey do not record that information in the format requested and that to provide it in that format would involve disproportionate cost. However, since 20 December, Amey have gathered this information from their suppliers in a one-off exercise. Since the Future Defence Infrastructure Services contracts came into service on 1 April 2022, of the 1,628 tasks raised under the damp and mould task category, 404 have been issued under instruction to a Damp and Mould surveyor and 77 of these have been returned. The Department continues to work with its Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services contractors to refine and standardise the way in which data is collected and analysed.

John Healey:[\[118825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel have moved into (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation with non-habitable failures, in each year since 2015.

Alex Chalk:

The Department's policy is that no Service family should be moved into Service Family Accommodation (SFA) with non-habitable failures.

If, at the scheduled Move in, any SFA is deemed to be non-habitable, the family should either be moved to temporary accommodation (eg a hotel); or into alternative permanent SFA if the fault cannot be rectified quickly.

The Ministry of Defence is aware of one case in 2021 where a Service family was exceptionally and incorrectly moved into an SFA with non-habitable faults at Move-In. The family were immediately moved into temporary accommodation and then into an alternative, permanent SFA, as soon as the mistake was identified. There are no other recorded such instances.

The Department does not record this information for Single Living Accommodation, in the format requested. This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

John Healey: **[118826]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces families living in (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation have been provided temporary accommodation due to issues with (i) heating and (ii) hot water in each month since April 2022.

Alex Chalk:

The table below shows the number of Service families who moved from their Service Family Accommodation to alternative temporary accommodation each month since 1 April 2022, as a result of heating or hot water problems.

APRIL	8
May	3
June	4
July	2
August	5
September	11
October	16
November	18
December	49
Total	116

No home should be left without heating or hot water for more than 24 hours. Alternative forms of heating and sources of hot water, or alternative accommodation, are provided. If the offer of alternative accommodation is declined, the use of bathing facilities in a welfare house is provided.

Armed forces families do not live in Single Living Accommodation; therefore no information is held.

John Healey: **[118827]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many temporary heaters have been provided to armed forces families living in (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation in each month since April 2022.

Alex Chalk:

VIVO do not record the number of temporary heaters provided to armed forces families living in Service Family Accommodation. Amey have recorded this information since 19 December 2022 and have issued 206 temporary heaters to 103 families.

For Service Family Accommodation, heaters should be made available to families as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

Armed forces families do not live in Single Living Accommodation therefore, no information is held.

John Healey:[\[118856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 111520 on Armed Forces: Housing, what the average response time was for maintenance requests classed as (a) emergency, (b) urgent and (c) routine for (i) Amey and (ii) VIVO in each month since April 2022.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts, comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statistics are not published for the initial six-month bedding-in period as there is insufficient quality assured data.

KPI data will be available for Q3 (October - December) from 15 January 2023.

I will write to the right hon. Member in due course and place a copy of my response in the Library of the House.

John Healey:[\[118857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation units have an energy efficiency rating of C or above.

Alex Chalk:

This information is not held centrally for Single Living Accommodation (SLA) therefore we are unable to provide the information requested.

As at January 2023, 96% of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) meets or exceeds the Government's Decent Homes Standard, and only these properties are allocated to Service families. As at 10 January 2023, we have 47,942 SFA properties. Of these, 23,287 have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C and above.

It is estimated that approximately 40% of the UK's housing stock meets or exceeds an EPC of C. This compares with the 48.6% of SFA that meet or exceed that standard.

John Healey:[\[119887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, what the performance of the supplier in resolving stage 1 complaints was in each quarter since the contract began.

John Healey: [\[119888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, what proportion of claims escalated to stage 2 in each quarter since the contract began.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts, comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statistics are not published for the initial six-month bedding-in period as there is insufficient quality assured data.

KPI data will be available for Q3 (October - December) from 15 January 2023.

I will write to the right hon. Member in due course and place a copy of my response in the Library of the House.

John Healey: [\[119889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, what proportion of reactive maintenance tasks were subject to recalls in each quarter since the contract began.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts, comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statistics are not published for the initial six-month bedding-in period as there is insufficient quality assured data.

Reactive Maintenance recalls are one of the contract KPIs for Amey and VIVO. However, their systems have not yet captured this data.

This is one of the performance failings MOD have directed Amey and VIVO to address and this is recognised in their Rectification Plans.

John Healey: [\[119890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, what proportion of reactive maintenance tasks were completed to a good standard in a single visit in each quarter since the contract began.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts, comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statistics are not published for the initial six-month bedding-in period as there is insufficient quality assured data.

KPI data will be available for Q3 (October - December) from 15 January 2023.

I will write to the right hon. Member in due course and place a copy of my response in the Library of the House.

John Healey:

[119891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, what proportion of properties were prepared to the required standard for move-in in each quarter since the contract began.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts, comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statistics are not published for the initial six-month bedding-in period as there is insufficient quality assured data.

KPI data will be available for Q3 (October - December) from 15 January 2023.

I will write to the right hon. Member in due course and place a copy of my response in the Library of the House.

John Healey:

[119910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 111526 on Armed Forces: Housing, how many urgent repairs were completed in each month since 1 April 2022.

Alex Chalk:

The total number of completed urgent repairs at Service Family Accommodation properties in each month since 1 April 2022, can be found in the table below.

MONTH	VIVO – TOTAL COMPLETED IN MONTH	AMEY – TOTAL COMPLETED IN MONTH	TOTALS
April 2022	1,482	886	2,368
May 2022	1,721	929	2,650
June 2022	1,807	895	2,702
July 2022	2,051	694	2,745
August 2022	1,956	1,190	3,146
September 2022	2,414	1,359	3,773
October 2022	2,708	1,335	4,043
November 2022	3,389	1,765	5,154
December 2022	3,809	2,041	5,850
January 2023 to date	1,124	585	1,709
	22,461	11,679	34,140

John Healey: [\[120848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, whether Regional Accommodation Maintenance Service contractors met their Key Performance Indicator for the quality of post-void repairs in each quarter since the contract began.

John Healey: [\[120849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, whether Regional Accommodation Maintenance Service contractors met their Key Performance Indicator for voids prepared to move-in standard in each quarter since the contract began.

John Healey: [\[120850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, whether Regional Accommodation Maintenance Service contractors met their key performance indicator relating to the provision of management plans in each quarter since the contract began.

John Healey: [\[120851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December to Question 97447 on Armed Forces: Housing, whether Regional Accommodation Maintenance Service contractors met their key performance indicator on Assurance - Works Order Inspectio in each quarter since the contract began.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts, comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) statistics are not published for the initial six-month bedding-in period as there is insufficient quality assured data.

KPI data will be available for Q3 (October - December) from 15 January 2023.

I will write to the right hon. Member in due course and place a copy of my response in the Library of the House.

■ HMS Collingwood: Repairs and Maintenance

John Healey: [\[120861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January to Question 113210 on HMS Collingwood: Repairs and Maintenance, how many of the 393 reported maintenance issues were classified as (a) emergency, (b) urgent and (c) routine.

Alex Chalk:

Of the 393 maintenance issues at HMS Collingwood, three were classified as an emergency, 108 as urgent and 282 classified as routine.

■ Kosovo: Peacekeeping Operations

John Healey:

[\[119906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel are deployed to NATO's mission in Kosovo.

James Heappey:

There are 41 UK personnel currently deployed to NATO's KFOR mission. This includes two staff officers in the KFOR HQ and an Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Task Force which provides a highly valued capability. We also offer a Battalion sized Strategic Reserve Force which is held at 14 days' notice to effect in the UK.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[118841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many flight hours have been made by the P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft fleet in each year since its first delivery.

Alex Chalk:

Annual flying hours for the Poseidon MRA1 fleet since the delivery of the first aircraft in October 2019 are given in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	FLYING HOURS 1
2019-20	120
2020-21	930
2021-22	1,830
2022-23	1,750

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10
2. 1 April to 31 December 2022

■ Military Aircraft: Helicopters

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[120883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on the New Medium Helicopter programme.

Alex Chalk:

The New Medium Helicopter (NMH) competition's Contract Notice and Dynamic Pre-Qualification Questionnaire were released on 18 May 2022. Responses have been evaluated to determine a shortlist of credible suppliers. They will be invited to participate in the second half of the competition, which is anticipated to be launched later this year. Suppliers were notified of the Dynamic Pre Qualification Questionnaire evaluation outcome on 31 October 2022.

■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement**Stephen Farry:** [\[117868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's procurement spend was spent in each UK region in 2022; and what the per capita expenditure was for each region.

Alex Chalk:

The report containing this information for Financial Year 2021-22 is due to be published on 26 January 2023.

■ Warships: Procurement**Hilary Benn:** [\[120895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is taking steps to enable small and medium UK based engineering businesses to bid for work to provide waste management systems, including shredders, compactors and vacuum storage systems, for new naval vessels.

Alex Chalk:

We recognise that SMEs make a significant contribution to the defence supply chain and wider UK prosperity. That is why the department has published its SME Action Plan to make it easier for SMEs to access opportunities and to bid for requirements. We are also encouraging our major suppliers to publish their own sub-contract opportunities through the Defence Sourcing Portal, making it easier for SMEs to find and bid in for defence work.

■ Watchkeeper WK450**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[120884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel are training with the Watchkeeper platform.

Alex Chalk:

The Watchkeeper Regiment (47th Regiment Royal Artillery) has 463 service personnel who train with Watchkeeper both overseas and at home from their base in Larkhill, as well as from Keevil Airfield. This training involves both live and simulated aircraft flights and involvement in wider collective training.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 11 Downing Street: Government Art Collection****Emily Thornberry:** [\[119036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 110636 on Treasury: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, if she will publish the unique inventory numbers assigned to the

Government Art Collection works (a) removed from and (b) added to 11 Downing Street in November 2021.

Stuart Andrew:

As outlined in the previous answer, this relates to the relocation of art within the offices of 11 Downing Street whilst refurbishment was taking place. A list of the items temporarily moved will be placed in the Library of the House.

This includes safely transferring the political cartoons donated by former Chancellors, including Alistair Darling's from 2007, "With hindsight, that wasn't the best time to ask the Chancellor which music he prefers – Johnny Cash or Northern Rock."

I hope the Rt Hon Member and her staff will appreciate the importance of preserving such moments from history of the last Labour Government.

The full activity schedule is attached, with lists A,B,C and D on the following pages. I will place a copy of the schedule in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. Full activity schedule [Schedule.pdf]

■ **Afghanistan: Cricket**

Julian Knight:

[R] [[117638](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has had recent discussions with the International Cricket Council on the participation of Afghan women and girls in cricket.

Stuart Andrew:

Sport operates independently of government, therefore direct representations to the International Cricket Council on the participation of Afghan women and girls in cricket would be a matter for the England and Wales Cricket Board to raise.

The Government is supportive of efforts to promote the participation of women in sport, and is pleased the UK is hosting the Secretariat of the International Working Group on Women and Sport over the next three years.

■ **Betting Shops: Greater London**

Catherine West:

[[117764](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of gambling shops on high streets in London in each the last 5 years.

Paul Scully:

The Gambling Commission records data on premises numbers at a national rather than a local level. In March 2022 its [Industry Statistics](#) recorded 6,219 Licensed Betting Shops and 1,285 Adult Gaming Centres in Great Britain and the figures for each reporting period since 2017 are detailed in the table below.

REPORTING PERIOD	ADULT GAMING CENTRES	LICENSED BETTING SHOPS
31/03/2017	1,548	8,800
31/03/2018	1,481	8,559
31/03/2019	1,464	8,304
31/03/2020 (revised figures)	1,464	7,683
31/03/2021(revised figures)	1,381	6,462
31/03/2022 (provisional figures)	1,285	6,219

Each Local Authority is required to have a current list of all licensed gambling premises available to access on request under section 156 of the Gambling Act.

Our review of the Gambling Act 2005 is looking at the situation of the land-based gambling industry as part of its wide-ranging scope. A White Paper setting out our conclusions and next steps will be published in the coming weeks.

■ **Broadband: Prices**

Kevin Brennan:

[\[119921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with Ofcom on the upcoming 11.1 percent price increase of wholesale broadband in April 2023.

Julia Lopez:

The regulation of wholesale prices in the fixed telecoms market is a matter for Ofcom, the independent regulator. Through our Statement of Strategic Priorities we have instructed Ofcom to regulate in a way that encourages both competition and investment in telecoms infrastructure. Following this guidance, Ofcom developed its Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review (WFTMR) which allows Openreach prices to increase in line with inflation.

Thanks to this approach, there is now a thriving market of over 80 providers investing £35bn rolling out gigabit broadband all over the UK. Today, nearly 73% of premises can access gigabit-capable networks, up from just one in ten in November 2019.

Janet Daby:

[\[121106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of phone and broadband providers on potential in-contract price rises in the next financial year.

Julia Lopez:

On November 29 2022, I convened a roundtable with the UK's major mobile, broadband, and landline providers to discuss the affordability of connectivity services.

I urged the industry to remain mindful of the impact any price rises on households, particularly when many are facing additional pressures on their finances due to the global rise in the cost of living.

Ofcom has a statutory duty to monitor the ongoing affordability of telecommunication services, and officials continue to engage regularly with both Ofcom and operators to explore ways we can support households in staying connected.

■ **Channel Four Television: Privatisation**

Jamie Stone:

[\[117894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much from the public purse her Department spent on its proposals to privatise Channel 4.

Julia Lopez:

As set out in the Department's answer of 14 November 2022 to Question [80659](#), in the 2021-22 financial year DCMS's costs for policy development related to Channel 4, including staff activity, external research and advice, public consultation and stakeholder engagement, were approximately £600,000. For the 2022-2023 financial year to November, these activities are estimated to have costs of £1.4 million.

This work has supported the development of the sustainability package recently [announced](#) by DCMS which will help address the challenges that Channel 4 is facing to its long-term success and sustainability.

It is right that when planning for the sale of an asset the government pursued appropriate specialist advice. Now that the decision has been taken not to proceed with a sale, all contracts with specialist external advisors have been terminated.

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[118916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 107078 on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, how many purchases with a value less than £500 were made against her Department's budget through a Government procurement card in 2021.

Julia Lopez:

In accordance with the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 107078, the Department made 572 transactions for the purchase of goods and services with a value less than £500, using a Government Procurement Card.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[119032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's publication of Government procurement card spending over £500 for November 2022, what the (a) nature and (b) purpose was of the taxi services for which Imperial Transportation was paid £952.02 on 17 November 2022.

Julia Lopez:

The taxi services of Imperial Transportation were procured to transport officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, over 250 miles during a visit to Ottawa and Montreal, Canada for a UK-Canada Public Policy Forum. This was on the official advice of the High Commission in Ottawa, as no government cars were available and the use of public transport was impractical.

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

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:[\[120120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) desktops, (b) laptops, (c) mobile phones and (d) other devices are discarded by her Department in each of the last four years.

Julia Lopez:

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Desktops	0	0	0	0
Laptops	0	0	0	0
Mobile Devices *	0	0	0	0
'Other' devices**	0	0	0	159***

*Mobile Devices' includes mobile handsets and tablet devices

**Other' devices includes monitors and or display screens

***159 'other' devices reference end of life monitors upgraded as part of a technology refresh.

■ **Emergency Services: Voluntary Work**

Munira Wilson:[\[119189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential benefits of establishing a National Volunteer Corps to support emergency services.

Stuart Andrew:

Volunteering is critical to a vibrant and resilient civil society; it benefits volunteers and the organisations involving them and has transformational impacts on beneficiaries and their communities. This Government is committed to enabling people to take part in all forms of social action, including volunteering. We know the profound benefit that volunteering has on the individual, on communities and on society.

We also recognise the impact of volunteering in emergencies. As such, DCMS has committed to funding the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP) through to 2025. The partnership was established following 2017 crises including the Grenfell fire and Manchester terrorist attacks and aims to help people and organisations prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. The VCSEP is a collection of voluntary and community sector organisations, and is co-chaired by the British Red Cross and the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA). The partnership creates a network of networks, reaching thousands of volunteer-involving groups and organisations.

Given the effectiveness of this partnership and their existing reach into communities, DCMS is keen to support their resilience and emergency response work.

DCMS has considered other mechanisms, including a national volunteering reserve as was suggested in 2020 by Danny Kruger MP in his report ' [Levelling Up Our Communities: Proposals for a New Social Covenant](#) '. [The Government response to this report](#) outlined that a volunteering reserve would not be a solution to current barriers to volunteering such as work commitments, caring commitments, and people doing other things in their spare time. Evidence such as NCVO's Time Well Spent research indicates volunteering is an activity inspired by a particular cause or purpose. For these reasons, we are focussing our efforts on supporting volunteering to grow and adapt, including through our active support of the Vision for Volunteering. We will continue to assess the value of approaches such as a national volunteering corps. However, given the evidence points to people stepping forward when demand exists, our current focus is on developing structures which coordinate a crisis response across organisations, rather than developing a national corps.

■ Food Poverty

Beth Winter:

[117817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding has been allocated to (a) FareShare and (b) other food redistribution organisations from (i) the Dormant Assets Scheme and (b) other sources.

Stuart Andrew:

Dormant assets funding in England can currently only be distributed to youth, financial inclusion, or social investment wholesalers. Given these restrictions, no funding has been directly allocated to food redistribution organisations such as FareShare.

However, the independent organisations that currently receive dormant assets funding are free to determine the most impactful initiatives in their sectors. We understand that some of their work has indeed benefitted food redistribution organisations. For example, through the Access Foundation, social investment has been provided by the Key Fund to FoodWorks Sheffield, which works to divert food waste and use it to provide affordable food in various neighbourhoods across the city.

FoodWorks has grown to save over 500 tonnes of food waste per year, work with hundreds of volunteers, and feed thousands of people each month.

In terms of other sources: since 2018, a series of grant awards have been taken forward by the Food Waste Prevention team in the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to make sure more surplus food is diverted from animal feed and disposal for human consumption. Around £13 million has supported both large and small redistribution organisations across the country to increase their capability and capacity, with FareShare benefitting with around £3 million of grant awards.

During the COVID-19 response, Defra also provided two separate streams of funding to the food distributor FareShare totalling £26.5 million to support food charities with the purchasing and distribution of food to the vulnerable.

■ **Football: Females**

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[120141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans that the report of the in-depth review into the future of domestic women's football will be delivered..

Stuart Andrew:

The Review of Women's Football will support the continued growth and development in women's and girl's football, to ensure the women's game has a strong and sustainable future.

The independent review's report is expected in 2023, and the government will respond afterwards.

■ **Football: Safety**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[118992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 22 January 2022 to Question 111571 on Football: Safety, what recent progress her Department has made on ensuring fan safety at football grounds; and if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of safety issues experienced by Newcastle United fans at Hillsborough on 7 January 2023.

Stuart Andrew:

The safety of spectators at sporting events is of the highest importance to His Majesty's Government. We continue to work closely with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA), clubs, governing bodies and local authorities to ensure that football fans can continue to enjoy the sport whilst attending matches safely.

The Football Association are currently investigating reports of overcrowding at the Leppings Lane End at Hillsborough Stadium on 7 January 2023. The ultimate responsibility for the safety of spectators lies at all times with the ground management and the SGSA remains in contact with the club, Sheffield City Council and the Safety Advisory Group as the facts are established and any implications for

safety management arrangements at Hillsborough are considered. We are in contact with the SGSA on this matter.

■ Gaming: Investment

Antony Higginbotham:

[\[120138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to encourage more investment in the emerging blockchain gaming industry.

Julia Lopez:

The Government's ambition is to make the UK a global hub for cryptoasset technology and investment. In April 2022, the Government set out a number of reforms which will see the regulation and aspects of tax treatment of cryptoassets evolve.

The Government is committed to supporting the growth of the UK's games sector. As part of a wider package to support the growth of the creative industries, the Government has committed to an £8 million expansion of the UK Games Fund. The UK Games Fund will continue to provide valuable support to early-stage games development and talented graduates throughout the UK. In addition, the Video Games Tax Relief continues to make the UK one of the leading destinations in the world for making video games.

■ Hillsborough Stadium: Safety

Chi Onwurah:

[\[118991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with (a) the FA, (b) Sheffield Wednesday Football Club and (c) the Football Supporters Association on fan safety at Hillsborough Stadium.

Stuart Andrew:

The Football Association are investigating reports of overcrowding at the Leppings Lane End at Hillsborough Stadium on 7 January 2023. The ultimate responsibility for the safety of spectators lies at all times with the ground management and the SGSA remains in contact with the club, Sheffield City Council and the Safety Advisory Group as the facts are established and any implications for safety management arrangements at Hillsborough are considered. We are in contact with the SGSA on this matter.

■ Holiday Accommodation

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's proposals for a new registration scheme for short term holiday lets, what assessment she has made of the extent to which this scheme would add to the information on the location of short term holiday lets already accessible to the public through commercial websites.

Stuart Andrew:

A registration scheme could provide a much needed, authoritative source of data on the location of short-term holiday lets in England. The exact details on how the registration scheme will operate, including what information would be collected, will be explored through a public consultation, to be published by summer recess.

Rachael Maskell:[\[117683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department's proposals for a new registration scheme for short term holiday lets will include a requirement for minimum (a) environmental and (b) safety standards equivalent to those found in the private rented sector.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government is aware that there are concerns about the inconsistent application of regulations and standards across the guest accommodation sector, including short term holiday lets. The details of how a registration scheme for short-term holiday lets will operate will be explored through a public consultation, to be published before the summer recess.

■ ICT: Innovation**Chi Onwurah:**[\[119002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the report by the Government Office for Science entitled Large-scale computing: the case for greater UK coordination, published in September 2021, whether her Department has taken recent steps to increase the UK's share of the global supercomputing capacity.

Paul Scully:

In response to the 2021 report by the Government Office for Science ([Large-scale computing: the case for greater UK coordination](#)), the government launched an independent review into the future of compute in June 2022. The review will produce recommendations on the interventions required to ensure that the UK can fully exploit world-class compute infrastructure. It will contain an overview of the international advanced compute landscape and look at how the UK can collaborate internationally to strengthen its domestic compute ecosystem and promote the UK's international stance in tech and innovation. The Government will respond to the review after publication later this year.

■ Semiconductors**Carol Monaghan:**[\[120086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support her Department plans to provide to develop the UK's flexible semiconductor market; and whether that support will be outlined in the forthcoming semiconductor strategy.

Paul Scully:

On behalf of the government, DCMS has been reviewing its approach to the UK's global semiconductor sector and intends to set out its support for the sector in the

forthcoming UK Semiconductor Strategy. This has been developed by engaging with industry experts, representative bodies and the wider global community.

The Government recognises that the UK's approach to the semiconductor sector should look to support and build on our existing strengths domestically, and ensure that our industry can complement the UK's ambitions as a science and technology superpower. We recognise the UK has strengths in the growing flexible semiconductor industry, and this will form a part of our strategy going forward.

■ **Semiconductors: Investment**

Carol Monaghan:

[\[120085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the attractiveness of the UK for investment in semiconductor fabrication facilities compared to overseas markets.

Paul Scully:

On behalf of HM Government, DCMS has been reviewing the UK semiconductor sector, and intends to set out more detail in the forthcoming UK Semiconductor Strategy. The Government recognises that the UK's approach to the semiconductor sector should look to support and build on our existing strengths domestically, and is considering efficient interventions that will encourage investment.

■ **Telecommunications: Infrastructure**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[119978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether regulations exist that govern how close to existing residential properties telecommunication apparatus can be installed.

Julia Lopez:

When installing apparatus on both public and private land, operators must follow the provisions contained in the Electronic Communications Code. Further requirements for operators are set out in the Electronic Communications Code (Conditions and Restrictions) Regulations 2003. Operators must also comply with any applicable planning requirements, including any conditions, set out in relevant legislation.

Both fixed-line and mobile operators should also follow the relevant code of practice when deploying telecommunication apparatus so that it is placed appropriately, and local authorities and communities are engaged prior to installation. The codes of practice set out the required notification requirements where new apparatus to be installed by the operator, to indicate to nearby residents the intention to install apparatus at the proposed location.

Through Ofcom's spectrum licence conditions, operators of radio equipment are also required to comply with the international guidelines for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields for the protection of the general public; operators are under a legal obligation to operate their radio equipment in accordance with the conditions of their licence.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Standards

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[117578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to improve the quality of apprenticeships.

Robert Halfon:

The department's reforms have transformed apprenticeships. The department wants to further improve the quality of apprenticeships so that as many apprentices as possible benefit from these opportunities. The department has set an aim of reaching a 67% achievement rate for apprenticeship standards by the end of the 2024/25 academic year. To support this ambition, we are taking a range of actions to drive up apprenticeship quality and achievements.

The content of every apprenticeship is now designed directly by employers. Every apprentice has protected time off the job to dedicate to their training and all apprentices complete a rigorous end point assessment to confirm their competency. These changes mean that apprenticeships are now higher quality and better meet the needs of employers and individuals.

To support employers give their apprentices a high-quality experience, the department is working with them to improve their apprenticeship programmes and providing them with targeted support including through our Employer Quality Roadmap which provides guidance on what employers need to be doing at each stage of the apprenticeship.

To support providers to deliver high quality provision, the department is continuing to invest in a professional development programme for teachers and trainers of apprentices. We have strengthened our measures for holding training providers to account, using a wider range of quality indicators and user feedback. Ofsted will also be fully inspecting all apprenticeship providers by 2025.

To support apprentices to make the right choices, the department is making sure they get the best possible advice and support at every stage of their apprenticeship journey, supported by new digital support services and better careers advice. The department has also launched a new exit feedback tool for apprentices who have withdrawn, and a new feedback tool for existing apprentices to provide feedback on their training provider. We will use this feedback to inform further improvements.

■ Apprentices: Taxation

Stephen Morgan:

[\[117954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impact of the apprenticeship levy on (a) opportunities for young people in disadvantaged areas and (b) the provision of industry-related skills and education to young people.

Robert Halfon:

This government is committed to ensuring that more young people can benefit from the skills, knowledge, and career development opportunities that an apprenticeship provides. That is why we are increasing investment in apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024/25 through the apprenticeship levy.

The department has launched the Career Starter apprenticeships campaign, showcasing Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships suitable for young people leaving full-time education and we continue to actively promote apprenticeships in schools, including in disadvantaged areas, through our Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme.

To support more Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME), who play an important role in creating opportunities for young people and in disadvantaged areas, to access the benefits of apprenticeships, we have launched an SME Pathfinder service across four regions in the North of England. Specialists will engage with employers who have not had an apprentice in the past two years, highlighting the many benefits that apprentices bring to business and provide support with the apprentice recruitment process.

Recognising that additional resource may be required to support younger apprentices or those with disabilities, the department continues to offer payments to employers and providers supporting disadvantaged apprentices. This includes a £1000 payment when employing an apprentice aged 16-18, care-leavers aged 19-24 and those aged 19-24 with an Education Health and Care plan.

■ Childcare**Sarah Olney:**[\[120054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of childcare providers in each region of England in each of the last five years.

Claire Coutinho:

This is a matter for His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Children: Social Services**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[117960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her planned timetable is for the publication of a Government response to the report by the Competition and Markets Authority entitled Children's social care market study: final report, published on 10 March 2022.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is rapidly working on a detailed implementation strategy in response to the three independent reviews into children's social care published in 2022. A response will be published early this year.

■ Department for Education: Energy

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[113234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much has been spent on energy for office space occupied by civil servants in (a) her Department, (b) Ofsted and (c) Ofqual in each of the last ten years for which data are available.

Nick Gibb:

The below table includes data showing how much has been spent on energy for office space occupied by civil servants in the Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted and Ofqual.

COST (£ THOUSANDS)			
Financial Year	DfE	Ofsted	Ofqual
2012/13	N/A	187	58
2013/14	N/A	214	53
2014/15	N/A	226	50
2015/16	1,610	131	57
2016/17	1,748	129	46
2017/18	1,731	181	50
2018/19	1,610	150	N/A
2019/20	1,748	150	N/A
2020/21	1,731	172	N/A
2021/22	1,534	148	N/A

Notes:

The Government Property Agency are DfE's asset management supplier. It does not hold some of the requested historical data and this is reflected in the table.

Financial figures for the DfE, Ofsted and Ofqual have been rounded.

During this period reported the DfE, Ofsted, and Ofqual have had changes in accommodation – the property strategy and profile has changed moving from sole occupancy buildings to being tenants within the government estate where possible in line with government efficiency strategies.

Data is not available for Ofqual from 2018 onwards as they have moved to a building where this is included within the lease and so this is not available as a per tenant figure. As such this is reported as 'N/A'.

■ Foster Care

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[117576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of foster care placements.

Claire Coutinho:

The department recognises the urgency of action in ensuring sufficient foster placements. The department continues to fund Fosterline and Fosterline Plus, a free-to-access helpline and support service for current and prospective foster carers, to provide high quality, independent information and advice on a range of issues.

Since 2014, the department has provided over £8 million to help embed the Mockingbird programme, an innovative model of peer support for foster parents and the children in their care. The department is also committed to engaging widely with those with care experience and all interested stakeholders to help us agree an implementation strategy that will drive the right change and scale up good practice across the country.

The department is currently working with local authorities to recruit more foster carers and improving the conversion rate from expressions of interest to approval. This includes local recruitment campaigns that build towards a national programme, to help ensure children have access to the right placements at the right time.

The department is carefully considering the recommendations made in the independent review of children's social care and will publish a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy early in 2023.

■ Foster Care: Asylum

Rachael Maskell:

[120003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to place child asylum seekers in need of foster care into homes rather than temporary accommodation; and what support her Department is providing to foster parents receiving those children.

Claire Coutinho:

The department takes the welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) seriously. It is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure children receive the right level of care, including foster care. The department is working closely with the Home Office and local government to ensure that this happens and to increase the number of placements available.

It is important that foster carers receive the support they need to fulfil their role and to meet the needs of the children in their care. This includes caring for UASC. The statutory framework and National Minimum Standards make clear that all foster carers must receive the training and support they need to carry out their role effectively. There will be different needs in local areas, and it is important that fostering service providers have the flexibility to provide additional training and support, including for those caring for UASC. Foster carers will also receive tailored

support from their supervising social worker and should receive at least the National Minimum Allowance to cover the costs of caring for their foster child.

■ **Foster Care: Higher Education**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[117503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support children in foster care to attain a university education.

Claire Coutinho:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Romford to the answer given on 23 December 2022 to Question [112050](#).

■ **Foster Care: Recruitment**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[117502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support local councils with the recruitment of foster carers.

Claire Coutinho:

The department continues to fund Fosterline and Fosterline Plus, a free-to-access helpline and support service for current and prospective foster carers, to provide high quality, independent information and advice on a range of issues.

Since 2014, the department has provided over £8 million to help embed the Mockingbird programme, an innovative model of peer support for foster parents and the children in their care. The department is also committed to engaging widely with those with care experience and all interested stakeholders to help us agree an implementation strategy that will drive the right change and scale up good practice across the country.

The department is working with local authorities to recruit more foster carers and improve the conversion rate from expressions of interest to approval. This includes local recruitment campaigns that build towards a national programme, to help ensure children have access to the right placements at the right time.

The department is carefully considering the recommendations made in the independent review of children's social care and will publish a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy early in early 2023.

■ **Free School Meals**

Alex Cunningham: [\[119984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the criteria is for (a) registering for and (b) funding free school meals for children in non maintained but state funded schools.

Alex Cunningham: [\[120080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her policy is on the provision of free school meals for children in special schools.

Nick Gibb:

All pupils attending state funded schools are subject to the standard criteria for free school meals (FSM), which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities>. Equivalent funding is delivered to maintained schools and academies via the dedicated schools grant and general annual grant respectively.

Non-maintained special schools have a duty to provide FSM to eligible pupils under the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. The latest statistics indicate that 39.7% of pupils with an education, health and care plan, and 36.4% of pupils with special educational needs support, were eligible for FSM in 2022. More information is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england/2021-22>.

The Government spends over £1 billion annually delivering FSM to pupils in schools. Around 1.9 million disadvantaged pupils are eligible for FSM, as well as an additional 1.25 million infants who receive a free meal under the universal infant FSM policy. Together, this provides support to over one third of all pupils in schools.

In addition to this, the Department is funding up to £30 million in the national school breakfast programme until the end of the 2024 summer term. This funding will support up to 2,500 schools in disadvantaged areas, meaning that thousands of children from low income families will be offered free, nutritious breakfasts. The Department is also funding over £200 million a year in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which provides free holiday club places with healthy meals and enriching activities to children from low income families.

■ Multi-academy Trusts: Pay**Rachael Maskell:****[117671]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the impact of pay awards to (a) chief executives and (b) other leadership staff of multi academy trusts on school budgets.

Nick Gibb:

The responsibilities of school leadership staff have changed significantly in recent years, with many now running several academies in a multi-academy trust and taking on sponsor academies that require considerable improvement.

The Department is clear that academy trust salaries should be justifiable and reflect the local context. The Department's expectations on this are clearly set out in the Academy Trust Handbook and the Setting Executive Salaries guidance. These documents provide the key contextual factors that trusts should be considering when setting or reviewing pay, such as: individual responsibility; retention and recruitment needs; the current and historic performance of the trust; the size of the trust; and the make-up of its academies, for example the mix of primary and secondary schools.

Academy trusts are transparent on pay and the Department has further strengthened transparency on pay by introducing new requirements for trusts to publish the number

of employees whose benefits, including salary, pension contributions, taxable benefits, and termination payments, exceed £100,000 on their website in £10,000 bandings. Where employees are also trustees, this information must be disclosed in £5,000 bandings.

The financial health of the academies sector is strong and the latest published data shows that in 2020/21, 97.4% of trusts had a cumulative surplus or a zero balance. The Department continues to support academy trusts through the current economic challenges to ensure the sector remains strong. Equally, the Department continues to challenge high pay where it is neither proportionate nor directly linked to improving pupil outcomes, in order to maintain value for money, accountability and transparency.

■ National School Breakfast Programme

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[903067]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the National School Breakfast Club Programme.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to continuing support for school breakfast clubs and the Department is investing up to £30 million between July 2021 and July 2024 to continue the national programme. This funding will support up to 2,500 schools in disadvantaged areas meaning that thousands of children from low-income families will be offered free nutritious breakfasts to better support their attainment, wellbeing and readiness to learn. The focus of the programme is to target the most disadvantaged areas of the country, including the Department's Education Investment Areas.

Over 2,100 schools are currently participating in the programme, and the supplier, Family Action, is continuing to recruit more schools. Family Action has estimated that 270,000 children are having a breakfast from the programme on an average school day.

Research shows the positive impact of school breakfasts. An Education Endowment Fund evaluation of the earlier Magic Breakfast programme, found that supporting schools to run a free of charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered an average of 2 months' additional progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 with moderate to low security. Schools also saw an improvement in pupil behaviour and attendance.

It also found that pupils who attended breakfast clubs had reduced hunger and improved concentration levels in class. Additional positive impacts on pupils' social development and the way in which they helped some pupils make wider friendship groups and become more confident were also highlighted by schools.

■ Pre-school Education: Bristol North West

Darren Jones:

[117818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the availability of staff in early years settings in Bristol North West constituency.

Claire Coutinho:

The department does not hold constituency level data for the early years workforce. In December 2022, the department published the childcare and early years provider survey which shows the data at a national and regional level. This can be accessed here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2022>.

The department has regular contact with each local authority in England. If a local authority raises concerns about sufficiency issues, including due to staffing availability, the department will escalate, with the possibility of offering short-term support via our external support contract. The department is currently seeking to procure a contract that will provide support to local authorities in fulfilling their childcare sufficiency duties. At present, all local authorities, including those in and around Bristol, report that they are fulfilling their duty to ensure sufficient childcare.

■ Pre-school Education: Teachers

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[117575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to improve early years teacher training.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is committed to ensuring there are routes to graduate level qualifications in the early years sector. The department funds the level 6 Early Years Initial Teacher Training programme qualification. This provides up to £5,000 per eligible trainee in bursaries, and £7,000 per eligible employer with a trainee on the programme.

The department is investing up to £180 million in training, qualifications and support for the early years workforce as part of the early years education recovery programme. One element of this is significantly expanding the number of fully funded Early Years Initial Teacher Training places for the current and next academic year. We are also reviewing the level 3 early years educator qualification criteria.

■ Primary Education: Mental Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[117701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of primary schools in England employ a (a) play and (b) creative arts therapist; and how many and what proportion of Ofsted reports completed in 2022 for primary schools in (a) York and (b) elsewhere in England include reference to (i) play and (ii) creative arts therapy.

Nick Gibb:

I refer my hon. Friend, the member for York to the answer I gave on 6 December 2022 to Question [97789](#).

■ Pupils: Disadvantaged**Stephen Morgan:****[117956]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department plans to take to reduce the attainment gap for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds at (a) Year 6, (b) GCSE and (c) A Level.

Nick Gibb:

Reforms to support schools and drive improved attainment were set out in the Schools White Paper.

The Department is funding 55 Education Investment Areas (EIA), of which 24 are Priority Education Investment Areas (PEIA). In each of the 24 PEIAs, the Department will make further investment available in addition to the significant support available to all EIAs. PEIAs will receive a share of around £40 million of funding to address local needs, and priority access to a number of other programmes offered by the Department.

This is in addition to the targeted support provided by the pupil premium to help schools raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Since its introduction, total pupil premium funding has increased from £600 million in the 2011/12 financial year to over £2.6 billion in the 2022/23 financial year. Per pupil funding rates are increasing by 2.7% in 2022/23, to their highest ever levels in cash terms.

The education of disadvantaged children has been particularly affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department is committed to helping these pupils to recover and help close the attainment gap. That is why recovery programmes are focused on those most in need.

The Department is providing £1 billion to extend recovery premium funding over the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. This will help schools deliver evidence based approaches to support disadvantaged pupils. It builds on the nearly £1 billion in flexible funding delivered to schools in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years, through the catch up and recovery premia.

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is helping pupils receive additional targeted support, including those who have been hit by disruption to their education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the NTP began in November 2020, nearly 3 million courses have been started on the Programme.

The 16-19 Tuition Fund offers courses to accelerate the progression of lower attaining students. Eligibility in the 2021/22 academic year was broadened to include economic disadvantage in addition to low prior attainment. For the 2022/23 academic year, the Department has broadened this eligibility further to allow more students to benefit from the funding.

■ School Rebuilding Programme

Rachael Maskell:

[117695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to announce the (a) level and (b) purpose of the funding awarded to each school selected for funding through the school rebuilding programme and in particular to (i) All Saints, York and (ii) Tang Hall Primary, York.

Nick Gibb:

Schools selected for the School Rebuilding Programme will have one or more buildings replaced or significantly refurbished based on their condition. There will be a range of projects from whole school replacements to single building refurbishments. The scope of each project will be confirmed following a detailed feasibility study and condition surveys of buildings to confirm the work required. Projects are procured directly by the Department, and contract values are published on the Contracts Finder site on GOV.UK, usually within 30 days of the contract being signed. The site is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>.

Tang Hall Primary School was selected in July 2022. The project is currently progressing through the feasibility stage. All Saints RC School in York was provisionally prioritised with 238 other schools in December 2022, and the Department will shortly be providing further information to these schools about expected timescales.

■ School Rebuilding Programme: Solihull

Julian Knight:

[117623]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of her Department's School Rebuilding Programme for Solihull constituency.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has provisionally allocated 400 of the 500 available places on the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) to schools, prioritised on the basis of their condition. Of these, one is in Solihull constituency, and another is in Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. A list of the 400 schools and the methodology to select them, is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-schools-in-the-programme>. The Department has also published equality impact assessments following each selection round. These can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-equalities-impact-assessment>.

In addition to the SRP, the Department allocates annual condition funding to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate. Local Authorities receive condition funding through an annual School Condition Allocation (SCA). For the 2022/23 financial year, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has been allocated £2,054,926 in SCA funding to prioritise across its maintained schools. Academies and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools

in Solihull will either receive SCA funding through their trust or VA group, or will be instead able to bid into the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) for their condition need. More information about condition funding can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>.

■ Schools: Buildings

Bridget Phillipson:

[117567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to her Departments guidance on Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: estates published on 14 December 2022, if she will publish a list of all the school buildings which have (a) roofs and (b) other elements of the building made wholly or in part from Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete, by (i) the parliamentary constituency and (ii) local authority; and if she will make an estimate amount of capital funding provided to those schools in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has sent a questionnaire on reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) to all responsible bodies, asking them to provide information on RAAC in their estates. Responses from the questionnaire will allow the Department to better understand the prevalence of RAAC across the education estate and ensure the correct support is in place to meet the responsible bodies' needs.

As the questionnaire remains open for responses, the Department is not able to provide a list of schools that contain RAAC elements at present. The Department will consider releasing outcomes from the questionnaire in the future.

The Department has allocated over £13 billion since 2015 for keeping schools safe and operational, including £1.8 billion committed this financial year.

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[117577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to improve the quality of school buildings.

Nick Gibb:

Well maintained, safe school buildings are a priority for the Department.

The Department allocates annual condition funding to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate. The Department has allocated over £13 billion for this purpose since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed for the current financial year.

The Department has recently announced that eligible schools will also receive an allocation from an additional £447 million in capital funding in 2022/23 for capital improvements to buildings and facilities, prioritising works to improve energy efficiency. Condition allocations are published online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>.

The School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) will carry out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects at 500 schools across England, with buildings prioritised

based on their condition. There are now 400 projects in the programme. The most recent set of 239 schools were announced in December 2022. Confirmed projects can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>.

All new and refurbished school buildings delivered by the Department must meet the same high standard of design and construction. The specification is updated on a four year cycle based on good industry practice. The latest specification (S21) is the first to have net zero carbon in operation standards and includes approaches to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

■ Schools: Energy

Chi Onwurah:

[120119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial support is available to help schools in (a) the North East and (b) Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency with rising energy costs; and whether such support will be available after 1 April 2023.

Nick Gibb:

A new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector was confirmed on 9 January 2023, ahead of the current Energy Bill Relief Scheme ending in March. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users, including schools, will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024. This is on top of the additional funding in core schools funding announced at the Autumn Statement.

Significant cash increases to school funding will help schools in Newcastle upon Tyne and across the North East to manage higher costs in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Nationally, core schools funding (including funding for both mainstream schools and high needs) is increasing by £4 billion in 2022/23, compared to the previous year. It will increase by a further £3.5 billion in 2023/24, following the additional funding for schools announced at the Autumn Statement. Together, that means an increase of over 15% in just two years.

Through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the Schools Supplementary Grant for mainstream schools, the North East is receiving an extra £110.7 million this year, which is an increase of 6.6% per pupil (this per pupil funding increase excludes "growth" funding). This takes total funding in the North East for 2022/23 to over £1.9 billion. In 2023/24, the North East will be seeing an extra £121 million through the DSG and the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) combined, which will be an increase of 6.1% per pupil, taking funding in the region to over £2 billion.

Through the DSG and MSAG combined, this means Newcastle-upon-Tyne will be seeing an extra £15 million this year, which is an increase of 6.1% per pupil (this per pupil funding increase excludes "growth" funding). This takes total funding for 2023/24 in Newcastle Upon Tyne to over £222 million.

■ Schools: Finance

Paul Howell:

[\[903069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the level of pupil funding in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools.

Nick Gibb:

Taking the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations and the additional funding announced in the Autumn Statement together, core schools funding is increasing by £3.5 billion in 2023/24, compared to 2022/23. By 2024/25, the core schools budget will total £58.8 billion, the highest level of investment in real terms per-pupil on record.

■ Schools: Inspections

Mark Pritchard:

[\[117534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the extent of delays to Ofsted inspections of schools caused by the covid-19 pandemic; and what steps her Department is taking to clear the backlog of overdue inspections.

Nick Gibb:

Ofsted's routine school inspections were paused in March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of routine school inspections was lifted on 28 April 2021. Whilst some graded inspections took place during the 2021 summer term, Ofsted returned to its full programme of routine school inspections in September 2021.

In November 2021, Ofsted announced its aim to inspect every state funded school by the end of summer 2025, so that every school will have at least one inspection between May 2021 and July 2025. Ofsted is confident it can meet this target

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Stephen Morgan:

[\[117952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to provide funding for the repair of school buildings in addition to that provided through the Priority School Building Programme.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[117953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing capital expenditure on schools to help make safety improvements to their buildings.

Nick Gibb:

The Department engages regularly with HM Treasury on a number of matters, including capital investment in the school estate. This includes official and ministerial engagement where appropriate.

The Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) was announced in 2012 and has been rebuilding and/or refurbishing buildings at 532 schools across the country, with buildings prioritised according to their condition.

The School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) is the successor programme to PSBP and was announced in June 2020 to carry out major rebuilding and refurbishment projects at 500 schools across England, with buildings prioritised based on their condition. There are now 400 projects in the programme. The most recent set of 239 schools were announced in December 2022.

In addition to these programmes, the Department allocates annual condition funding to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate. The Department has allocated over £13 billion for this purpose since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed for the current financial year.

The Department recently announced that eligible schools will also receive an allocation from an additional £447 million in capital funding in 2022/23 for capital improvements to buildings and facilities, prioritising works to improve energy efficiency.

Condition allocations for individual schools and responsible bodies are published online and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>.

■ Schools: Staff

Stephen Morgan:

[117955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help improve the (a) recruitment, (b) retention and (c) morale of (i) teachers, (ii) teaching assistants and (iii) school staff.

Nick Gibb:

The number of teachers remains high with over 465,500 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers working in state funded schools across the country. This is over 24,000 more than in 2010.

The Department's reforms are aimed at increasing teacher recruitment and at ensuring staff stay and succeed in the profession.

The Department has recently raised starting salaries by 8.9% to £28,000 and remains committed to the Government's ambition of delivering £30,000 starting salaries to attract talented people to teaching. In inner London, starting salaries begin at £34,500.

The Department is investing £181 million in financial incentives. For those starting initial teacher training (ITT) in the 2023/24 academic year, the Department is offering bursaries worth up to £27,000 and scholarships worth up to £29,000 to encourage trainees to apply to train in key secondary subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing. The Department has expanded the offer to international trainees in physics and languages.

The Department provides a Levelling Up Premium worth up to £3,000 annually for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who work in disadvantaged schools.

In autumn 2021, the Department launched the 'Apply for teacher training' digital service. This enables a more streamlined, user friendly application route to attract and train teachers.

The Department will deliver 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by the end of 2024, giving all teachers and school leaders access to world class, evidence based training and professional development at every stage of their career.

To support retention in the first few years of teaching, the Department has rolled out the Early Career Framework (ECF) nationally, providing the foundations for a successful career in teaching. This is backed by over £130 million a year in funding.

The Department has also launched a new and updated suite of National Professional Qualifications for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practice to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

The Department is committed to taking a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, and to ensuring that staff wellbeing policy is integrated within schools' culture. The Department has published a range of resources to help address staff workload and wellbeing. This includes the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which the Department is encouraging schools to sign up to as a shared commitment to promote staff wellbeing. More than 2,350 schools have signed up to the Charter since it was launched in November 2021. The Department has also published the workload reduction toolkit, developed alongside school leadership staff to help reduce workload, and resources to support schools to implement effective flexible working practices. Additionally, before the COVID-19 pandemic, average teacher and head teacher working hours reduced by five hours per week over the previous three years, as found by the Teacher Workload Survey in 2019.

Building on a successful pilot led by the charity Education Support, the Department is funding a longer term programme of mental health and wellbeing support for head teachers. The scheme, delivered by Education Support, is providing one-to-one counselling, supervision, and peer support from experts to head teachers. Over 1,000 head teachers have benefited from this programme. Education Support also provides a free helpline for school staff.

The Department continues to review this work and to consider innovative ways to train and recruit new teachers, for example working with the sector to explore new apprenticeship routes into teaching.

■ Teachers: Qualifications

Janet Daby:

[117943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the total subject hours for (i) history, (ii) geography, (iii) English and (iv) religious education in key stages (a) three, (b) four and (c) five were taught by teachers without a post A-level qualification in that subject in the last 12 months.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the school workforce in England, including subjects taught in state funded secondary schools, is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. Information is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

Overall figures for Key Stages 3 to 5 are available in the national statistic publication, which is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/5b359029-bbd3-4856-812c-08dae43019f8>.

Timetabled teaching is reported for a typical week in November, as determined by the school. It does not cover an entire year of teaching. If there are variations in timetabling across the year, this is not covered in the data available to the Department.

Subject taught is collected from secondary schools that use electronic timetabling software that can produce data in the format required. Data is then weighted to provide national totals.

■ Teachers: Working Hours

Janet Daby:

[117942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 110853 on Religion: Secondary Education, if she will make an estimate of the number and proportion of teachers of (a) religious education, (b) geography, (c) history and (d) English who spent the majority of their timetabled hours teaching each subject in the last 12 months.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the school workforce in England, including subjects taught in state funded secondary schools, is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. Information is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

As of November 2021, 49% of teachers teaching religious education (RE), 72% teaching geography, 73% teaching history, and 87% teaching English were teaching these subjects for at least 50% of the time in a typical week of the school timetable. The following table breaks this information down further.

Teachers in secondary schools in England who spent the majority ¹ of their timetabled hours teaching RE, geography, history or English

November 2021

SUBJECT	TEACHERS ²	TEACHERS WITH MAJORITY ¹ OF HOURS TEACHING THAT SUBJECT	
		NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
RE	15,529	7,608	49%
Geography	16,548	11,892	72%
History	17,587	12,873	73%
English	39,043	33,940	87%

Source: School Workforce Census and Database of Teacher Records

1 - 50% or more of individual teachers' total timetabled hours.

2 - Teachers with at least some of their timetabled time set to teach the subject.

Timetabled teaching is reported for a typical week in November, as determined by the school. It does not cover an entire year of teaching. If there are variations in timetabling across the year, this is not covered in the data available to the Department. As this information is based on electronic timetabling data, it does not include time spent by teachers on their classroom preparation, training, or any other non-timetabled activities.

Data on subjects taught is collected from a large sample of secondary schools. This is then weighted to provide national totals.

■ Universities: Business

Rachael Maskell:

[117676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made a recent assessment of the potential role of universities in helping to grow (a) social enterprises, (b) community interest companies, (c) cooperatives and (d) mutuals in their local areas.

Robert Halfon:

The department has not undertaken such an assessment. However, universities play a key role in supporting economic growth in their local area. For example, universities can work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to create an environment which encourages initiatives such as co-operatives and mutuals to start and grow.

More generally, the higher education (HE) sector is essential to the success of our economy and society. Analysis conducted by Frontier Economics of HE providers in England found that in 2018/19, English universities contributed over £52 billion to GDP, directly provided 360,000 jobs and supported a further 455,000 jobs across their localities and the wider economy.

High-quality HE and research across the country are key to delivering successful outcomes for students, providing the skills our businesses and services need, and injecting innovation into our economy.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Fertilisers****Harriett Baldwin:****[109548]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to help ensure the availability of (a) urea and (b) other fertilisers for domestic food production in (i) 2023 and (ii) 2024.

Mark Spencer:

Britain sources both nitrogen-based and non-nitrogen fertiliser from a wide range of countries and produces ammonium nitrate (AN) fertiliser domestically. While global fertiliser prices have risen, the supply chain providing imports of fertiliser to the UK has remained dynamic in sourcing products. CF Fertilisers continues to produce ammonium nitrate fertiliser from its plant at Billingham

We are continuing to monitor the security and stability of fertiliser and other supply chains, and work closely with colleagues across government and devolved administrations as well as industry figures

Defra hosts regular Fertiliser Industry Taskforce meetings with devolved administrations and key industry figures including the National Farmers Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the Agricultural Industries Confederation

To support farmers the Basic Payment Scheme payment is being made in 2 instalments to give farmers greater financial fluidity. Other actions taken include changes to guidance on farmers using manures, increased grants for farmers and growers, boosting research and development

Indicative data suggest that farmers have made a slight shift to using more urea based fertilisers this year, because of higher AN prices. Urea fertilisers emit greater amount of ammonia, after spreading, than other inorganic fertilisers so care must be taken to optimise application for agronomic and environmental benefit. The Government will monitor the success of industry action on reducing ammonia emissions from use of urea fertilisers and if regulation is needed this is likely to require use of ammonia inhibitors rather than a complete ban on urea

Defra recently laid a Statutory Instrument (SI) to enable continued ammonium nitrate supply and importation, by extending the current provision allowing use of both EU and UK laboratories for Detonation Resistance Testing

Support in the form of guidance from fertiliser suppliers and agricultural organisations such as National Farmers Union can be found from various public sources.

Furthermore, AHDB recently published reports commissioned by Defra, modelling the potential impact on arable and grassland yields of fertiliser price rises, and have also published a new fertiliser price dashboard.

■ Air Pollution

Alex Sobel: [\[101055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has plans to publish the analysis informing her proposed clean air targets.

Rebecca Pow:

The analysis has already been published as part of the Consultation.

Stephen Morgan: [\[109798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will respond to the recommendations of the report by UK100 Yes we CANZ! published in June 2022.

Rebecca Pow:

No.

Stephen Morgan: [\[109799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to integrate clean air and Net Zero policy development.

Rebecca Pow:

Yes.

Jim Shannon: [\[110711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to integrate clean air and Net Zero policy development.

Rebecca Pow:

Yes.

Alex Sobel: [\[95922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department will publish the analysis used to support the air quality targets developed for England under the Environment Act 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

The analysis has already been published as part of the Consultation.

■ Air Pollution: Pollution Control

Stephen Morgan: [\[109806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has taken steps to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration on tackling air pollution.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State is working across Government to tackle air pollution.

■ Air Pollution: Standards

Alex Sobel:

[\[109788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will publish the (a) modelling reports produced by Imperial College London and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and (B) other papers that informed the PM2.5 targets established in the Environment Act 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

We have published over a thousand pages of detailed analysis showing the rationale for our targets to be set under the Environment Act.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[109803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure that central government targets are adopted on air quality in line with the Environment Act 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Act sets out a legal duty to publish two air quality targets. These were announced on 16th December.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[109805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to improve the monitoring and reporting of air pollution.

Rebecca Pow:

There are currently over 500 monitoring sites across the UK, made up of 14 networks measuring a range of pollutants, which provide information to the public. These are subject to continuous review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and deliver on public expenditure at good value.

As part of our work to assess progress towards the new PM2.5 targets, we have already invested £1m to expand the PM2.5 monitoring network in 2021/22. By the end of 2025 we will have invested a further £10m to at least double the size of the original PM2.5 network.

■ Allotments

Rachael Maskell:

[\[74775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of contribution of allotments to (a) wellbeing and (b) growing food within communities.

Mark Spencer:

The Government recognises the importance of access to local green spaces, including allotments and the benefits of community food growing projects which enable and support healthy lifestyles within our communities. This also helps to bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing, promotes local social interaction, as well as providing wider benefits for nature and the environment.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities leads on supporting communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. The Government's Food Strategy set out our plan to ensure the food system supports healthy and sustainable diets for all as well as a prosperous food sector.

■ **Animal Welfare: Labelling**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[117490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has plans to introduce mandatory animal-welfare labelling on supermarket products.

Mark Spencer:

At the end of 2021, the Government ran a call for evidence to gather data on the impacts, cost and deliverability of different types of labelling reforms for animal welfare. Building on this call for evidence, the Government announced in the recent Food Strategy that we will consult on mandatory animal welfare labelling reforms in 2023.

■ **Avian Influenza: Eggs**

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[109545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to review rules on the labelling of free range (a) eggs and (b) poultry, in the context of outbreaks of avian influenza.

Mark Spencer:

Egg Marketing Standards provides a 16-week derogation period during which the free-range description can be retained on eggs even if hens have been housed. Defra currently has no plans to review this derogation period

In recognition of the pressures the egg sector is currently facing, Defra has granted a concession which will apply if the housing orders that are currently in place in England exceed the 16-week derogation period. This concession will allow producers and packers, on a one-off basis, the option to use either direct print to pack or an affixed label on free-range boxes. Accompanying clear and transparent point of sale signage should also be in place to ensure consumers are not misled and to avoid undermining consumer confidence in the free-range industry. Poultry Meat Marketing Regulations provide a 12-week derogation period during which the free-range description can be retained on meat from poultry that has been housed. As most free-range poultry is slaughtered at around 8 weeks, in practice the derogation period of 12 weeks is rarely exceeded. When this does happen then the free-range description cannot be used and the relevant production method must be indicated. There are no plans to review this derogation period

Egg and Poultry Meat Marketing are both devolved policy matters. Any review of, or changes to, these standards outside England is therefore the responsibility for each of the devolved administrations.

■ **Clean Air Zones: Bristol**

Ruth Jones: [\[117859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had discussions with local government representatives on the impact of the Bristol Clean Air Zone.

Rebecca Pow:

My officials have worked closely with Bristol City Council throughout the development and implementation of their plans.

■ **Climate Change: USA**

Ruth Jones: [\[117857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she last had discussions with the US Climate Envoy.

Mark Spencer:

The Secretary of State has met many ministers, counterparts and other foreign dignitaries at recent international events, such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, when a new global framework on global biodiversity was agreed.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Alcoholic Drinks**

Ruth Jones: [\[111712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department has spent on alcohol in each of the last five years.

Mark Spencer:

Expenditure on alcohol is not permitted under the department's Travel and Subsistence Policy.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Chief Scientific Advisers**

Greg Clark: [\[100918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings (a) they and (b) other Ministers in their Department have had with the Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from (i) 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022, (ii) 1 March to 31 May 2022 and (iii) 1 June to 31 August 2022.

Mark Spencer:

Defra draws from a range of scientific advice and expertise. In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal meetings are not normally disclosed.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Pens**Ruth Jones:** [\[111713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her department has spent on single use pens in each of the last five years.

Mark Spencer:

The information requested is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Publications**Paul Maynard:** [\[102851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what independent reports have been commissioned by her Department since December 2019.

Mark Spencer:

The information requested is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Trade**Gareth Thomas:** [\[106313\]](#)

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

Mark Spencer:

Defra has around 500 staff working on a wide variety of trade-related roles across the department from trade policy to international negotiations and food exports to Sanitary and Phytosanitary trade assurance. Trade related roles are based across different business units in Defra, for example animal health or environment, as opposed to being delivered through one specific trade unit.

Given the dispersed nature of trade roles across the department, and as trade may only form part of any given role, records do not exist for exactly how many staff have been allocated to deal with issues related to international trade in Defra in each of the past five years.

We are in the process of planning workforce arrangements for the next two years in line with the public spending commitments set out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Autumn Statement.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Written Questions**Tony Lloyd:** [\[105261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 21 November 2022 to Questions 84814 and 84816 on Pigs: Slaughterhouses,

when she plans to respond to Question 84815, tabled on 11 November 2022 for answer by 16 November 2022.

Mark Spencer:

A response was published on 14th December 2022.

■ Eggs: Prices

Jim McMahon:

[\[119199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to help tackle the increase in the cost of eggs.

Mark Spencer:

The UK egg industry operates in an open market and the value of egg commodities, including the farm gate egg price, is established by those in the supply chain including farmers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. While government may act in exceptional circumstances, we do not set retail food prices nor comment on day-to-day commercial decisions by companies.

I hosted an egg industry roundtable on 6 December 2022. This involved representatives from across the UK egg supply chain. The Roundtable focused on the various challenges that the sector is currently facing including the increase in input costs caused by the war in Ukraine and the impact of avian influenza. The meeting was productive and conducted in a spirit of co-operation with a clear willingness from all parties to address issues affecting the supply chain.

Defra continues to monitor the egg market and to work closely with the sector.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Ruth Jones:

[\[106457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of importers and manufacturers of vapes in the UK are registered with the Environment Agency; and if she will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

Vape importers and manufacturers may need to register as producers under the UK Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations (WEEE) Regulations, the Batteries Regulations and/or the Packaging Regulations. For WEEE they report tonnage of equipment placed on the market within 15 broad categories rather than specific product type.

■ Electronic Cigarettes: Waste Disposal

Ruth Jones:

[\[106456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the proportion of (a) disposable and (b) all vapes which are recycled.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has made no such assessment.

Ruth Jones:

[\[106458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what is the value of payments made by importers and manufacturers of vapes per annum to finance the cost of collection and the proper treatment of disposed vapes.

Rebecca Pow:

The Department does not hold information on the value of payments made by importers and manufacturers registered under the UK Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations and with an obligation to finance the cost of collection and the proper treatment of household WEEE such as disposed vapes. Such matters would be determined by the contractual arrangements between individual obligated businesses and the Producer Compliance Scheme, approved under the regulations, to which they belong to discharge their obligations.

Ruth Jones:

[\[106459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the cost of the (a) collection and (b) treatment of disposed vapes.

Rebecca Pow:

The Department has not made an estimate of the cost of the collection and treatment of disposed vapes.

■ Fisheries: China

John Spellar:

[\[117456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps through the World Trade Organisation to help restrict the size of the Chinese distant water fleet and its impact on fish stocks.

Mark Spencer:

WTO Members reached a landmark agreement at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference to prohibit the most harmful fisheries subsidies contributing to Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing, the fishing of overfished stocks, and fishing on the high seas. Members also committed to continue negotiations on prohibiting subsidies contributing to overfishing and overcapacity. The agreement will help improve the health of global fish stocks and the sustainable blue economy. This is also the first WTO agreement specifically addressing environmental sustainability, hopefully setting a precedent for future agreements of this kind. All members, including China, are now in the process of ratifying the agreement.

■ Food

Rachael Maskell:

[\[74773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to help communities to grow their own food.

Mark Spencer:

The Government's Food Strategy set out our plan to ensure the food system supports healthy and sustainable diets for all as well as a prosperous food sector.

The Government recognises the importance of access to local green spaces, including allotments and the benefits of community food growing projects which enable and support healthy lifestyles within our communities. This also helps to bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing, promotes local social interaction, as well as providing wider benefits for nature and the environment.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities leads on supporting communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. The Government's Food Strategy set out our plan to ensure the food system supports healthy and sustainable diets for all as well as a prosperous food sector.

■ Food: Community Development**Rachael Maskell:**[\[107164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to promote community food growing projects.

Mark Spencer:

The Government recognises the importance of access to local green spaces, including allotments and the benefits of community food growing projects which enable and support healthy lifestyles within our communities. This also helps to bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing, promotes local social interaction, as well as providing wider benefits for nature and the environment.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities leads on supporting communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. The Government's Food Strategy set out our plan to ensure the food system supports healthy and sustainable diets for all as well as a prosperous food sector.

Rachael Maskell:[\[107166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the potential benefits of grants to encourage community food projects.

Mark Spencer:

Defra has no plans to make an assessment on potential benefits of grants to encourage community food projects.

The Government recognises the importance of access to local green spaces, including allotments and the benefits of community food growing projects which enable and support healthy lifestyles within our communities. This also helps to bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing, promotes local social interaction, as well as providing wider benefits for nature and the environment.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities leads on supporting communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. The

Government's Food Strategy set out our plan to ensure the food system supports healthy and sustainable diets for all as well as a prosperous food sector.

■ **Food: Cooperatives**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[107169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to promote food growing cooperatives.

Mark Spencer:

The Government recognises the importance of access to local green spaces, including allotments and the benefits of community food growing projects which enable and support healthy lifestyles within our communities. This also helps to bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing, promotes local social interaction, as well as providing wider benefits for nature and the environment

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities leads on supporting communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. The Government's Food Strategy set out our plan to ensure the food system supports healthy and sustainable diets for all as well as a prosperous food sector.

■ **Food: Inflation**

Catherine West:

[\[117765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with stakeholders in the supermarket sector on trends in the level of food inflation.

Catherine West:

[\[117766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help tackle rises in the level of food inflation.

Mark Spencer:

Defra officials have regular discussions with food retailers about a range of issues, including the impact of food price inflation.

■ **Food: Prices**

Dan Carden:

[\[119253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce food prices.

Mark Spencer:

Rising food prices are dependent on a combination of factors including agri-food import prices, domestic agricultural prices, domestic labour and manufacturing costs. Given sustained pressures, we anticipate food prices continuing to trend upwards in the short term. Defra is closely monitoring the situation and taking action to maintain an efficient food supply chain by mitigating against any potential burdens or friction which could otherwise drive-up consumer food prices. In addition, my Department

continues to use regular engagement to work with retailers and producers to explore the range of measures they can take to ensure the availability of affordable food. However, it is not for HM Government to set retail food prices nor to comment on day-to-day commercial decisions by companies.

■ Food: Trade Agreements

Helen Morgan:

[\[117984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for International Trade on ensuring parity of (a) animal welfare and (b) environmental standards in food production in future trade deals.

Mark Spencer:

The Secretary of State regularly discusses a range of issues with the Secretary of State for International Trade, including on the UK's approach to different trade negotiations. Discussions cover a range of issues including animal welfare and environmental considerations

Our discussions are grounded in our commitment that the Government will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards in our trade deals

Environmental and animal welfare considerations continue to be central to our approach to agricultural trade in line with our manifesto commitment that the UK's high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards will not be compromised by our trade negotiations.

■ Foreign Relations: Australia

Ruth Jones:

[\[117856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she last had discussions with her Australian counterpart.

Mark Spencer:

The Secretary of State has met many ministers, counterparts and other foreign dignitaries at recent international events, such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, when a new global framework on global biodiversity was agreed.

■ Foreign Relations: France

Ruth Jones:

[\[117855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she last had discussions with her French counterpart.

Mark Spencer:

The Secretary of State has met many ministers, counterparts and other foreign dignitaries at recent international events, such as the UN Convention on Biological

Diversity in Montreal, when a new global framework on global biodiversity was agreed.

■ Horticulture: Seasonal Workers

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[117826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the press release of 16 December entitled Government provides boost to horticulture industry with certainty over seasonal workers, what is the guaranteed minimum of paid hours each week for workers on the scheme; who is responsible for monitoring that this is received by workers for the duration of their 6 month visa; and what are the channels for redress if workers are not paid.

Mark Spencer:

All recruitment operators for the Seasonal Workers visa route offer a guaranteed minimum number of hours for seasonal migrant workers, with most working in excess of these hours. The usual rules prohibiting zero hours contracts continue to apply. Recruitment operators can transfer seasonal workers between farms to ensure these minimum hours are met and they also have welfare measures in place to ensure workers are well cared for.

The Home Office and Defra continue to monitor the visa route closely to make sure operators and growers adhere to the stringent requirements set for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the seasonal workers, including redress if workers are not paid. The operators of the Seasonal Worker visa route are licensed via a rigorous government selection process. As a minimum requirement, operators must be licensed by the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority (GLAA). This makes sure that all workers are only placed with farms that adhere to all relevant legislation. Should a scheme operator lose their GLAA licencing at any point, their sponsor licence will be revoked with immediate effect.

Defra run an annual workers survey and liaise regularly with operators to monitor any issues. A new team will also focus on ensuring sponsors are abiding by workers' rights by improving training and processes for compliance inspectors and creating clear policies and guidance for robust action for scheme operators where workers are at risk of exploitation.

■ Marine Environment: North East

Alex Sobel:

[\[120169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the remit is of the panel investigating the mass die-offs of marine life on the North East coast.

Mark Spencer:

The remit of the Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel is to provide an independent scientific assessment of all the possible causes of the mass crustacean mortality incident in the northeast of England which occurred between September and December 2021 using all relevant available data.

The aims of the committee as set out in its terms of reference have been provided to EFRA and state that the panel will:

- scientifically review all the available evidence of the unusual crustacean mortality event.
- identify the most likely causes and implications for recurrence.

The scientific review will include, but will not be limited to, consideration of the theories put forward as a cause of this mass-mortality:

- the consequences of the breakdown of an algal bloom
- the impact of chemicals (including pyridine toxicity)
- the impact of maintenance dredging of shipping channels

The panel will focus on scientific issues and will not consider Government processes during the investigation of the mortality event(s), food safety, nor the economic implications of the deaths.

Alex Sobel:

[\[120170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the reporting deadline will be for the panel investigating the mass die-offs of marine life on the North East coast.

Mark Spencer:

A report from the Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel is due to be submitted to my Department this month, with a view to publish shortly afterwards.

Alex Sobel:

[\[120171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent progress has been made by the panel investigating the mass die-offs of marine life on the North East coast.

Mark Spencer:

We have not been sighted on the work of the Crustacean Mortality Expert panel to ensure independence. The report will be presented to my Department by the panel once it has completed its work.

■ Marine Protected Areas: Fisheries

Henry Smith:

[\[110660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will take steps to ban industrial fishing vessels from Marine Protected Areas.

Mark Spencer:

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only

We have built a comprehensive network of MPAs covering 40% of English waters and are now focusing on making sure they are properly protected. Nearly 60% of our

178 English MPAs are already protected from damaging fishing activity, including byelaws this year in the first four offshore sites, which ban bottom towed gear over sensitive habitats. We are aiming to have all MPAs in English waters protected from damaging fishing activity by 2024. Only fishing activities which could damage the protected features of an MPA require management, such as trawling on the seabed

We are reviewing our policy on industrial fishing, and we will continue to engage with stakeholders about our future approach over the next few months, particularly towards industrial fishing of sandeel and Norway pout within our waters. The UK advocates an approach towards setting Total Allowable Catches which is founded on the best available scientific advice and that will maintain or rebuild sustainable fish stocks and fisheries.

■ Milk

Jim McMahon:

[119198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to help ensure that there will be an adequate supply of milk to meet consumer demand in 2023.

Mark Spencer:

The UK has a dynamic and resilient dairy industry and I am confident of its ability to continue to supply high quality fresh milk and dairy products to consumers. Defra continues to closely monitor the dairy market and maintains regular engagement with key dairy industry representatives.

■ Packaging: Recycling

Ruth Jones:

[80889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the impact on businesses of the decision to run Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging alongside the existing requirement to purchase Packaging Recovery Notes from 2026/27.

Rebecca Pow:

We published a detailed impact assessment alongside HM Government's response to the second consultation on Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. The link is available here: [Packaging and packaging waste: introducing Extended Producer Responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/packaging-and-packaging-waste-introducing-extended-producer-responsibility).

■ Plastics: Packaging

Ruth Jones:

[117852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Welsh Government on that government's announcement on single-use plastics in December 2022.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State has had no discussions with the Welsh Government about the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Bill.

■ **Poultry: Animal Housing****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[117560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has plans to phase out the caging of laying hens by 2027.

Mark Spencer:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 03 November 2022 to the hon. Member for Glasgow North, PQ UIN 69670.

■ **Recycling****Justin Madders:**[\[108247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the full guidance on the Extended Producer Responsibility measures will be published.

Rebecca Pow:

Following the laying of the draft Packaging waste- data reporting SI on 22nd November, we have published new guidance on 'how to collect your packaging data for EPR'. This is for all UK organisations that will be affected by Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging. We have also conducted several webinars to provide information to producers.

■ **Recycling: Small Businesses****Justin Madders:**[\[108246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what impact assessment has taken place on the requirements of the Extended Producer Responsibility measures on small retailers.

Rebecca Pow:

As part of the 2022 Government response to the 2021 EPR consultation, Defra conducted an impact assessment which included the assessment of the impact of EPR measures on small retailers and businesses.

■ **Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[117489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to (a) improve standards of animal welfare in abattoirs and (b) help ensure that farm animals have a humane death.

Mark Spencer:

The Government encourages the highest standards of animal welfare at killing. To help ensure farm animals have a humane death, legislation requires that animals are

spared avoidable pain, suffering, or distress during killing and related operations. These requirements are monitored and enforced by Official Veterinarians of the Food Standards Agency in all slaughterhouses.

Following a review [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welfare-of-animals-at-the-time-of-killing-england-regulations-2015-post-implementation-review>] of the legislation protecting animal welfare at the time of killing, and as part of our Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are carefully considering a wide range of welfare at slaughter improvements that could be made to legislation and practice, including in slaughterhouses.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive

Harriett Baldwin:

[109555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Sustainable Farming Incentive.

Mark Spencer:

The Sustainable Farming Incentive opened for applications in June 2022. To date we have received over 1,700 eligible applications and more than 1,400 agreements are live. We have received positive feedback from farmers about how quick and easy it is to apply for an SFI agreement, that they are paid quarterly and have flexibility to choose how to deliver actions in their agreement. The Sustainable Farming Incentive is being introduced incrementally between now and 2025, and as the offer is expanded, we expect uptake to accelerate. We have plans in place to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme as farmers join and the offer is expanded and continue to learn from our SFI Pilot and Environmental Land Management Tests and Trials.

■ Total Allowable Catches

Dr Matthew Offord:

[108161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of the advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas on total allowable catches; and whether her Department has sought to follow that advice in fishing negotiations with (a) the EU, (b) Norway and (c) the North-East Atlantic coastal states.

Mark Spencer:

The UK has advocated in all those negotiations an approach towards setting Total Allowable Catches (TACs) that is founded on the best available scientific advice including from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) on achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield. The Government will publish a full assessment of the number of TACs set consistent with ICES advice in early 2023 and once all annual negotiations have concluded.

■ World Trade Organization: Trade Agreements

Sir Bernard Jenkin:

[\[117402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether officials from her Department attended courses on (a) SPS agreements, (b) trade and the environment and (c) agriculture agreements at the World Trade Organisation in each year since the EU referendum in June 2016; and if she will make a statement.

Mark Spencer:

Defra officials have attended courses and other learning events on SPS agreements, trade and the environment, and agriculture agreements at the World Trade Organisation since 2017 (there is no record for 2016). This includes learning that is regularly on offer through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Trade Faculty. In addition, officials have attended seminars and presentations from departmental experts as part of Defra's internal trade capability offer that ensures officials are fully equipped to deliver the Government's trade objectives.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Kate Osamor:

[\[117734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people attended the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Conference; and how many and what proportion of these were from outside the UK.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The PSVI conference in November 2022 was attended by over 1,000 participants, which included over 50 countries and survivors from across the globe. The invitation list focused on a broad range of voices that included a wide range of governments, international organisations, civil society actors including survivor groups, experts from health, legal, military and academic fields, faith leaders and parliamentarians. We worked closely with the conference Survivor Advisory Group, to ensure that survivor perspectives were included throughout our planning. Over 50 percent of the delegates were participants from overseas.

Kate Osamor:

[\[117735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any people invited to the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Conference were unable to attend because their visa applications were (a) rejected and (b) not processed in time.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Prior to the conference the FCDO maintained regular contact with Home Office officials on a number of applications submitted by invited participants. Neither the Home Office nor the FCDO were made aware of any participants invited that did not receive a visa to attend. Should we be provided with details on any individual having

been refused incorrectly we will review this with Home Office colleagues and reach out to any impacted individuals.

Kate Osamor:

[\[117736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Conference on levels of sexual violence in conflicts in the next five years.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The PSVI Conference of 28-29 November 2022 was attended by over 1,000 delegates, including survivors, civil society, multilateral partners and representatives from at least 57 countries.

The UK launched a new Political Declaration at the conference which outlines the steps needed to tackle conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Fifty three countries and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Pramila Patten endorsed the Political Declaration, with 40 countries making specific national commitments. The UK is working to promote implementation of these commitments. The UK also launched a three-year PSVI Strategy at the conference, the impact of which will be evaluated with the support of independent experts.

Kate Osamor:

[\[117737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether participants at the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Conference will be able to provide feedback on the conference.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Since the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Conference on 28-29 November 2022, FCDO has welcomed all forms of feedback. In December, we hosted an online feedback session for the survivors who attended and those engaged through the Survivor Advisory Group. Supported by the PSVI Survivor Champions, we are committed to ensuring survivors remain at the centre of PSVI policy development post-conference. Lessons learned exercises continue to be conducted, including specific lesson learning from the UK's efforts to deliver a survivor-centred conference. Lessons will be shared with wider teams to support the effective delivery of future international conferences.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the implementation of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict strategy prioritises support and accountability for children who have experienced sexual violence in conflict.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Strategy prioritises strengthening justice and supporting survivors, including children, as two of four key objectives. At the PSVI Conference, held from 28-29 November 2022, Lord (Tariq)

Ahmad of Wimbledon announced up to £12.5million of new funding to support strategy implementation. This includes up to £8.6 million for the Accountability Commission and Taskforce (ACT) for Survivors, to support national authorities to investigate, prosecute and deliver justice for all survivors, including up to £5.15 million for the Global Survivors Fund. We will continue to work through the UN Security Council to address the impact of armed conflict on children.

■ **Baradine Berdei Targuio**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[118987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to engage with authorities in Chad on the arrest of Baradine Berdei Targuio, president of the Chadian Organisation of Human Rights, on 5 January 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK is aware of the arrest of Baradine Berdei Targuio on 5 January 2023 along with eleven officers of the Chadian National Army on charges of 'attempting to destabilize state institutions'. The British Embassy in Chad is closely following developments in the country and continues to remind the Chadian authorities of their responsibility to protect and promote human rights and uphold the Rule of Law.

■ **Bulgaria: Visits Abroad**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[117492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether ministers in his Department plan to visit Bulgaria.

Leo Docherty:

The UK has a strong bilateral relationship with Bulgaria, which we are committed to strengthening. As Minister for Europe, I plan to visit Bulgaria later this year, building on a range of positive engagement in 2022. This included a visit to Sofia in March 2022 by James Cleverly, in his then capacity as Minister for Europe and North America. I also had an introductory meeting with the Bulgarian Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Marin Raykov, in November in London, where our discussions focused on the bilateral relationship and Russia/Ukraine.

■ **Burkina Faso: Economic Situation and Politics and Government**

Ruth Jones:

[\[117847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) political and (b) economic situation in Burkina Faso.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK is closely monitoring the political and economic situation in Burkina Faso following the coup on 30 September 2022. The World Bank forecasts economic growth at 5 per cent in 2023, but political instability, insecurity, climate shocks and social discontent from high food inflation pose significant risks to this outlook. The

former Minister for Africa raised the impact of the coup with international partners and highlighted the importance of Burkina Faso transitioning back to civilian rule. The UK will continue to provide humanitarian aid to those most in need and is committed to strengthening economic ties with developing countries to support sustainable growth. For example, through the new Developing Countries Trading Scheme, Burkina Faso will benefit from preferential access to UK markets.

■ Central Asia: Foreign Relations

Catherine West: [\[120056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the governments of (a) Tajikistan, (b) Uzbekistan and (c) Turkmenistan.

Leo Docherty:

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs spoke to the former Uzbek Foreign Minister on 1 December at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Poland. He also met briefly with the Tajik Foreign Minister at the same event, but has not recently met ministers from Turkmenistan. Lord Ahmad met the Turkmen Foreign Minister last year. We regularly engage with our partners in Central Asia to support reform, encourage trade, and to build a secure and stable region.

■ China: Biotechnology

Catherine West: [\[120059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for (a) Health and Social Care and (b) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on Chinese involvement in the UK's bionomics industry.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Foreign Secretary has not held recent discussions with the Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on Chinese involvement in the UK's bionomics industry.

As an open economy, we welcome foreign trade and investment, including from China, where it supports UK growth and jobs in non-strategic areas. But we will not support investments which compromise our national security. The Government has published guidance which provides UK businesses with clear information and specialist support to help negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter when working with Chinese businesses.

■ China: Diplomatic Service

Catherine West: [\[117744\]](#)

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

David Rutley:

The total number of FCDO UK Based staff at the Embassy and Consulates in China are:-

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2014	100-119
2015	100-119
2016	80-89
2017	80-89
2018	80-89
2019	80-89
2020	90-99
2021	70-79
2022	70-79

The figures also do not include FCDO Country-Based Staff in our overseas Missions, who are essential to the delivery of FCDO objectives.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years, as such it is not completely comparable.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years.

■ **China: Nepal**

Catherine West:[\[120055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications of Chinese investment in Nepalese infrastructure projects for regional (a) security and (b) stability.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

China is a longstanding and major source of investment and aid to Nepal, including in the energy and tourism sectors. We recognise there is need to increase resilience and ensure that countries have a choice of investment and development partnerships. We are working with partners to ensure a range of countries in South Asia, including Nepal, have alternatives to a strategic dependence on China or any other country. British International Investment has invested over \$100m in Nepal, within their broader South Asia portfolio, which will create jobs and boost economic growth and stability.

■ Climate Change: Finance

Preet Kaur Gill:

[117790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 105356, what representations he has made to (a) the UNFCCC and (b) other parties on the (i) aims and (ii) priorities of the transitional committee for the loss and damage fund; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

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 pro-actively engaging with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and parties at official level to establish the Transitional Committee membership 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 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 £13 million 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.

■ Colombia: Human Rights

Dan Carden:

[120172]

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 number of social activists who have been killed in Colombia since 2016.

David Rutley:

Colombia is an FCDO Human Rights Priority Country, and supporting efforts to improve stability and security in Colombia remains an important priority. At the UN Security Council on 11 January, I [Minister Rutley] raised attacks on human rights defenders and social activists and our commitment to supporting efforts to address the root causes of violence in Colombia. To date, we have spent over £74 million through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Colombia and improve stability and security. We will continue to support programmes that help Human Rights Defenders and other groups affected by violence.

■ Development Aid: Racial Discrimination

Preet Kaur Gill:

[117787]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he will provide the Government's response to the First Report of the International Development Committee, Racism in the aid sector, HC 150, published on 14 June 2022; and for what reason he is yet to provide the Government response to that report.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

I provided a response to the International Development Committee (IDC) on 5 December 2022, together with a letter to the IDC Chair, apologising for the delay. The UK Government is grateful to the IDC for its report on racism in the aid sector. We wanted to provide a comprehensive response to the complex issues raised by the IDC's report. This took time, but it should not have taken as long as it did. The FCDO is committed to providing UK Government responses within 8 weeks, and the Foreign Secretary has asked officials to ensure that a delay of this kind does not recur.

■ East Africa: Development Aid

Hilary Benn:

[117470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which UK-funded aid programmes in East Africa have had reduced levels of funding since 2020.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

In 2020 total bilateral Overseas Development Aid spend in East Africa amounted to £1.058 billion. In 2021, this decreased to £608 million. Comparative figures for 2022 are not currently available and will be published in due course within the 2022 Statistics on International Development report. Details on the FCDO's overall programme spend by year and by country are published online on UKaid Development Tracker (<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>).

■ East Africa: Food Aid

Hilary Benn:

[117469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of humanitarian aid to East Africa was spent on nutrition support in the 2021-22 financial year.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

In financial year 21/22 the UK spent £221 million on humanitarian aid in East Africa. This included the provision of specialist nutrition commodities and health care and sanitation activities - sectors which are integral to nutrition. Given the broad nature of our nutrition work we are not able to provide accurate information about the size and proportion of humanitarian aid to East Africa that was spent on nutrition support in the 2021-22 financial year.

Eswatini: Diplomatic Service

Sir James Duddridge: [\[117531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many full time equivalent staff his Department has in Eswatini.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The full time equivalent FCDO staff in Eswatini is fewer than 10.

Eswatini: Politics and Government

Sir James Duddridge: [\[117530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of the democracy movement in Eswatini.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK Government remains disappointed by the lack of progress towards meaningful dialogue in Eswatini to address the restrictions on democratic and civil rights. We are clear that all citizens have the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression and that the Government of Eswatini must exercise restraint and respect the human rights of its people. Through our High Commissioner in Mbabane, representations on this matter have been made directly to King Mswati III, the Prime Minister of Eswatini and others, including senior officers in the police service. The High Commissioner has also engaged with political activists within the Political Parties Assembly (PPA) and the wider Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) to better understand their aspirations and capacities and to encourage constructive pursuit of their political goals. The FCDO will continue to monitor the human rights and security situation in Eswatini and promote dialogue and peaceful resolution of the political and social conflicts within the country.

European Parliament Members: Lobbying

Andrew Rosindell: [\[117488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his European Union counterparts on the subject of alleged lobbying activity in relation to Qatar; and if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the potential impact of recent alleged lobbying activities on diplomatic relations between Europe and the Middle East.

Leo Docherty:

I refer the honourable member to my [Minister Docherty] reply of 19 December to his question 110608. The UK Government continues to monitor developments in the European Parliament and is in regular contact with our EU counterparts on a range of issues.

■ Fiji: Foreign Relations

Catherine West:

[\[120058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Fijian Government on (a) bilateral relations and (b) regional stability.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Foreign Secretary sent a congratulatory message to the new Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka in December 2022. Our High Commissioner and his team in Suva have ongoing discussions with the Government of Fiji spanning our cooperation on tackling climate change, supporting trade between the UK and Fiji, renewable energy and supporting the 1500 Fijian soldiers serving in the British Armed Forces. We welcome Fiji's support in the UN General Assembly on our shared interests including speaking out against Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. As a fellow maritime island nation, we work closely with Fiji to tackle Illegal, Unregulated and Unauthorised Fishing in the Pacific, and Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessel HMS SPEY conducted joint exercising and cooperation with their Fiji Navy counterparts twice last year.

■ Food Supply

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[118981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of global food insecurity needs in 2023 compared to (a) 2019 and (b) 2022.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

FCDO monitors global food security, and we regularly assess food security needs and famine risk and its causes in low and low-middle income countries.

Globally, levels of hunger remain alarmingly high and increasing. In 2019, pre-pandemic, already over 3 billion world-wide were unable to afford sufficient food to be food secure and healthy. This figure has significantly increased in 2022, and is affecting people in highly indebted import-dependent developing countries and, more generally, the poorest affected most of all.

Sustainable food security remains a priority of our humanitarian and development work, and it is a key objective of our International Development Strategy.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

Emily Thornberry:

[\[118865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's publication of spending over £500 with a Government procurement card in January 2022, what the event was for which SQ Event Hire Services

were paid £1,783.48 on 20 January 2022; who attended that event; and for what purpose it was held.

David Rutley:

This relates to stools and tables hired to ensure a reception at Luna Park in Sydney hosted by the then Foreign Secretary complied with the latest New South Wales covid restrictions. There were seventy guests, including the Australian Foreign Minister and the Premier of New South Wales. It was not used for admittance into the fairground or to go on any attractions.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ethnic Groups**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish data on the diversity of (a) staff who have joined his Department in each of the last five years and (b) all staff in his Department.

David Rutley:

The FCDO is committed to reflecting the country we serve. FCDO diversity data is published via the Civil Service diversity and inclusion dashboard. Further information can also be found in the FCDO's Gender Pay Gap report and the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts. These can all be found on gov.uk.

■ **Horn of Africa: Droughts**

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[117581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help provide resources to Somalia and Somaliland, in the context of drought in 2022.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Somalia urgently needs life-saving aid. In late 2022 I visited Somalia and saw how the drought is impacting millions across the country. I met President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, other government figures and humanitarian delivery partners, to discuss preparation for future crises. I also announced further UK aid, bringing the total humanitarian, health and nutrition support in Somalia to over £61 million this financial year.

In Somaliland, as part of a wider package of humanitarian and development support, the UK is working with partners to provide health and nutrition support, including to over 80 health facilities, providing services in the context of drought with the support of our partner UNICEF.

■ India: Property

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in India on access to justice for British nationals who own property in that country and have been victims of fraud.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Property or land disputes in India are private legal matters. We encourage anyone experiencing these difficulties to seek legal advice by engaging with an independent local lawyer. They are best placed to advise on their legal rights and avenues of redress.

Anyone who is a victim of fraud is advised to report the matter to the local police, as they have the jurisdiction to investigate. The FCDO has no authority to intervene or become involved in property disputes or cases of fraud.

■ Iran: Politics and Government

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[114861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Iran on its need to (a) respect the right to peaceful assembly and (b) release unfairly detained prisoners.

David Rutley:

We continue to raise human rights with the Iranian Government at every appropriate opportunity, both directly and in multilateral fora. This has included making clear to Iran that the violence levelled at protestors is totally unacceptable and must stop, through summoning Iran's most senior diplomat here in London, and through our ambassador in Tehran. We also supported successful votes to remove Iran from the UN Commission on the Support of Women and to establish an investigative mechanism into human rights abuses by the Iranian regime. The UK will work with partners to ensure this delivers for the people of Iran.

■ Japan: Diplomatic Service

Catherine West:

[\[117746\]](#)

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

David Rutley:

The total number of FCDO UK Based staff at the Embassy and Consulate in Japan are:-

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2014	20-29

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2015	20-29
2016	20-29
2017	20-29
2018	20-29
2019	20-29
2020	20-29
2021	20-29
2022	20-29

The figures also do not include FCDO Country-Based Staff in our overseas Missions, who are essential to the delivery of FCDO objectives.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years, as such it is not completely comparable.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose:

[\[117538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 27 October 2022 and 24 November 2022 on behalf of his constituent Mrs Jennifer Humphreys on women's rights.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

As set out in Lord Ahmad's responses to the honourable member on behalf of correspondence received from his constituent, the UK Government is committed to defending and promoting universal and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and will continue working with other countries to protect and further gender equality in international agreements. We continue to fund, support and lead on initiatives related to promoting gender equality including SRHR, Women, Peace and Security and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[119901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for East Londonderry of 15 November 2022 on a Latvian national.

Leo Docherty:

A response was sent to the Honourable Member on 19 December 2022.

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[120106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the email letter of 16 December 2022 from the hon. Member for Wirral West.

Leo Docherty:

We will respond within 20 working days as per the Cabinet Office guidelines.

■ **Pakistan: Diplomatic Service**

Catherine West:

[\[117747\]](#)

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

David Rutley:

The total number of FCDO UK Based staff at the Embassy and Consulate in Pakistan are:-

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2014	90-99
2015	100-119
2016	90-99
2017	80-89
2018	90-99
2019	80-89
2020	70-79
2021	60-69
2022	50-59

The Indo-Pacific Tilt is a whole of Government effort with many departments deploying staff onto the FCDO-led overseas platform at our Missions. The figures we have released represent numbers of FCDO UK based staff deployed to the Indo-Pacific and are therefore an underestimate of the UK Government's diplomatic presence in the region.

The figures also do not include FCDO Country-Based Staff in our overseas Missions, who are essential to the delivery of FCDO objectives.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years, as such it is not completely comparable.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years.

■ **Palestinians: Detainees**

Paul Holmes:

[\[113454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Joint Submission by Human Rights Watch and Lawyers for Justice to the Committee Against Torture on Palestine, published July 2022, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the Palestinian Authority on arbitrary arrest and torture in detention.

David Rutley:

Human Rights is a crucial element underpinning the UK's foreign policy. We continue to urge the Palestinian Authority (PA) to respect human rights, to ensure complaints of mistreatment or arbitrary detention are properly investigated and to continue to improve the performance of the security sector. The UK remains committed to a two state-solution, as Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for the Middle East, made clear on his visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories from 11-13 January. And an essential aspect of our efforts to prepare the ground for a two state-solution is to support a stable PA that can deliver services to its people and act as an effective partner for peace with Israel. The UK will continue to monitor these areas closely and raise with the highest levels of the PA.

■ **Republika Srpska: Russia**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[119146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has received evidence of the Russian Federation offering (a) financial, (b) arms, (c) manpower and (d) other support for Republika Srpska's secession from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Leo Docherty:

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has heightened the risk of instability in the Western Balkans. We will oppose Russian attempts to destabilise the region. The UK condemns any steps towards "de facto secession" by Republika Srpska by Milorad Dodik, who has met Putin on two occasions since February 2022 to seek Russian support. Attempts to undermine the integrity and functioning of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are dangerous and risk conflict. On 11 April 2022, the Government imposed sanctions against those driving secessionist policies in BiH. We will consider targeting others who continue these actions.

■ **Russia: EU Countries**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[117939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his European counterparts on the reasons for which the value of imports between Russia and most EU countries increased between 2021 and 2022; and if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of sanctions placed on Russia by (a) the UK and (b) its allies.

Leo Docherty:

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are in regular contact with their European counterparts, including at UNGA, G7 and G20 meetings. Our sanctions against Russia are working, its GDP is forecast to be 11% smaller in 2026 than it was prior to the invasion of Ukraine and will not return to pre-invasion levels until 2027 at the earliest. Furthermore, Russia's imports of its most critical goods are down by over 50% overall, with Russia's military facing enormous replenishment challenges.

■ **Seán Rooney**

Ruth Jones:

[\[117850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with the Irish Government on the death of Pte Seán Rooney in Lebanon.

Leo Docherty:

The Foreign Secretary offered the UK Government's condolences on the sad death of Private Rooney when he spoke to his Irish counterpart on 21 December. This followed the Minister for Europe's condolence letter of 16 December, in which he also thanked Ireland for its continued contribution to UN peacekeeping. The UK will continue to support the UN's efforts to fulfil its peacekeeping mandates in challenging circumstances. We support a full investigation into the incident in Lebanon and urge all concerned to ensure those responsible are brought to account.

■ **Somalia: Press Freedom**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help support media freedom in Somalia.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right and journalists must be allowed to do their jobs without fear and intimidation. The UK is defending media freedom in Somalia by supporting protection for Somali journalists, including by providing media training that focuses on improving relations between journalists and security forces. We continue to urge the Somali Government to amend the 2020 Media Law to enable

the media to report independently without risk of retribution and continue to raise media freedom consistently with the Somali Government.

■ Somaliland: Politics and Government

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[117582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in (a) Somalia and (b) Somaliland on the status of Somaliland.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK, consistent with the entire international community, does not recognise Somaliland's unilateral declaration of independence. It is for Somaliland and Somalia to come to an agreement about their future relationship. Any new arrangements would need to be recognised by the African Union and neighbours in the region. The African Union is the pre-eminent regional body mandated to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States, of which Somalia is one. The UK encourages dialogue between Mogadishu and Hargeisa on this issue. During my visit to Somalia in November 2022, I reiterated this position in my engagements with the Federal Government of Somalia.

■ South Korea: Diplomatic Service

Catherine West:

[\[117745\]](#)

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

David Rutley:

The total number of FCDO UK Based staff at the Embassy in South Korea are:-

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2014	10-19
2015	10-19
2016	10-19
2017	10-19
2018	10-19
2019	10-19
2020	10-19
2021	10-19
2022	10-19

The figures also do not include FCDO Country-Based Staff in our overseas Missions, who are essential to the delivery of FCDO objectives.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years, as such it is not completely comparable.

■ The Gambia: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones:

[\[117848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the political situation in The Gambia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK Government judges that the 2021 Presidential elections in The Gambia were free, fair and transparent, and an important milestone for The Gambia's democracy. We welcome President Barrow's commitment to passing a new constitution during his tenure. We are aware of the recent charges of treason against eight soldiers from The Gambia Armed Forces. The UK strongly condemns any attempts to overthrow democratically elected governments. We continue to monitor the situation closely.

The British High Commission in Banjul regularly raises good governance and democracy with the Government of The Gambia. The UK-funded International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance has facilitated peaceful and constructive dialogue between political, civil society, and religious groups to help progress the constitutional reform process. In association with the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association, the UK also provides legislative support and judiciary training for parliamentarians to build capacity within the judiciary system.

■ Transcaucasus: Roads

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[117728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Azerbaijani counterparts on the recent blockade in the Lachin corridor and its humanitarian impact.

Leo Docherty:

The UK Government has made clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor during winter risks severe humanitarian consequences. I [Minister Docherty] issued a statement highlighting the importance of re-opening the Lachin corridor on 13 December and our Ambassadors in the region and other senior UK officials have reinforced this message with key interlocutors. We also called for early resolution of this issue in our interventions in Vienna at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 15 December and in New York at the UN Security Council on 20 December. We engage regularly with the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia and urge them 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.

■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the provisional findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry for Ukraine on levels of sexual and gender-based violence committed against children, what recent steps his Department has taken to help ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence against children in Ukraine are held accountable for their actions.

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.

■ **Vietnam: Diplomatic Service**

Catherine West:

[\[117748\]](#)

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

David Rutley:

The total number of FCDO UK Based staff at the Embassy and Consulate in Vietnam are:-

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2014	10-19
2015	10-19
2016	Fewer than 10
2017	Fewer than 10
2018	Fewer than 10
2019	Fewer than 10
2020	Fewer than 10

YEAR	BANDED HEADCOUNT
2021	Fewer than 10
2022	Fewer than 10

The figures also do not include FCDO Country-Based Staff in our overseas Missions, who are essential to the delivery of FCDO objectives.

Total headcount is FCDO UK Based staff within requested locations. Data from legacy departments has been aggregated for pre FCO/DFID merger years, as such it is not completely comparable.

■ War Crimes

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is taking steps to help ensure that international war crimes investigations are politically and financially supported to embed child-specific expertise throughout their investigations.

Leo Docherty:

Child-specific expertise is an essential element of our support for international war crimes investigations. The UK's additional £1 million voluntary contribution to the International Criminal Court will contribute to enhancing capacity with respect to investigations into crimes of sexual and gender-based violence and crimes against children, led by the Prosecutors' Special Adviser on Crimes Against and Affecting Children. In Ukraine, we are providing personnel from the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Team of Experts to support capacity building amongst prosecutors and the police as well as support to victims, including children.

■ West Bank: Weapons

Andrew Percy:

[\[113261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Palestinian Authority on the potential smuggling of weapons and other contraband into the West Bank.

David Rutley:

We continue to closely monitor the security situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The UK continues to provide the Palestinian Authority (PA) with professional support in helping develop its security institutions. The UK remains committed to a two state-solution, as Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for the Middle East made clear on his visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories from 11-13 January. An essential part of our efforts is the provision of training and other technical assistance to the PA Ministry of Interior and PA Security

Forces (PASF), to support the development of capable, responsible security forces that respect human rights and are accountable to the Palestinian people.

■ World Health Organization

Justin Madders:

[\[117641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the parliamentary ratification of the World Health Organisation Pandemic Treaty.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The procedure for ratification of any new treaty is set out in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 which provides a mechanism for Parliament's statutory role in the scrutiny of treaties. The UK is committed to strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and as such supports a new international instrument. World Health Organization Member States have yet to begin negotiating the instrument text. The FCDO will provide Parliament with updates as appropriate. If a new international instrument having the status of a treaty is agreed by WHO Member States, the Government will follow the usual statutory ratification procedure.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the statement made by Daren Mochrie of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives in oral evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee on 20 December 2022 that NHS England is working on a revised or a new urgent and emergency care strategy, when he expects to publish that strategy.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the statement made by Daren Mochrie of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives in oral evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee on 20 December 2022 that NHS England is working on a revised or a new urgent and emergency care strategy, what the scope of that strategy is; and what he expects it will achieve.

Will Quince:

NHS England will publish its urgent and emergency care recovery plan in early 2023. These plans will set out detailed ambitions for recovery to deliver improved ambulance response times for Category 2 incidents to 30 minutes on average over 2023/24, with further improvement towards pre-pandemic levels in 2024/25 and year-on-year improvements in Accident and Emergency waiting times over 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The Recovery Plan is the focus of NHS England's strategy work at the current time. We will continue to consider the longer-term strategy for Urgent and Emergency Care in the light of this document and progress in delivering against it.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments and Ambulance Services: Standards

Emma Hardy:

[\[120173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) ambulance handover times outside NHS hospitals and (b) A&E waiting times.

Will Quince:

A range of measures are in place. The National Health Service has set out a plan to substantially increase capacity and resilience this winter. NHS bed capacity will be increased by the equivalent of at least 7,000 general and acute beds, helping reduce waits for admission from accident and emergency.

On 9 January, the Government announced £200 million to improve patient discharge and free up hospital beds, on top of the £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund announced in December 2022. An additional £50 million in capital funding is being made to expand hospital discharge lounges and ambulance hubs to improve patient flow through hospitals, freeing up space in accident and emergency, and allowing ambulances to swiftly get back on the roads.

The Autumn Statement provides an additional £3.3 billion of NHS funding in both 2023/24 and 2024/25, enabling rapid action to improve urgent and emergency care performance toward pre-pandemic levels. The NHS will set out detailed recovery plans in the coming weeks, including ambitions to improve ambulance response times for Category 2 incidents and deliver year-on-year improvements in accident and emergency waiting times.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Staff

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[117501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase staffing levels in A&E departments.

Will Quince:

Decisions on individual staffing levels in accident and emergency are a matter for local National Health Service trusts to take in responding to patient demand and capacity pressures. We have commissioned NHS England to develop a long term plan for the NHS workforce for the next 15 years. This plan will help ensure that we have the right numbers of staff, with the right skills to transform and deliver high quality services fit for the future.

As of September 2022, there were almost 9,400 FTE doctors specialising in Emergency medicine. This is an increase of over 400 compared to a year ago. The Government is supporting accident and emergency services with £250 million announced on 9 January to support patient flow.

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Addictions

Sarah Olney: [\[120022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of classifying (a) drug and (b) alcohol addiction under the Mental Health Act 1983 for the treatment of people who suffer from addiction to those substances.

Sarah Olney: [\[120024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with stakeholders on the potential merits of classifying (a) drug and (b) alcohol addiction under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made and no discussions have taken place. Drug and alcohol addictions are not regarded as mental disorders for the purposes of the Mental Health Act. We are improving treatment and recovery for people with drug and alcohol misuse conditions through the Government's Ten-Year Drugs Strategy.

■ Ambulance Services

Jim Shannon: [\[118929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to respond to increasing demand for the Ambulance Service.

Will Quince:

The Autumn Statement provides an additional £3.3 billion in each of 2023/24 and 2024/25 to enable rapid action to improve urgent and emergency care performance towards pre-pandemic levels. The National Health Service is publishing recovery plans in the coming weeks to improve Category 2 ambulance response times to 30 minutes.

In addition, as announced on the 9 January, the Government is immediately making available an additional £50 million in capital funding to expand hospital discharge lounges and ambulance hubs. This will help with the increased demand on the ambulance service this winter by improving patient flow through hospitals and reducing handover delays.

■ Ambulance Services: Staff

Rachael Maskell: [\[114740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the NHS Staff Survey that ambulance staff have lower morale, higher stress and on all indices, are worse off than other NHS workers.

Will Quince:

The National Health Service is working closely with the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives to strengthen leadership and culture and ensure there is a strong package of wellbeing support for staff in the ambulance sector. This includes building on the findings of the recent messenger review of leadership in health and care which identified that good leadership and strong values is key to better patient outcomes.

The Government is supporting the ambulance service and key actions to boost capacity including approximately 7,000 general and acute hospital beds and £500 million to discharge medically fit individuals. These will improve patient flow through hospitals which will support timely handovers, thereby helping to alleviate stress for ambulance staff.

For 2022/23 NHS England are working in collaboration with Ambulance Trusts to develop rehabilitation pathways for staff who have been on long term sickness. Targeted support has been provided for ambulance staff including £8.5 million invested in a pilot of body worn cameras and a further £700k to review restraint and de-escalation training, to develop a central violence prevention hub to improve consistency of approach and support staff nationally.

The Secretary of State met recently with representatives from the Ambulance Sector on 10th January 2023.

■ Ambulance Services: Strikes**Rachael Maskell:**[\[120981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the communication of information on levels of cover during strikes across NHS Ambulance Trusts.

Will Quince:

The Government states there is a legal requirement to ensure minimum service levels for ambulance services during strike action and has brought forward the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill.

■ Autism and Learning Disability**Barbara Keeley:**[\[119933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle closed cultures in inpatient settings for people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Maria Caulfield:

Health and care providers have a responsibility to prevent and detect closed cultures and their systems for setting and monitoring culture and encouraging staff to speak up.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has developed 'Right support, right care, right culture' guidance for services for people with a learning disability and autistic people

which outlines the importance of ensuring a service's model of care, policies and procedures are in line with the current best practice.

The CQC has increased its scrutiny and oversight of providers of support for people with a learning disability and autistic people. The CQC uses both the guidance and observation when regulating registered services, including the monitoring, assessing and inspecting of such services. As a result, the CQC has identified more closed cultures and has taken enforcement action to protect people.

NHS England has also established a three year quality improvement programme which seeks to tackle the root causes of unsafe, poor-quality inpatient care in mental health, learning disability and autism settings.

We are considering what else may also be needed to address quality wider issues for mental health inpatient care.

■ **Autism and Learning Disability: Restraint Techniques**

Barbara Keeley:

[119934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how regularly his Department is meeting with colleagues at NHS England to reduce the use of restrictive interventions in inpatient settings for autistic people and people with learning disabilities.

Maria Caulfield:

Department officials meet regularly with NHS England colleagues to discuss a range of topics in relation to the care and treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities, including reducing the use of restrictive interventions in inpatient settings. This includes meetings each month in relation to action to reduce use of long-term segregation.

We work closely with NHS England to deliver a range of programmes aiming to reduce restrictive interventions. These include Independent Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (IC(E)TRs) and a Senior Intervenor pilot to help individuals in the most restrictive setting move towards discharge. NHS England have commissioned the HOPE(S) model, which is being delivered to embed good practice across inpatient services to reduce the use of long-term segregation and restrictive practices for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

NHS England has also commissioned the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health and Academic Health Science Networks across England to improve the safety and outcomes of people using inpatient Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA) services by reducing the incidence of restrictive practices. A pilot saw most participating hospital wards seeing a significant reduction in one or more measure of restrictive practice and is therefore being scaled up across all MHLDA Trusts in England.

■ **Breast Cancer: Chemotherapy**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[119098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the review of NICE diagnostics guidance on tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer will launch.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[119099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons a review of the NICE diagnostics guidance on tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer has not taken place.

Helen Whately:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is actively considering options for its diagnostics guidance on tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer. A number of technologies are recommended in the current guidance, provided data is collected to reduce uncertainties in the evidence base.

In line with its published process and methods, NICE routinely monitors for new information, such as changes to the evidence base, assessing its likely effect on current recommendations. NICE will only undertake a formal review to determine if an update to the guidance review if this is indicated by its monitoring activities.

■ **Cancer: Diagnosis**

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[\[117962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the diagnosis rate of cancer at stages one and two in adults aged between 18 and 50.

Helen Whately:

The National Health Service (NHS) is implementing non-specific symptom pathways for patients who do not fit clearly into a single urgent cancer referral pathway. These pathways will also support the NHS to meet the new Faster Diagnosis Standard which will ensure that all patients who are referred for the investigation of suspected cancer find out whether they have cancer or not within 28 days.

To encourage people to get in touch with their general practitioner if they notice or are worried about symptoms that could be cancer, NHS England is running the 'Help Us, Help You' campaign, which seeks to address the barriers that are deterring patients from accessing the NHS.

■ Cancer: Health Education

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[117961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help increase awareness amongst GPs of cancer symptoms in patients aged between 18 and 50.

Helen Whately:

In April 2020, NHS England introduced the 'Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service – Early Cancer Diagnosis Guidance' for Primary Care Networks, which 99% of general practitioners practices are signed up to. This is designed to support improvements in rates of early cancer diagnosis by requiring Primary Care Networks to review the quality of their practices' referrals for suspected cancer and take steps to improve this.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Julian Sturdy: [\[120923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the potential merits of expanding the use of medical cannabis.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made. Licensed cannabis-based medicines are routinely available on the National Health Service, however, clinical guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence demonstrate a clear need for more evidence to support routine prescribing and funding decisions for unlicensed cannabis based products for medicinal use in humans. Until that evidence base is built, prescribers will remain reticent to prescribe and no decision can be made by the NHS on routine funding.

We continue to call on manufacturers to conduct research and we are working with regulatory, research and NHS partners to establish clinical trials to test the safety and efficacy of these products.

■ Care Homes: Visits

Dan Carden: [\[121125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' fourth report on Protecting Human Rights in Care Settings, conclusions 18 and 19, published on 16 December 2022, for what reasons his Department is not considering legislation in relation to care users and visiting arrangements in care settings.

Dan Carden: [\[121126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' fourth report on Protecting Human Rights in Care Settings, conclusion 20, published on 16 December 2022, for what reason his Department is not considering legislation in relation to giving

the CQC the power to require care settings to inform them of any changes to their visiting status.

Helen Whately:

The Government's guidance states that every resident should be able to have at least one visitor in all circumstances. The Department uses the Capacity Tracker to collect monthly visiting data that is self reported and submitted by care providers in England. As part of every care home inspection, the Care Quality Commission specifically asks if the service is facilitating visits in accordance with current guidance and it can take regulatory action when required. We are working to review a range of options to help avoid instances where residents are unable to receive visitors.

Dan Carden:

[\[121127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions his Department has had with the CQC where visits have not been allowed into care settings.

Helen Whately:

The Department regularly works with Care Quality Commission (CQC) and stakeholders to ensure that visiting remains a priority. CQC specifically ask care providers if they are facilitating visiting as part of their inspections and can take regulatory action when required. This encourages settings to follow the Government guidance which states that every resident should be able to have at least one visitor in all circumstances.

Dan Carden:

[\[121128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data sources his Department is using to monitor whether visits are taking place in line with the guidance on visiting in care settings.

Helen Whately:

The Department uses the Capacity Tracker to collect monthly visiting data that is self-reported and submitted by care providers in England. In the week ending 14 December 2022, 98.6% of care homes were able to accommodate visits in all circumstances. We continue to engage with the Care Quality Commission, health protection teams and stakeholders to monitor visiting and gather feedback, recognising the negative impact that not receiving visitors has on residents' health and well-being.

■ **Carers: Medical Equipment**

Helen Hayes:

[\[114726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what financial support his Department provides to carers running medical equipment and devices.

Helen Whately:

The Government's cost of living support package delivers £15 billion worth of support measures to assist the most vulnerable with rising energy bills, including charges incurred by medical equipment and devices as part of home care.

Certain specialised NHS England services, such as home Haemodialysis, do include financial support to offset energy costs sustained from running medical equipment at home.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the situation and stands ready to take further steps if needed.

■ Catapult Centres

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[119157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much public funds his Department has spent on the partnership with Moderna to produce a new Innovation and Technology Centre in the UK.

Maria Caulfield:

We are unable to provide the information requested on expenditure, as it is commercially sensitive.

Through the partnership, Moderna will, at its own cost, establish a United Kingdom based manufacturing facility and research and development (R&D) centre as well as commit substantial investment in UK based R&D activities over the 10 year period, bringing the UK a step closer to becoming the leading global hub for life sciences.

■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination

Maggie Throup:

[\[120092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department plans to spend on promoting the uptake of free (a) seasonal flu and (b) covid-19 booster vaccinations to eligible cohorts in winter 2022-23; and how much was spent on promoting those vaccinations in winter 2021-22.

Maria Caulfield:

The 2022/23 campaign to promote uptake of seasonal flu and COVID-19 booster vaccinations had a media spend of £3.02 million. This was an integrated winter vaccinations campaign therefore it is not possible to split out the spend by vaccine. The 2021/22 campaign to promote uptake of seasonal flu and COVID-19 booster vaccinations had a media spend of £11.5 million. This was also an integrated winter vaccinations campaign and spend cannot be separated out by vaccine.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Maggie Throup:

[\[120090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage by cohort of (a) people aged 50 to 64, (b) people aged 65 to 74, (c) people aged 75 and over, (d) pregnant women, (e) people aged 5 and over and at high risk from covid-19 due to a health condition or a weakened immune system, (f) people aged 5 and over who live with someone who has a weakened immune system, (g) people aged 16 and over and who are carers, either paid or unpaid, (h) people living or working in a care home for older

people and (i) frontline health and social care workers who had taken up the offer of a free covid-19 booster vaccination by (A) 30 November 2022 and (B) 31 December 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held. However, the following table shows the booster uptake in age group from 50 years old to 90 years old and over by 30 November 2022 and 31 December 2022.

AGE GROUP	BOOSTER UPTAKE 30 NOVEMBER 2022 (%)	BOOSTER UPTAKE 31 DECEMBER 2022 (%)
50-54 years old	38.3	41.8
55-59 years old	48.5	51.5
60-64 years old	58.1	60.8
65-69 years old	70.1	71.6
70-74 years old	77.5	78.7
75-79 years old	80.8	82.1
80-84 years old	81.2	82.5
85-89 years old	80.7	82.2
90+ years old	77.9	79.9

Source:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/vaccinations?areaType=nation&areaName=England>

Data on vaccine uptake in pregnant women is published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in the Vaccine Surveillance Report, data is available up to June 2022. Of women who gave birth in June 2022, 67.3%, 24,933 of 37,037, had received 2 doses of the vaccine before they gave birth.

The National Health Service publishes data on the total number of people who have had an Autumn Booster dose to date, 12 January for Health Care Workers, immunosuppressed and those at risk in the age bracket, of five years old to 49 years old. Individuals identified as carers in their general practitioner record were included in this cohort but from 1 December 2022 carers are no longer included.

UKHSA publish monthly reports on seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccine uptake in frontline healthcare workers. Data published to the end of November 2022 showed that in 165 NHS Trusts providing a return, 338,602 frontline healthcare workers had received a COVID vaccine since 1 September 2022, an uptake of 36.3 %.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[120188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his department plans to make the seasonal covid-19 booster vaccination available to people under the age of 50.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government continues to be guided by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on who should be offered COVID-19 vaccinations and the JCVI keeps the evidence to support its recommendations under regular review.

On 15 July 2022, the Government accepted the JCVI's advice that the primary aim of the COVID-19 booster vaccine programme in autumn 2022 should be to augment immunity in those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 and thereby optimise protection against severe COVID-19, specifically hospitalisation and death, over winter 2022 to 2023. This includes all adults aged 50 years old and over and individuals aged 5 to 49 years old in a clinical risk group. The clinical risk groups for COVID-19 vaccination are defined in the UK Health Security Agency's 'Green Book' on vaccines and immunisation.

Daisy Cooper:

[121157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the vaccination rate for covid-19 for people who meet the eligibility criteria (a) was in 2021, (b) was in 2022 and (c) is so far in 2023, broken down by (i) Integrated Care Board and (ii) age in England.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Under the Health and Care Act 2022, 42 integrated care boards (ICBs) were established on 1 July 2022, therefore data broken down by ICB is not available.

However, COVID-19 vaccination coverage figures for England have been published weekly by UK Health Security Agency since the start of the vaccine programme broken down by age and are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-weekly-surveillance-reports>

A time series of doses 1, 2, 3 and the Autumn booster broken down by age in the weekly flu and COVID-19 surveillance report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2022-to-2023-season>

Also, data on vaccination uptake in England by age, region and local authority is available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

■ Defibrillators: Public Places

Beth Winter:

[\[117819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment has his department made of the adequacy of the (a) number and (b) accessibility of public access automated external defibrillators.

Beth Winter:

[\[117820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to review the (a) number and (b) accessibility of public access automated external defibrillators.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made. The Government has agreed to provide funding of £1 million to design a grant scheme for the expansion of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) that expands the number and accessibility of publicly supported access to defibrillators.

■ Dental Services: Children

Chi Onwurah:

[\[120117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice his Department provides to parents if NHS dental services are not available for their children locally.

Neil O'Brien:

In circumstances where parents are unable to access an urgent dental appointment for their child directly through a National Health Service dental practice, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance. In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients' which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care, including for children, whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices. These changes have been implemented, including through regulations that came into effect on 25th November 2022. NHS England is

holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and other stakeholders for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System planned to take place in 2023.

■ Dental Services: Databases

Sarah Olney: [121036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when NHS England will resume collecting Dental Commissioning data.

Neil O'Brien:

There has been no pause to the collection of National Health Service dental commissioning data. The latest dental statistics published by NHS Digital is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2021-22-annual-report>

■ Dental Services: Ipswich

Tom Hunt: [120158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase access to NHS dentistry in Ipswich constituency.

Neil O'Brien:

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care, including in Ipswich. These will improve access to National Health Service dentistry whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices. We have taken action to implement these changes, including through regulations that came into effect on 25 November 2022.

NHS England is holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and other stakeholders for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System planned to take place in 2023.

Tom Hunt: [120159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of NHS dental care provision in Ipswich constituency.

Neil O'Brien:

No assessment has been made.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care, including in Ipswich. These will improve access to National Health Service dentistry by adults and children, whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices. We have implemented these changes, including through regulations that came into effect on 25 November 2022. NHS England is holding further discussions with the British

Dental Association and other stakeholders for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System planned to take place in 2023

■ **Dental Services: Newcastle upon Tyne**

Chi Onwurah:

[120116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) availability and (b) accessibility of NHS dental services in Newcastle for (i) adults and (ii) children.

Neil O'Brien:

No assessment has been made. In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care, including in Newcastle. These will improve access to National Health Service dentistry by adults and children, whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices. We have taken action to implement these changes, including through regulations that came into effect on 25th November 2022. NHS England is holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and other stakeholders for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System planned to take place in 2023.

■ **Dentistry**

Chi Onwurah:

[120118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department holds any data on the ratio of NHS dentists to the population; and if he will make a statement.

Neil O'Brien:

NHS Digital publishes annual Dental Statistics for England with data on dental activity including clinical treatments, dental workforce, and the number of patients seen. The latest report sets out that 24,272 dentists performed National Health Service activity during 2021/22. This compares with a population of 56,536,000 in England. Therefore there is one dentist for every 2,329.3 people in England.

NHS Digital's Dental Statistics are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics>

Dean Russell:

[120191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has held recent discussions with (a) the British Dental Association and (b) similar representative organisations on (i) support for dentists and (ii) encouraging take-up of NHS contracts.

Neil O'Brien:

We have regular discussions with the British Dental Association, other organisations in the dental sector and organisations representing dental patients to support and improve National Health Service dental care.

Stakeholders were integral to the development of 'Our plan for patients', announced in September 2022. This plan outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to NHS dental care. This included improving the 2006 contract to ensure fairer remuneration for practices providing complex treatment, issuing clear guidance on how often patients should expect to attend for check-ups, and enabling dentists to make better use of dental teams to deliver NHS treatment. Working together with stakeholders, these changes were implemented through regulations that came into effect on 25th November 2022.

NHS England is holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and the wider dental sector for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System, planned for 2023

■ Dentistry: Contracts

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[119926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the contractual terms of dentists to incentivise them to work in areas having difficulty providing NHS dentistry services; and if he will make a statement.

Neil O'Brien:

NHS England are leading discussions with the British Dental Association, other dental stakeholder groups and patients for further reform of the NHS dental system in 2023. We are aware that certain areas have particular challenges to access to dental care. One of the aims of the next stage of the National Health Service dental system reforms is to improve access for patients, including in areas that traditionally experience challenges in access.

In September 2022 we announced 'Our plan for patients' to make improvements to the NHS dental system. On 25 November 2022, amendments to the NHS dental contract came into effect, which will increase access for patients, make NHS dentistry a more attractive place to work and increase efficiency.

To incentivise high performing practices to expand and deliver more NHS care, particularly in those areas where NHS dentistry is less prevalent, we have enabled, subject to commissioner agreement, practices to deliver up to 110% contracted activity so that more patients can be seen.

■ Dentistry: Higher Education

Dean Russell:

[\[120192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many students have undertaken dental studies at (a) university or (b) medical colleges since 2021.

Neil O'Brien:

Dentistry courses in England are all offered at universities. The following table shows entrants to dentistry courses in England by course provider.

PROVIDER	TOTAL
The University of Birmingham	70
University of Bristol	60
University of Central Lancashire	25
King's College London	155
The University of Leeds	75
The University of Liverpool	70
The University of Manchester	70
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	65
University of Plymouth	55
Queen Mary University of London	70
The University of Sheffield	70
Total	795

Source: Office for Students Medical and Dental Students Survey 2022

Note:

Entrants are based on initial figures and are likely to change.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Edenred

Emily Thornberry:

[\[118862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 December to Question 107082, for what reason he is concerned that the disclosure of the information requested in relation to his Department could affect Edenred's commercial interests when sixteen other government departments who also use the Edenred contract to pay non-cash vouchers to their staff have disclosed the same information since 6 December 2022 with no such concerns arising.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 12 January 2023]: Upon further consideration with Edenred, the Department has decided to disclose this information in line with other Government departments. The following tables shows the total value of non-cash vouchers awarded to staff working for the Department.

YEAR	VALUE
2017/18	£11,585
2018/19	£23,150
2020/21	£53,155
2021/22	£106,575

■ Draft Mental Health Bill

Liz Twist: **[121059]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including early intervention measures within the upcoming Mental Health Bill.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government published a draft Mental Health Bill on 23 June 2022. It is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-mental-health-bill-2022>

The draft Bill is focused on modernising the Mental Health Act 1983, which provides the legislative framework under which people may be detained and treated for a severe mental disorder. The draft Bill is currently subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by a joint Parliamentary Committee. Information on the Committee is available at the following link:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/605/joint-committee-on-the-draft-mental-health-bill/>

Following pre-legislative scrutiny, the Government will bring forward a Mental Health Bill when Parliamentary time allows.

■ Elective Recovery Taskforce

Daisy Cooper: **[120127]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the membership of the Elective Recovery Taskforce.

Will Quince:

The Elective Recovery Taskforce membership will be published in due course.

■ Evusheld

Mark Pritchard:

[\[118965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of NICE bringing forward proposals to support the introduction of next generation of Evusheld to offer protection against covid-19 for those people for whom traditional covid-19 vaccines offer limited or no protection.

Will Quince:

No 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 on whether new medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE's guidance is developed by experts based on a thorough assessment of the available evidence and through extensive engagement with stakeholders. NICE is only able to appraise medicines in relation to the conditions they have been licensed for. NICE's technology appraisal process usually takes approximately nine months. The appraisal of Evusheld is underway as a priority and following an agreement with the manufacturer, NICE has already expedited the appraisal of Evusheld by one month and its independent Appraisal Committee will meet on 24 January to consider its draft recommendations.

■ Functional Neurological Disorder

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[120836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people in England suffering from Functional Neurological Disorder; and how many new cases were diagnosed by NHS services in England in the last year for which data is available.

Helen Whately:

No estimate has been made. The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Health Professions: Training

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[120178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of incorporating education on female presentation of symptoms into the training of healthcare professionals.

Will Quince:

No specific assessment has been made. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides authoritative, evidence based guidelines for healthcare professionals on best practice. In areas where there is evidence of sex based differences in symptoms, diagnosis or treatment, these are reflected in NICE guidelines.

The Women's Health Strategy for England sets out our ambitions to improve healthcare professional education and training on women's health. Alongside the Women's Health Ambassador, we will work with education institutions, professional bodies and other stakeholders to improve education and training.

■ Health Services

Tracey Crouch: [\[117557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that specialist medical services are accessible in all regions of England.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for commissioning and ensuring healthcare needs of local communities are met. Specialised services may be located in specialised hospitals because they are capable of recruiting a team of staff with the appropriate expertise to perform the required treatments.

■ Health Services: Mental Illness

Martyn Day: [\[119992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients with severe mental illness have adequate access to physical health checks.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to 390,000 people with a severe mental illness receiving a full annual physical health check each year by 2023/24. As of quarter 2 of 2022/23, 239,372 people with severe mental illness received the complete list of physical health checks in the preceding 12 months, with more receiving at least one element of the physical health check.

Since 2021/22, NHS England's Quality and Outcomes Framework has incentivised general practices for delivering all six elements of these physical health checks. As part of the £500 million funding from the Mental Health Recovery Action plan 2021/22, we have also provided £14 million to support the physical health of people living with severe mental illness, such as with physical health checks, or getting their COVID-19 vaccine.

■ Health: Females

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[120177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce health inequalities between men and women.

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[120179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle health inequalities affecting women.

Taiwo Owatemi:

[120180]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to implement the Women's Health Strategy on tackling health inequalities and ensuring equitable access to and experience of services for women.

Maria Caulfield:

A priority running through the Women's Health Strategy for England is ensuring that all women have equitable access to and experience of services and disparities in health outcomes between men and women and groups of women are reduced. Last year we appointed Professor Dame Lesley Regan as the Women's Health Ambassador for England to ensure women that experience health disparities are heard. The Department will update Parliament on the implementation of the Women's Health Strategy annually.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is focused on improving the nation's health and tackling health disparities. The health levelling up mission, stated in the Levelling Up White Paper, to improve healthy life expectancy by five years by 2035 and narrow the gap by 2030 remains Government policy. A significant proportion of ill health is preventable. By focusing on the major conditions that contribute to early death and reduce years of good health, as well as the behaviours that drive those conditions like smoking, poor diet and alcohol consumption, which disproportionately impact some places and communities, we will make progress on reducing health disparities and improve the health of women.

■ **Health: Research**

Andrew Rosindell:

[117499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the UK-South Africa health partnership; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 January 2023 to Question [113181](#).

■ **Heating: Health Hazards**

Ian Byrne:

[117883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on human respiratory health of (a) log burning stoves and (b) pellet boilers.

Maria Caulfield:

Air pollution has been highlighted as the largest environmental risk to public health in the United Kingdom. Burning combustion of wood accounted for 17% of fine particulate matter emissions in 2020.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has as part of the Cleaner Air Programme, undertaken a systematic review of the epidemiological studies on the association

between outdoor and indoor solid fuel exposure, including biomass and coal and respiratory diseases in children and adults. The evidence suggests that burning solid fuels such as coal and wood indoors could contribute to the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer in adults but further work is needed to confirm this. There is less evidence for effects in children. Introducing measures to reduce solid fuel burning can improve air quality, leading to some reductions of adverse respiratory effects.

■ HIV Infection: Clinics

David Mundell:

[\[119937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that contracts awarded to HIV clinics require those clinics to conduct annual audits of (a) the number of people in the local area requiring HIV care and (b) the capacity of those clinics to provide that care.

Neil O'Brien:

Contracts awarded to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) clinics are the responsibility of NHSE specialist commissioning groups and local authority commissioners who assess the need in their local populations and set the requirements of the contracts. Data on HIV treatment and care are collected from HIV services by the United Kingdom Health Security Agency and reported back centrally to assist commissioners and service providers in monitoring performance.

■ HIV Infection: Health Services

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[119171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that the National HIV action plan includes targeted work to ensure migrants and asylum seekers living with HIV can access HIV care and treatment.

Neil O'Brien:

As part of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) action plan, the Department is currently reviewing the model sexual health service specification, which takes account of people who may face additional barriers to services such as migrants and asylum seekers. Publication of the service specification is due in 2023. Under the oversight of the HIV Clinical Reference Group, NHS England are also currently reviewing the national service specification for adult HIV services, which sets out the standards of care that HIV providers are expected to meet.

■ HIV Infection: Mental Health Services

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[120123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to make mental health support part of the service specification for the treatment of young people with HIV.

Florence Eshalomi:

[120125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing psychological and mental health support as part of the national service specification for HIV services.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government is committed to improving the quality of life of people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) including young people. Children and young people living with HIV receive care from paediatric services commissioned in line with the Paediatric HIV service specification which includes access to mental health support. We are also in the process of establishing a workforce task and finish group which will explore innovative ways for the workforce to provide better support to people of all ages in care, including mental health support.

As set out in the NHS England roadmap, specialised HIV inpatient and outpatient services have been identified as key areas for greater integrated care systems leadership by NHS England and integrated care boards. This will allow local systems to simplify and strengthen HIV care pathways with other services through effective local partnerships, including psychosocial support and mental health services, for a more holistic approach to care.

As part of the Government's HIV Action Plan, NHS England are also currently reviewing the national Service Specification for Adult HIV services (2013), which sets out the standards of care that HIV providers are expected to meet, including availability of community, psychological and psychosocial support for patients.

■ HIV Infection: Screening

David Mundell:

[118861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will expand HIV opt-out testing to local authority areas where there are between two and five per 1,000 people living with HIV.

Neil O'Brien:

As part of the Government's HIV Action Plan, NHS England has expanded opt-out human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) testing in accident and emergency departments in the 21 local authority areas across the country with the highest prevalence of HIV, over 5 cases per 1,000 people, a proven effective way to identify new HIV cases. NHS England is investing £20m over 2022 to 2025 to support this activity.

We will be considering the full evidence from the first year of opt-out testing, alongside the data on progress towards our ambition of ending new HIV transmissions in England by 2030, to decide whether we further expand this programme to areas with high HIV prevalence, 2 to 5 cases per 1,000 people. We will also share the findings from the opt-out testing programme with local health systems to inform local decisions on expansion.

■ HIV Infection: Standards

Florence Eshalomi:

[120126]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the HIV Action plan includes steps to (a) monitor (b) evaluate and (c) benchmark health-related quality of life, using measurements developed in collaboration with people who have HIV.

Neil O'Brien:

The HIV Action Plan monitoring and evaluation framework was published on 1st December 2022 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework/hiv-action-plan-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework>

This measures the progress towards the aims of the HIV Action Plan to reduce human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) transmissions and deaths by 2025. The priority is to promote the quality of life of people living with HIV and to reduce stigma. Reducing stigma and promoting quality of life are key themes in the monitoring and evaluation framework. A baseline indicator, taken from the Positive Voices Survey for a quality of life measure was presented in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as 7.4 out of 10 for people living with HIV, compared to 7.7 out of 10 in the general population.

The framework will continue to monitor and evaluate the quality of life measure from this baseline. The framework states that further work will be undertaken with the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group and with professional groups, the HIV community and academic partners to develop indicators to monitor quality of life for those living with HIV. It is anticipated that these indicators will be aligned with UNAIDS' 2025 AIDS Targets, which include an assessment of punitive laws and policies and targets of less than 10% of people living with HIV experiencing stigma and discrimination and less than 10% experiencing gender inequality and violence.

The monitoring and evaluation framework was published in December 2022 and included a place holder indicator of quality of life using the positive voices survey.

The framework sets out a commitment to further develop this indicator to monitor the quality of life with key stakeholders including the HIV community. The HIV community advisory group feeds directly into the HIV Action plan Steering group and will enable future indicators to be co-produced.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages

Alex Sobel:

[120145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to support to patients affected by hormone replacement therapy shortages.

Maria Caulfield:

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 supply issues with a limited number of products.

We are working with suppliers and other stakeholders such as the National Health Service and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to maintain overall HRT supply to patients across the UK, including working to expedite resupply dates of the disrupted HRT products to resolve issues as soon as possible and to help fill supply gaps and prevent future shortages.

Access to in-demand products has improved since we issued Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) on HRT products to limit dispensing to three months' supply to even out distribution and allow alternative products to be dispensed, as necessary. 17 SSP's for HRT products have been issued since April 2022, and a much smaller number of SSP's remain in place as the supply position of several products affected by short term supply issues have been resolved.

We regularly share communications about shortages and discontinuations with the NHS and have issued a number of communications about HRT supply issues to date. We have updated supply information about all HRT products, including those currently affected by supply issues, on the Specialist Pharmacy Services Medicine Supply Tool for NHS staff, including general practitioners to access.

■ Hospitals: Discharges**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[119248]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral statement of 9 January 2023 on NHS winter pressures, what measures will be implemented to discharge mental health patients into appropriate settings more quickly.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 12 January 2023]: Integrated care boards and providers of mental health and community inpatient services have been asked to ensure that they have robust discharge processes in place, ensuring that patients who no longer need to be in an inpatient setting are discharged and cared for in more appropriate settings.

We are working with the National Health Service to improve the timely discharge of patients from mental health settings by working with social care partners and implementing the 10 best practice interventions identified by the National Health and Social Care Discharge Taskforce.

The additional £200 million announced on 9 January 2023 will fund short-term NHS step-down care packages. Integrated care boards, working closely with local authorities, will use this to purchase places in care homes and other settings, such as hospices, to help fund wrap-around primary and community health services to support patients' recovery. Further details on how this funding will be spent will be released shortly.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[120010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Oral Statement on NHS Winter Pressures of 9 January 2023, Official Report, column 285, how much and what proportion of the discharge funding will go towards (a) mental health services and (b) mental health resources in emergency departments.

Maria Caulfield:

The £200 million announced on 9 January will fund short-term National Health Service step-down care packages. Integrated care boards, working closely with local authorities, will use this to purchase places in care homes and other settings, such as hospices, and to help fund wrap-around primary and community health services to support patients' recovery. Further details on how this funding will be spent will be released shortly.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to discuss solutions with armed forces planners to delays in NHS discharges.

Will Quince:

There have been no specific discussions.

■ Incontinence: Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to prepare and implement an NHS workforce plan to ensure effective incontinence management for patients, including adequate provision of pelvic physiotherapy for all patients who require it.

Neil O'Brien:

The NHS Long Term Plan set out a commitment to ensure that women have access to multidisciplinary pelvic health clinics and pathways across England. NHS England is therefore rolling out Perinatal Pelvic Health services which are currently being set up in two-thirds of integrated care systems (ICSs) ahead of full national deployment from 2023/24. An objective of these services is to increase the number of pelvic health physiotherapists nationally so that all women have access to best practice perinatal pelvic health care in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance. As of September 2022, the two-thirds of ICSs currently implementing these services plan to recruit 67 additional pelvic health physiotherapists in total, of which 40 have already been recruited.

To support the provision of continence care for people living with dementia, the NHS RightCare scenario 'Getting the dementia pathway right' provides guidelines on continence care and support, good practice and where practice could be improved across the patient journey. This is supported by more detailed guidance set out in 'Excellence in Continence Care Practical guidance for commissioners and leaders in

health and social care' to inform commissioning of high quality community continence services.

The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan this year, which will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals required in future years, taking account of improvements in retention and productivity. This will include allied health professionals.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Maggie Throup:

[120089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage by cohort of (a) children aged 2 and 3 years on 31 August 2022, (b) school-aged children including all primary school aged children and eligible secondary school aged children, (c) people aged 6 months to under 50 years in clinical risk groups, (d) pregnant women, (e) people aged 50 to 64, (f) people aged 65 to 74, (g) people aged 75 and over, (h) people staying in long-stay residential care homes, (i) people who are carers, (j) people in receipt of carer's allowance, (k) the main carer of an older or disabled person, (m) people who are in close contact with immunocompromised individuals and (n) frontline health and social care workers who had taken up the offer of a free seasonal flu vaccination by (A) 30 November 2022 and (B) 31 December 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally. However, the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) publish seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in general practitioner patients. The following table shows the provisional monthly data for 1 September 2022 to 30 November 2022 for various cohorts and seasonal influenza vaccine uptake provisional data for all school aged primary school children in England given from the 1 September 2022 to the 30 November 2022.

COHORT	UPTAKE 30 NOVEMBER 2022 (%)
65 years old and over	76.2
6 months old to under 65 years old at-risk	42.7
Pregnant women	30.0
50 years old to under 65 years old and not in a clinical risk group	35.6
50 years old to 65 years old and in a clinical risk group	56.7
All 2 year olds (combined)	34.5
All 3 year olds (combined)	36.7
Reception (age 4 years old to 5 years old)	47.8
Year 1 (age 5 years old to 6 years old)	48.3

COHORT	UPTAKE 30 NOVEMBER 2022 (%)
Year 2 (age 6 years old to 7 years old)	49.3
Year 3 (age 7 years old to 8 years old)	48.9
Year 4 (age 8-9 years old)	48.2
Year 5 (age 9-10 years old)	47.5
Year 6 (age 10-11 years old)	46.0
All primary school age (age 4 years old to 11 years old)	48.0

Source: Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in GP patients: monthly data, 2022 to 2023 and Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in children of school age: monthly data, 2022 to 2023, UKHSA

Data for December 2022 will be published at the end of January 2023 and data for secondary school aged children will be published on 26 January 2023.

UKHSA has published provisional data for Seasonal influenza uptake amongst frontline healthcare workers (HCWs) in England 2022 to 2023 for the period 1 September 2022 to 30 November 2022, it is 41.8%. The data for December 2022 will be published at the end of January 2023.

As of the week, ending 18 December 2022, the proportions who had received their flu vaccination for the 2022 to 2023 season were, 70.1% of total residents and 13.8% of total staff of older adult care homes:

Vaccine uptake for carers will be published in the 2022 to 2023 annual report

Daisy Cooper:

[\[121116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many flu vaccinations were given in England in (a) 2021, (b) 2022, and (c) 2023 as of 11 January; and if he will provide a breakdown of those figures by (i) patient age and (ii) integrated care board area.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Annual reports are currently available for 2020 to 2021, 2021 to 2022. The finalised report for 2022 to 2023 will be published in due course. The integrated care board (ICB) structure was introduced in July 2022.

Numbers of patients registered with general practitioner (GP) practices and numbers who received influenza vaccine and influenza vaccine uptake in children of school age for 2021 to 2022 and 2020 to 2021 are published and available at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-gp-patients-winter-season-2021-to-2022>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-flu-vaccine-uptake-in-children-of-school-age-monthly-data-2021-to-2022>

For the 2022 to 2023 season monthly data is available. The latest reports are published and available at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vaccine-uptake#seasonal-flu-vaccine-uptake:-figures>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-children-of-school-age-monthly-data-2022-to-2023>

This includes provisional data for all vaccination up until 30 November 2022. The data for January will be published at the end of February 2023.

Monthly data for 2022 to 2023 is broken down by ICB and is available for GP patient data at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-gp-patients-monthly-data-2022-to-2023>

■ **Liothyronine**

Darren Jones:

[117833]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of expanding access to the drug Liothyronine T3 for people with hypothyroidism.

Will Quince:

No specific assessment has been made. Decisions about prescribing rest with the healthcare professional concerned, who has clinical responsibility for that particular aspect of a patient's care. Prescribing is informed by a range of factors, including any national or local prescribing guidelines but, ultimately, the decision on what to prescribe is made by the prescriber themselves, using their own clinical judgement.

NHS England's guidance 'Items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care' states that levothyroxine is the first line treatment for hypothyroidism and liothyronine should not be routinely prescribed. However, the guidance states that liothyronine may be recommended for individual patients who may not respond to levothyroxine alone. This guidance has been refreshed and stakeholder feedback on proposed changes were considered in the summer.

Guidance on the prescribing of liothyronine has also been published by the Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee and this is being updated at a national level. The Department understands this will state that it is appropriate to prescribe liothyronine for some patients and sets out how prescribers may determine this, and that only patients who have not previously been reviewed should be reviewed to consider

future treatment plans. This document is still being drafted and further refined following stakeholder engagement.

■ Medical Equipment: Manufacturing Industries

Chi Onwurah: [\[118996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has had recent discussions with representatives of the medical technology industry on supporting that industry to deliver positive outcomes for (a) patients, (b) the NHS and (c) the economy.

Will Quince:

The Department along with the Office for Life Sciences and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency are in constant dialogue with the Medtech industry, through engagement with trade associations and companies, on matters relating to product safety, regulation, market function, supply resilience, innovation, investment, growth and jobs.

Chi Onwurah: [\[118997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps with (a) Cabinet colleagues, (b) the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and (c) the medical technology industry to help ensure that medical technology businesses are supported through the standstill period for medical device regulation until July 2024.

Will Quince:

The Government is committed to supporting medical technology businesses throughout the standstill period and the wider reform of the medical device regulatory framework. During the medical device standstill period, the current regulatory system remains in place.

We are working with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Office for Life Sciences in the development of the updated medical device regulations. The Life Sciences Council recently released a joint statement on an agreement to support the delivery of the new regulatory system. The policies for inclusion in the updated regulations are outlined in the Government's response to the MHRA's consultation, with further engagement with industry planned. The new legislation will be accompanied by a suite of guidance to support businesses in the transition to the new framework. We will continue to work with other relevant Government departments in the development of the regulations.

■ Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Ben Lake: [\[119065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's budget was derived from the public purse in each of the last five financial years.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not collected centrally. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is an executive agency of the Department. The MHRA is primarily funded by income from fees for sales of products and regulatory services. The MHRA's fees are set to cover full costs incurred by the Agency, in accordance with HM Treasury's Managing Public Money guidelines. An approximate breakdown of the agency's funding is 50% fees for services, 25% industry periodic fees and 25% Department funding.

The following table shows the Department's funding over the previous five financial years.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL
2021/22	£29,957,000
2020/21	£43,336,000
2019/20	£43,450,000
2018/19	£34,559,000
2017/18	£28,800,000

A more in-depth breakdown of the MHRA's income and expenditure is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medicines-and-healthcare-products-regulatory-agency-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-to-2022>

Ben Lake:**[119066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of funding the cost of medicines regulation undertaken by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is a largely fee charging regulator with approximately three quarters of its income derived from fees levied on applicants. This is a standard form of cost recovery for regulators worldwide. The MHRA has recently concluded a public consultation on its statutory fees to ensure all costs involved in delivery are recovered, which concluded on 23 November 2022.

Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review**Emma Hardy:****[117892]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Section 9 Conflicts of interest in the Policy paper entitled Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review: update report on government implementation, published on 22

December 2022, and the Patient Representative Working Group, what patient groups were represented on that Working Group; how those patient groups were chosen and by whom; how many people in total were in the Working Group; and how many times the Working Group had met as on 6 January 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department selected patient representatives through engagement with NHS England and the Devolved Governments. Our intention was to form a voluntary group that best represented patients across the four nations. Since March 2022, we have held two Patient Representative Groups (PRG). Four patient representatives attended each of the sessions. We expect to hold another PRG early in 2023 to discuss feedback on pilot systems.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose:

[\[117540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 31 October 2022 and 2 December 2022 on covid-19 vaccine safety.

Maria Caulfield:

We have searched our system and mailboxes and have been unable to find a case that matches these dates. We contacted your office for a copy of this correspondence and will look into the matter further once this has been received.

Paul Maynard:

[\[120906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to correspondence of 18 October 2022 from the hon. Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys on the impact of rising energy prices on vulnerable individuals in assisted living facilities.

Helen Whately:

I replied to the hon. Member on the 17 November 2022.

■ **Mental Health**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November to Question 87882 on Mental Health, if he will publish a long-term strategy on mental health, well-being and suicide prevention.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government is committed to improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for people who experience worse outcomes than the general population. This is a key part of our commitment to level up and address unequal outcomes and life chances across the country.

We launched a 12-week public call for evidence on what can be done across Government in the longer term to support mental health, wellbeing and suicide

prevention. This closed on 7 July 2022. We received submissions from 5,273 respondents representing a broad range of stakeholders from across England and we are currently considering these.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[121013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress his Department has made on achieving the objectives of its 10-year cross-government mental health and wellbeing plan.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government has not published a 10-year cross-government mental health and wellbeing plan. We are committed to improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for people who experience worse outcomes than the general population. This is a key part of our commitment to level up and address unequal outcomes and life chances across the country.

We launched a 12-week public call for evidence on what can be done across Government in the longer term to support mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention. This closed on 7 July 2022. We received submissions from 5,273 respondents representing a broad range of stakeholders from across England and we are currently considering these.

■ **Mental Health Services: Safety**

Barbara Keeley:

[\[119932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring providers of all mental health, learning disability and autism services to publish the review of safeguarding policies in their organisations which was required by NHS England in autumn 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. However, a majority of trusts have already shared findings of reviews of safeguarding policies, through board minutes and other publications.

■ **Mental Health Services: Secondary Education**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[119004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the process is for referring a child in secondary school education for support from their local mental health team.

Maria Caulfield:

Children in secondary school education can access a range of children and young people's mental health services, including new education-based Mental Health Support Teams where these have been implemented. Referral to these services can be through a number of routes including by parents or carers, teachers, school nurses, special educational needs co-ordinators, general practitioners or from another National Health Service service. Children being supported by social services

or the youth offending team can be referred by their key worker for an appointment with someone in specialist children and young people's mental health services. In many areas, children and young people can also self-refer to their local children and young people's mental health services. Support is also available that children and young people can access without having to ask for a referral, including the Every Mind Matters and NHS websites and urgent mental health helplines that anyone can call.

■ Middle East Respiratory Syndrome

Jim Shannon:

[\[118925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Qatar on Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus.

Maria Caulfield:

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have not had specific discussions with Qatar on Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). UKHSA regularly monitors the international epidemiology of MERS-CoV, carries out risk assessments to understand the risk of imported cases to the United Kingdom population and publishes detailed guidance on the management of possible cases of MERS-CoV.

UKHSA remains vigilant and closely monitors developments in the Middle East and in the rest of the world where new cases of MERS-CoV have emerged and continues to liaise with international colleagues through well-established relationships, to assess whether our recommendations need to change.

■ Naltrexone

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[117663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has (a) included and (b) made an assessment of the potential merits of including low dose Naltrexone on its RAPID C-19 programme.

Will Quince:

The multi-agency research to access pathway for investigational drugs for COVID-19 (RAPID C-19) was established in 2020 to ensure that treatments for COVID-19 were made available safely to National Health Service (NHS) patients as soon as possible. The initiative has enabled rapid patient access to therapeutics including dexamethasone, remdesivir, tocilizumab and sarilumab and baricitinib, novel antibody treatments such as sotrovimab, and the two oral antivirals molnupiravir and nirmatralvir+ritonavir (Paxlovid).

RAPID C-19 has made no assessment of low dose naltrexone for COVID-19 and its role in reviewing potential COVID-19 treatments is now ending as the NHS moves back to routine commissioning arrangements for these treatments. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence will therefore appraise new licensed treatments, as appropriate, through its standard Technology Appraisal process and will continue to update its COVID-19 rapid guidelines as the evidence base evolves.

■ NHS and Social Services: Protective Clothing

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[121020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the reasons for his decision to require people providing social contact within a care setting to wear face masks as published in updated guidance on 15 December 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

Changes to the 'COVID-19 supplement to the infection prevention and control resource for adult social care' guidance were published on 15 December 2022 following consultation with the sector and a review of the latest public health advice. Guidance is constantly under review, with the latest update enabling providers to risk assess the proportionate use of masks while continuing to outline instances where face masks are recommended in line with public health advice. This means that in most situations, people providing social contact will not have to wear masks.

■ NHS: Agency Workers

John Spellar:

[\[118812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of firms providing agency labour to the NHS on (a) the amount of profit generated by those agencies, (b) trends in the level of health staff leaving NHS employment and joining those agencies and (c) dependence of the NHS on agency labour.

Will Quince:

The Department does not collect data on the amount of profit generated by agencies supplying staff to the National Health Service nor the number of health staff leaving NHS employment to work for agencies. Data on agency staff is held by the employing agency and is not shared with NHS England. NHS England holds data for agency shifts in the NHS, including hours worked and cost.

The deployment of a temporary workforce is an important element of efficiently running the NHS, allowing the NHS to meet demand fluctuations without the need to increase capacity above that which would be required on a sustained basis. Staff can be drawn from internal staff banks or external agencies.

Our policy is to reduce the use of agency staff and to prioritise the use of in-house staff banks over agency use. The introduction of the Agency Rules in 2016 helped to reduce agency spend by around £1.2 billion, from a peak of £3.6 billion in 2015/16 to £2.4 billion at the end of 2020/21. Total agency spend as a percentage of total wage bill decreased from 7.9% in 2015/16 to 3.7% in 2020/21. Reducing the use of agency staff must be balanced with providing safe care to patients. Trusts are able to use temporary staffing to respond to situations where they do not have sufficient staff numbers. NHS England has re-established measures in September 2022 to control agency expenditure, including a system agency expenditure limit.

■ NHS: Drugs

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[118848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made with Cabinet colleagues of the potential impact of a UK-India free trade agreement on the availability of medicines for the NHS.

Will Quince:

The sustainability of the National Health Service is a priority for the Government. That is why we are clear that in any negotiations on future trade agreements, we could not agree to any proposals on medicines pricing or access that would put NHS finances at risk or reduce clinician and patient choice.

■ NHS: Finance

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[117810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS funding has increased in line with inflation in total since 2010.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[120183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS funding has increased with the rate of inflation since 2010.

Will Quince:

The following table shows cash and real terms increases in expenditure for NHS England, based on outturn, from 2013/14 to 2021/22. NHS England was established in 2013/14 and like for like figures for prior years are not available. Outturn information for the current financial year is not yet available. The total real terms increase from 2013/14 to 2021/22 is £39.9 billion or 36.4%.

YEAR	NHS ENGLAND EXPENDITURE (£ BILLION) - CASH	NHS EXPENDITURE (£ BILLION) - REAL (IN 2021/22 PRICES)			% REAL TERMS INCREASE
			% CASH INCREASE		
2013/14	93.9	109.8	-	-	-
2014/15	97.3	112.5	3.6%		2.5%
2015/16	100.8	115.6	3.6%		2.7%
2016/17	106.0	119.2	5.2%		3.1%
2017/18	109.8	121.5	3.6%		1.9%
2018/19	114.6	124.5	4.3%		2.5%
2019/20	124.0	131.3	8.3%		5.5%
2020/21	143.7	143.0	15.9%		8.9%

YEAR	NHS ENGLAND	NHS		
	EXPENDITURE (£ BILLION) - CASH	EXPENDITURE (£ BILLION) - REAL (IN 2021/22 PRICES)	% CASH INCREASE	% REAL TERMS INCREASE
2021/22	149.7	149.7	4.2%	4.7%

■ NHS: ICT

Julie Elliott:

[\[117587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December to Question 99836, if he will publish the directory of products meeting DTAC standards.

Will Quince:

The directory of products meeting Digital Technology Assessment Criteria standards is an ambition for late 2023/24. It is intended that this will be publicly available.

Julie Elliott:

[\[117588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December to Question 99836, what penalties will be faced by companies that are not DTAC compliant as part of remedial action plans.

Julie Elliott:

[\[117589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what consequences will be faced by digital services providers to the NHS that are not compliant with DTAC standards.

Will Quince:

National Health Service organisations are responsible for ensuring that products that they procure and use meet the Digital Technology Assessment Criteria standards. The intention from remedial action plans is that NHS organisations ensure that all the companies that supply technologies or provide digital services are compliant with the minimum legislation and NHS standards that are in place to protect patients.

Actions plans will be led by NHS organisations and will focus on working with suppliers to swiftly achieve compliance. If compliance cannot be achieved, then NHS organisations will need to consider contractual measures that can be used. Any products that are identified as being in breach of Medical Device Regulations will be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

Julie Elliott:

[\[117590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December to Question 99836, how many DTAC-required NHS contracts have been awarded to companies that are not DTAC-compliant.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not held centrally. The NHS Digital Health Technology Standards Audit did not ask National Health Service organisations to differentiate within the contracts that were awarded before and post Digital Technology Assessment Criteria launch.

■ NHS: Industrial Disputes**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[117729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of Exchequer on potential options for resolving the pay dispute with NHS staff.

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 the health and social care sectors.

■ NHS: Labour Turnover and Recruitment**Ian Lavery:**[\[118958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve levels of staff (a) recruitment and (b) retention in the NHS.

Will Quince:

The Government is growing the National Health Service workforce. There are now over 42,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) more staff working in NHS provider trusts and commissioning bodies than a year ago, October 2021, including almost 4,700 more doctors and over 10,500 more nurses. We are working hard to deliver 50,000 nurses by the end of March 2024 and we are well on the way towards achieving this aim with over 36,000 more nurses working in the NHS now compared with September 2019.

The Government has funded 1,500 more medical school places each year for domestic students in England, a 25% increase over three years. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and has delivered five new medical schools in England. There are currently record numbers of medical students in training.

The NHS People Plan sets out a comprehensive range of actions to improve staff retention. Actions to improve the experience of staff outlined in the 2020 NHS People Plan and People Promise continue to be priorities, as outlined in the NHS national planning guidance in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The NHS Retention Programme is continuously seeking to understand why staff leave, resulting in targeted interventions to support staff to stay whilst keeping them well. A staff retention guide has been updated and includes information on supporting staff in their late and early career with specific focus on induction, reward and recognition and menopause support.

We have also commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term workforce plan. The plan 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.

■ NHS: Pay

Rachael Maskell: [\[117678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to help agree a negotiation framework on NHS staff pay with trade union representatives.

Rachael Maskell: [\[117689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will discuss a long term pay plan with NHS unions.

Will Quince:

Ministers in the Department wrote to representatives of health unions early in January to invite them to meet to discuss the evidence that the Government will be submitting to the Pay Review Bodies for the 2023/24 pay round. These meetings took place in the week commencing 9 January.

■ NHS: Pay Settlements

Bambos Charalambous: [\[119097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the criteria are for selecting members of the NHS pay awards body; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the independence of that body.

Will Quince:

Members of the NHS Pay Review Body are appointed following an open recruitment process which is run in accordance with the Governance Code on Public appointments and is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Job description and person specifications setting out the essential criteria for the role vary slightly depending on the member vacancy advertised. The Office of Manpower Economics provides an independent secretariat to the pay review bodies separately from the Department.

Rachael Maskell: [\[120982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to help resolve pay disputes with NHS staff in relation to settlement for 2022/23.

Will Quince:

Ministers at the Department wrote to representatives of health unions early in January to invite them to meet to discuss the evidence that the Government will be submitting to the Pay Review Bodies for the 2023/24 pay round. These meetings took place in the week commencing 9 January.

The Government is focused on the 2023/24 pay review process but also recognise that despite over one million National Health Service workers receiving a pay rise of at least £1,400 this financial year, global economic headwinds are putting household budgets under pressure and we are happy to listen to concerns from health unions about this.

■ NHS: Preventive Medicine

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[119897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what preventative health measures his Department is (a) taking and (b) planning in order to ease pressures on the NHS.

Will Quince:

The Department is pursuing a range of policies which will prevent ill health and make a difference to the demand on services for National Health Services, including policies focused on the main risk factors for preventable ill health and on preventative health services.

We are making progress in restoring services for preventable non communicable conditions such as cardiovascular disease (CVD). For example, based on the current rate of recovery, we expect NHS Health Check delivery, a core part of our CVD prevention pathway, to return to pre-pandemic levels by June 2023. We continue to explore new policies to improve the prevention of ill health, including for the detection, diagnosis and management of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

■ NHS: Staff

Ian Lavery:

[\[118961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to reduce the (a) pressure on and (b) workload of NHS staff.

Will Quince:

We are committed to looking after the National Health Service workforce. The health, safety and wellbeing of NHS staff is a priority and as we continue to grow the NHS workforce. There are now over 42,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) more staff working in NHS provider trusts and commissioning bodies than a year ago in October 2021, including almost 4,700 more doctors and over 10,500 more nurses.

The NHS People Plan and NHS People Promise, published in July 2020, set out a comprehensive range of actions that are focussed on making the NHS a better place to work and to improve retention. This includes a stronger focus on health and wellbeing, strengthening leadership and management to support staff and expanding opportunities for flexible working. We have also committed to publishing a long term workforce plan this year to help ensure the NHS has the robust and resilient workforce it needs for the future.

Ian Lavery:

[118962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of (a) increasing funding for medical schools, (b) offering additional financial support to people training for medical careers and (c) increasing salaries for NHS workers on increasing the size of the NHS workforce.

Will Quince:

The Government reviews funding arrangements for all healthcare students before the start of each academic year. Whilst we will attempt to address a variety of issues with the finite resources available to us, we must also strike a balance between ensuring students are financially supported during their studies and delivering maximum value for money for the taxpayer.

For 2023/24, we have asked the independent pay review bodies for pay recommendations for National Health Service staff not already in multi-year deals. This follows the acceptance in full of the 2022/23 financial year's recommendations.

We have commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term plan for the NHS workforce for the next 15 years. The high-level long-term NHS workforce plan 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. This plan will help ensure that we have the right numbers of staff, with the right skills to transform and deliver high quality services fit for the future.

■ NHS: Waiting Lists

Ian Lavery:

[118959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for (a) GP appointments, (b) Accident and Emergency treatment and (c) delayed medical (i) treatments and (ii) operations in hospital.

Will Quince:

On 22 September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients' which contains measures to help people make an informed choice about which practice is best for them, book general practice appointments more easily, benefit from more options when they need care and bolster general practice teams with other professionals who can help them to deliver over a million more appointments this winter.

As announced in the Autumn Statement, the Government is investing an additional £3.3 billion in each of 2023/24 and 2024/25 to enable rapid action to improve urgent and emergency, elective, and primary care performance to pre-pandemic levels.

The pandemic has put enormous pressures on the National Health Service with elective waiting lists growing to over 7 million patients but we remain committed to ensuring people get the right care at the right time. The NHS will set out detailed recovery plans in the coming weeks.

■ Nurses: Apprentices

Rachael Maskell:

[120018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurse apprentices are training in York as of 10 January 2023; and whether he is taking steps to increase the number of nursing apprenticeships in other parts of the country.

Will Quince:

Individual trust level data on the number of nurse degree apprentices training in York is collected by the Department for Education. The Government has provided £172 million of additional funding to employers to support growth in nurse apprenticeships as part of its commitment to deliver 50,000 more nurses.

The number of Registered Nursing Degree Apprenticeships (RNDAs) has been increasing nationally. In the 2019/20 academic year there were 938 RNDA starts, compared to 2,243 in 2020/21 and 3,416 in 2021/22.

■ Paediatrics: Autism

Kerry McCarthy:

[118830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of current waiting times for (a) paediatric assessments and (b) initial paediatric appointments for Autism Spectrum Conditions in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire and average waiting times in England.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made.

Data currently collected by NHS Digital in the Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS) does not enable an assessment to be made of the waiting time from referral to a completed autism assessment, due to incompleteness of this data. However, it is possible to assess the average wait time from referral to first received care contact, this may or may not be a completed diagnosis assessment, for patients with a referral for suspected autism.

Based on the available data from the MHSDS from the year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 in England, 95,210 patients aged under 18 at time of referral had an open referral for suspected autism. Of these 30,095 have received a first attended contact. The median wait time for these 30,095 patients was 217 days. In the same time period for Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), there were around 65 patients aged under 18 with open referral for suspected autism and of these 65 patients around 20 received a first attended contact with a median wait time of 172 days.

This assessment only includes data submitted to the MHSDS. Our understanding is that the majority of children assessed for autism are seen in child development services, these services submit data to the Community Services Data Set (CSDS). However, it is not currently possible to correctly identify referrals for suspected autism

from the CSDS and so we are unable to provide average wait times. Work to improve autism waiting times data is underway.

■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Health Services**

Ian Byrne:

[117887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to improve the (a) funding of, (b) research into and (c) waiting times for treatment of pancreatic cancer.

Helen Whately:

As part of the Autumn Statement, the Government is investing an additional £3.3 billion in each of 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the National Health Service in England, enabling rapid action to improve emergency, elective and primary care performance towards pre-pandemic levels.

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including pancreatic cancer. Over the past five financial years, the NIHR has invested more than £14.6 million for pancreatic cancer research.

■ **Pregnancy Loss Review**

Olivia Blake:

[119252]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide a timeline for the Pregnancy Loss Review; whether he expects the review to reflect the recommendations from Miscarriage Matters, The Lancet Journals series published in April 2021; and whether he expects the review to recommend that (a) every miscarriage should be acknowledged and recorded and the figures published and (b) consistent miscarriage care should be available 24 hours a day in every area of the country.

Maria Caulfield:

The Pregnancy Loss Review: Care and Support when Baby Loss Occurs Before 24 Weeks Gestation was commissioned to consider the registration and certification of pregnancy loss occurring before 24 weeks gestation and on the quality of National Health Service care. The Review will make recommendations on improving the care and support women and families receive when experiencing a pre-24-week gestation baby loss. We know that the Review has been delayed and part of this delay is due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are working with the independent review leads to get it published as soon as possible.

There are currently no official statistics reported for miscarriages. It is hard to accurately report miscarriage figures in England due to a significant number of miscarriages not being reported to a healthcare provider, especially those that take place at an early gestation. However, while this is complex this is an area that the Government is considering more closely. The Government is committed to considering the Lancet Series' recommendation to record every miscarriage.

We cannot commit to the recommendation of miscarriage support 24 hours a day in every area of the country at this stage, but we remain committed to providing all women with safe care and we encourage services to provide care in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence clinical guideline on Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage, published April 2019.

■ Prostate Cancer

Tim Farron: [\[117541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of prostate cancer patients are asymptomatic when they are first diagnosed.

Helen Whately:

The 2018 National Cancer Diagnosis Audit collected referral data from general practitioners (GPs) on 64,489 cancer diagnoses in 2018, including 9,839 cases of prostate cancer. Symptoms were reported by the GP for 6,648 (68%) of all prostate cancer cases. The remainder of the cases were recorded with 'not known' (8%) or 'not applicable' (22%) symptoms.

■ Prostate Cancer: Screening

Tim Farron: [\[117542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a national screening programme for prostate cancer.

Helen Whately:

The UK National Screening Committee is due to review the evidence to screen for prostate cancer this year.

■ Social Prescribing

Rachael Maskell: [\[117687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to encourage NHS partner organisations including (a) businesses and (b) voluntary, community and social enterprises to participate in social prescribing programmes.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to encouraging a wide range of organisations to participate in social prescribing. To help grow and sustain social prescribing approaches and evolve and disseminate the evidence base, the Government established the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) in 2019. The organisation brokers relationships across health, local government, justice, arts and culture, sport and the outdoors, and other sectors, to increase the range and availability of community-based activities and support that people can be connected to. In December 2022 the Department announced £3.6 million of grant funding for NASP for two additional years.

■ Social Services

Catherine West:

[\[117758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help enable local authorities to provide more adult social care for patients in hospitals who cannot be discharged due to a lack of social care.

Helen Whately:

In September the Government announced the £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund to support timely and safe discharge from hospital into the community. The funding has been split between local authorities and National Health Service integrated care boards (ICBs). All the funding will be pooled through the Better Care Fund, with local authorities and ICBs jointly planning how it should be spent.

On 9 January 2023, the Government announced £200 million in new funding for the NHS to buy thousands of extra beds in care homes and other settings to help discharge more patients who are fit to leave hospital and free up hospital beds for those who need them. This additional funding will be allocated to ICBs and we expect they will work with local authorities to identify where the new capacity is most needed.

Catherine West:

[\[117759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on increasing social care capacity.

Helen Whately:

Officials and ministers from the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regularly meet with local authorities and their representatives to discuss social care capacity.

We have announced a £500 million discharge fund for this winter that can be used flexibly by local areas to speed up safe discharge and support workforce capacity. On 9 January, we announced an additional £200 million fund specifically for short term care, to allow local areas to buy thousands of extra beds in care homes and other settings and to invest flexibly in other forms of step-down bedded care.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) recruit staff to fill vacancies in the social care sector and (b) ensure high standards of care in that sector.

Helen Whately:

In February 2022, we made care workers eligible for the Health and Care Visa and added them to the Shortage Occupation list. We are also investing £15 million to further boost overseas recruitment opportunities. We are running a national recruitment campaign, with continuous activity across jobs boards, video on demand, digital audio, radio and social media until 31 March. We are also making available £500 million to support safe and timely discharges from hospital. Where appropriate

local areas can use this funding for measures related specifically to the recruitment and retention of care workers.

■ Three Counties Medical School

Rachel Maclean: [\[117828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding he plans to allocate to fund places at the Three Counties Medical School in Worcester.

Rachel Maclean: [\[117829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many funded places his Department intends to provide at the Three Counties Medical School in Worcester.

Will Quince:

The Government currently has no plans to provide funding nor to allocate funded places to the Three Counties Medical School in Worcester. However, this is continually under review.

The Government has commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term plan for the National Health Service workforce for the next 15 years. This will look at the mix and number of staff required across all parts of the country, including doctors.

■ Tobacco

Daisy Cooper: [\[119200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date he will publish a Tobacco Control Plan.

Daisy Cooper: [\[119201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the recommendations of the Khan review.

Neil O'Brien:

We are currently considering the recommendations made in 'The Khan review: making smoking obsolete' and further information will be available in due course.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney: [\[119249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of international travel from China on trends in the level of covid-19 in the UK.

Maria Caulfield:

We are monitoring the situation in China carefully following the increase in cases and the easing of entry requirements to China on 8 January. Ministers have received regular updates from the UK Health Security Agency on the potential impact of this on the United Kingdom.

There remains a concern that limited data being provided by China means a new variant of COVID-19 may emerge and begin circulating undetected. The Government has therefore taken action, requiring pre-departure testing for arrivals from China and introducing arrivals testing to enable sequencing of COVID-19 positive tests for a proportion of passengers on direct flights from China to Heathrow Airport. The best defence against COVID-19 remains vaccination, and the Government continues to encourage those eligible to get their boosters.

■ UK Health Security Agency

Taiwo Owatemi:

[119173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to require the UK Health Security Agency to produce more granular data on (a) HIV, (b) ethnicity, (c) age, (d) gender and (e) migration status.

Neil O'Brien:

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) data by ethnicity, age and country of birth is published annually online. In addition to national summaries, there are specific tables for regional levels and for key populations.

As part of the HIV Action Plan, published in 2021, the UK Health Security Agency has published a monitoring and evaluation framework. This contains key prevention indicators to track progress towards the aims of the Action Plan. A first iteration of the monitoring and evaluation framework was published 1 December 2022 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework>

This framework outlines the commitment to make more granular data using an interactive patient pathway available for local areas and a commitment to produce the indicators by key demographics, including age, ethnicity, gender country of birth and more later in 2023.

■ Vaccination: Disinformation

Andrew Gwynne:

[119898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle vaccine misinformation.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government is committed to tackling vaccine misinformation. The Department is working alongside the National Health Service, other Government departments and social media companies to tackle anti-vaccine messaging, to limit misinformation. Part of this effort includes supporting strategic communication teams to identify and rebut false information, as well as ensuring reputable sources such as NHS.UK or GOV.UK are prominent and readily available. We remain vigilant and will continue this work, applying the lessons learned to our evolving strategy.

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme: Coronavirus**Sir Christopher Chope:****[119873]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November to Question 88799 on Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme: Coronavirus, for how many of the 755 claims which had been awaiting the provision of medical records for at least one month at 8 November 2022 records had not been provided by 9 January 2023; and how many subject access requests to healthcare providers in respect of such records have been made.

Maria Caulfield:

Of the 755 claims which were awaiting the provision of medical records for at least one month as of 8 November, 377 were awaiting the provision of medical records by 9 January 2023. NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) are working with all affected claimants to receive consent to allow Subject Access Requests (SARs) to be made. 5 SARs have been made so far, following receipt of consent, from the 377 claims awaiting medical records.

Since the end of November 2022, to expedite this process, consent to request SARs has been included in the initial Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme claims process from all new claimants. Going forward, if healthcare providers do not engage with NHSBSA within 28 days of issuing a request for medical records, NHSBSA will automatically submit an SAR on a claimant's behalf.

■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access**Mr Laurence Robertson:****[119882]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of changes to the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing Access rebate on (a) investment in clinical trials and (b) the UK's market for launching innovative treatments.

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[119883]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference para 1.11 of the 2019 Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access - Chapters and Glossary, published December 2018, whether he has made an assessment of that schemes progress against its objectives; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[119884]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the relationship between the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing Access and the delivery of the Life Sciences Vision; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given on 9 January 2023 to Question [113161](#), [113162](#), [113178](#).

HOME OFFICE

■ Action Fraud

John Spellar:

[\[117454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the performance of Action Fraud.

Tom Tugendhat:

Tackling fraud is a priority for this government. Making it easier and more efficient for the public to report fraud is central to our efforts.

In light of advances to technology, growing demand on the service and an independent review by Sir Craig Mackey exploring the performance and function of Action Fraud, we are providing over £30 million to City of London Police over the next three years to support the upgrade of the Action Fraud service.

The upgrade is already underway, with improvements so far including more staff, better trained staff and vulnerable victims being prioritised. In 2023, a new, user-friendly, accessible reporting tool and website will be launched, offering an improved victim experience and simpler pathways to access further support and guidance.

The new service is expected to be fully operational by 2024. The upgrades will provide better support services and reporting tools for victims, produce greater intelligence and insight for policing so they can investigate more frauds, and allow for greater prevention and disruption at scale using this intelligence.

■ Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

Drew Hendry:

[\[121035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish the results of its 2014 public consultation on the review of Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government intends to bring forward proposals and engage with stakeholders this year on transparency of information and the protection of confidential information regarding the regulation of the use of animals in science. In doing so the Government intends to clarify Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, taking account of the previous consultation.

■ Asylum

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[\[118836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral statement by the Prime Minister of 13 December 2022, Official Report, column 885, whether she plans to publish further details on the changes to the asylum claim system.

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[\[118837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what external organisations were consulted when drafting the changes to the asylum claim system announced in the Prime Minister's statement on 13 December 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

As the Prime Minister outlined last month, we are radically re-engineering the end-to-end asylum process, for instance, by drafting shorter and simpler guidance, and omitting long, substantive interviews where decisions can be taken on the evidence available. We are committed to engaging with external organisations working in the asylum and immigration sector and will continue to work with such organisations in existing stakeholder forums.

■ Asylum: EU Law

Stella Creasy:

[\[119963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, whether she has plans to (a) revoke, (b) replace or (c) retain the Refugee or Person in Need of International Protection (Qualification) Regulations.

Robert Jenrick:

The Refugee or Persons in Need of International Protection Regulations 2006 were revoked by Section 30 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. Many of the key concepts of the Refugee Convention are now defined in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, ensuring Home Office decision-makers and the courts alike have the clarity they require to consistently apply them in the UK asylum system.

■ Asylum: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[117923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions her Department has had with the Northern Ireland (a) Executive Office, (b) Department for Communities and (c) Housing Executive on sourcing accommodation for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

The significant increase in dangerous journeys across the Channel is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system and it has made it necessary to continue to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers. The use of hotels is a short-term solution, and we are working hard with local authorities to find appropriate accommodation.

We attend a number of forums discussing the sourcing of accommodation for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland, one of which is the Strategic Partnership Group. This is a monthly meeting at which the strategic direction of asylum and wider refugee schemes are discussed. This meeting is chaired by the Executive Office and there is also representation from the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

■ Bail

Steve Reed: [\[119129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an estimate of the number of bail expiries due to a defendant not being charged within 28 days.

Steve Reed: [\[119130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of bails that have been extended beyond 28 days in each of the last 12 years.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office have published data on the number of pre-charge bails that concluded in each financial year, broken down by duration, as part of the [Police Powers and Procedures publications](#) since the year ending March 2018.

The Home Office began collecting and publishing data on the outcome of pre-charge bail records for the year ending March 2021. However, it is not possible to determine from this data whether a pre-charge bail expired due to the defendant not being charged within 28 days.

The pre-charge bail system was reformed through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 on 28 October 2022. As part of the Government's consultation on pre-charge bail, timescales were extended to better reflect the operational policing realities. The initial bail period is now 3 months which can then be extended for more complex cases.

■ Biometric Residence Permits: Standards

Steve McCabe: [\[118805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data her Department holds on the number of biometric residence permits that were issued with the incorrect type of permit conditions stated on the permit in 2022; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

The information is not available publicly and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[119044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in how many cases in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency and (b) nationally Biometric Residence Permits have not been produced because of a technical issue in 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The information is not available publicly and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ Charities: Finance

Daisy Cooper:

[\[117865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding from the public purse has been provided to charities that specialise in providing support to the families of survivors of child sexual abuse.

Miss Sarah Dines:

We recognise the devastating impact that child sexual abuse can have on many aspects of victims' and survivors' lives, including their families. We have increased investment in specialist support services for child sexual abuse in recent years. Through our Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Fund (SVSCSA) 2022-2025, the Home Office has recently awarded grant funding of £4.5 million to seven voluntary sector organisations in England and Wales who provide vital support for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse, adult survivors, and parents or carers of victims.

Of the seven organisations funded, more than half are carrying out activities that will support families of those who have been abused. For the year 2022-23, £120,552 has been awarded to an organisation that solely and directly supports families of survivors of child sexual abuse. A further £536,030.80 has been awarded to three organisations who are using some of this funding to specifically provide support to third party victims. This includes provision for families and friends of adult survivors, funding for delivery of a recovery service to non-abusing parents/carers and siblings, and a trauma-informed therapy for those who support victims and survivors, such as non-abusing parents.

■ Domestic Abuse: Gender Recognition

Rachel Maclean:

[\[117827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides report 2021-2022, published 25 August 2021, what methods her Department used to collect that report's data on gender reassignment; and whether the gender reassignment data (a) reflects self-declared gender and (b) requires an individual to have a Gender Recognition Certificate to be counted.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Domestic Homicide Project is led by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Vulnerability Knowledge Practice Programme (VKPP) and funded by the

Home Office. The data collection and methodology are managed by the project, not the Home Office. The project team have outlined their methodology below.

The options on the submission form for 'gender reassignment' are: 'Yes, No, Not Known'. This information is collected from those officers who are submitting the form and is based on their records. The definition provided in the guidance reads, "please indicate if the individual has, or is going through, gender reassignment. This is defined as a person whose gender identity is different to the gender assigned at birth. This does not require specific treatment or surgery as it is a personal process rather than a medical one. If not known, please select Not Known." This definition had been drafted in relation to the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance (Gender reassignment discrimination | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)).

Therefore, any response of 'yes' to this question may or may not involve the victim or suspect having a Gender Recognition Certificate. However, we have not received a 'yes' to that question on any of the submissions within our database from Year 1 (the August 2021 report) up to the present date. It is possible that there may be some individuals who have undergone gender reassignment (in a personal and/or medical capacity) but this was not known / recorded by the police and available to the submitter, and we do not have any evidence to suggest this in what we have been provided.

■ Horse Racing: Crime

Caroline Nokes:

[\[117568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of illegal pony and trap racing were recorded by police forces in England in the last 12 months.

Chris Philp:

This information is not held centrally by the Home Office.

■ Immigration and Visas

Alison McGovern:

[\[119985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the success rate is of visa and immigration applications when Members of Parliament intervene to help a constituent.

Robert Jenrick:

Each case is considered on its individual merits. Where a Member contacts the Home Office, it will address the issues raised and aim to respond within 20 working days.

■ Immigration and Visas: Appeals**Alison McGovern:**[\[119986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the success rate is of visa and immigration appeal applications to the Home Office (a) with Members of Parliament intervening and (b) without Members of Parliament intervening.

Robert Jenrick:

The information sought is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration Controls: Industrial Disputes**Grahame Morris:**[\[120940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken (a) to conduct an audit of positive results from the Warnings Index and Border Crossings systems during industrial action taken by members of the PCS Union in December 2022 and (b) to ascertain how many positive results were deemed to be a breach of the Border Force operating mandate during this same period; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office's priority is to deliver a safe and secure border and we will never compromise on this including during any period of Industrial Action. Border Force maintain 100% of the checks for all scheduled arriving passengers into the UK during periods of industrial action and this will be continued during any future periods of strike action.

Border Force's robust contingency plans keep our citizens safe and our borders secure. Non-striking Border Force staff, with the full range of appropriate powers, are continuing to complete their vital roles, including stopping and detaining passengers where appropriate, supported by military personnel and civil servant volunteers.

Border Force has a national assurance framework that is designed to ensure adherence to policy and guidance and identify any inconsistency in practice or process across all operational areas.

■ Immigration Controls: Students**Rachael Maskell:**[\[117674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason Border Forces detain people with valid student visas on arrival in the UK; and if she will take steps to end this practice.

Robert Jenrick:

Border Force does not hold the data in an easily accessible format on those detained and subsequently released on grounds they held a valid visa, student or other

However, the Home Office published data on how many people are detained or returned on gov.uk.

The latest publication can be found at: How many people are detained or returned? - GOV.UK The Immigration Rules require all arriving passengers to establish their eligibility for admission. Every passenger's passport or national identity card is checked electronically and there are also times when extra checks are conducted. Whilst this means on occasions arriving passengers, including some students, are held up by Border Force, these checks are necessary in order to maintain a safe and secure border. In some instances, individuals without the necessary immigration permission for the activities that they intend to undertake in the UK may be refused permission to enter at the border, which makes them liable for detention

It may also be helpful to have the link to the Home Office complaints procedure which can be found on Gov.uk website: Complaints procedure - Home Office - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

■ **Mears Group and Migrant Help: Contracts**

Sarah Champion:

[117597]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 111599 on Mears Group and Migrant Help: Contracts, whether her Department has attributed any ODA costs to (a) organisations or (b) projects and programmes under its contracts with (i) Mears Group and (ii) Migrant Help.

Robert Jenrick:

I refer my Hon. Friend to my answer on 21 December to Question 111599: [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Jessica Morden:

[120901]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the time taken to respond to (a) written parliamentary questions and (b) correspondence from Members of Parliament.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office is working to improve our performance in answering written parliamentary questions. For details on this continuous improvement I refer the Hon Member to the letter sent from Home Office to the Procedure Committee dated 21 June 2022

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/23223/documents/169558/default/>.

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of Hon. Member's written correspondence within 20 working days.

Performance against target has been impacted by an unprecedented increase in MPs queries prompted by successive global cases and a surge in HM Passport Office applications following the pandemic.

The Home Office has since implemented a correspondence recovery plan and as a result, the Home Office is due to return to its 20-day service standard in the week commencing 16 January 2023.

John Penrose:

[\[120930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to correspondence of (a) 10 November and (b) 12 December from the Hon. member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of my constituent Mark Kippax.

Robert Jenrick:

MPAM/0474236/22 – The Home Office responded to the hon. Member's correspondence on 12 January 2023.

■ Migrants: Electronic Tagging

Tim Loughton:

[\[117407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants awaiting determination of status in the UK and subject to electronic tagging have broken the conditions of the tag in the last 2 years by nationality.

Robert Jenrick:

A pilot was launched on 15 June 2022 with the purpose of establishing whether electronic monitoring is an effective way to improve and maintain regular contact management with asylum claimants who arrive in the UK via unnecessary and dangerous routes, in order to progress their immigration case.

The total numbers of migrants who have broken the conditions of tag is 151.

■ Motor Vehicles: Glass

Matt Western:

[\[119083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many vehicles were stopped by police on suspicion of being in breach of rules on tinted windows in England in the last 12 months.

Matt Western:

[\[119084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number and proportion of passenger vehicles that do not comply with legal specifications for tinted windows.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not hold this information centrally.

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 governs the amount of light that must pass through the windows of a vehicle and therefore how clearly the windows can be seen through.

It is for the police to take enforcement action as they consider appropriate against those in breach of the Regulations.

■ **Nurses: Migrant Workers**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her Department's policy that internationally recruited nurses should not stay in the same hotels as refugees.

Robert Jenrick:

Successive years in which record numbers of people have crossed the Channel in small boats has placed our asylum infrastructure under immense strain. In order to meet our statutory obligations to accommodate asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute, we have been forced to temporarily house asylum seekers in hotels. The use of hotels is a short-term solution, and we are working hard with Local Authorities and our accommodation providers to find more appropriate accommodation.

When standing up hotels for initial accommodation we ensure that our service providers have sole use of the site and will not mix with paying guests or other cohorts requiring support.

There are occasionally exceptional circumstances when we need to book short term emergency accommodation on a night-by-night basis, where there may be other paying guests or cohorts at those sites; however only used as a last resort.

■ **Offences against Children**

Rachel Maclean:

[\[117816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Independent report entitled IICSA: report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published 14 December 2022, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of Recommendation 15 on victims of child sexual abuse.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government is truly grateful to victims and survivors for bravely sharing their perspectives and experiences with the Inquiry and supporting its work over the past seven years.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published its final Report on Thursday 20 October 2022. This is an important milestone in cross-sector efforts to tackle all forms of child sexual abuse.

Insight from victims and survivors is invaluable in understanding how we can continue to tackle this horrific crime and make sure appropriate supports are in place to help victims and survivors rebuild their lives. We will keep working across government and with a wide range of partners such as children's charities, frontline professionals, law enforcement, and local authorities to ensure that the voices of victims and survivors are kept at the heart of our work to keep children safe from child sexual exploitation and abuse.

We will also work across Government at every level to address the issues raised by the Inquiry, and the Home Secretary will convene ministers across Whitehall to drive forward progress. This is in addition to the existing cross-departmental Governance

that is already in place to monitor the implementation of the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy.

We owe it to the victims and survivors to give the Inquiry's final recommendations proper time, consideration, and attention. That is why the Government will carefully consider all of the findings and each recommendation, including recommendation 15, before responding fully within the Inquiry's six-month timeframe, by April 2023.

■ **Police: Staff**

Rachel Maclean:

[117802]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many full-time equivalent employees are employed in equality, diversity and inclusions roles by police forces in England.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not hold information centrally on how many police employees are in equality, diversity and inclusion roles in police forces in England.

The Home Office collects and publishes data annually on the number of full-time equivalent police officers and staff by function in the '[Police Workforce, England and Wales](#)' statistical bulletin. These functions are based on the framework set out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of the Police Objective Analysis (POA) estimates. The POA framework does not include a specific function on diversity and inclusion roles.

■ **Refugees: Hotels**

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[118838]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are housed in hotels in England.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

The significant increase in dangerous journeys across the Channel is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system and it has made it necessary to continue to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers. The use of hotels is a short-term solution, and we are working hard with local authorities to find appropriate accommodation.

■ **Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme: Conditions of Employment**

Stuart C McDonald:

[119135]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the report of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration entitled *An inspection of the immigration system as it relates to the agricultural sector*, what steps she is taking to (a)

monitor worker's conditions and (b) ensure that workers can seek redress for complaints on the seasonal workers scheme.

Robert Jenrick:

Seasonal worker providers must hold a licence issued by the Home Office and comply with the published duties pertinent to that licence.

A key objective of the seasonal worker scheme is to ensure migrant workers are protected against modern slavery and other labour abuses. The Home Office and Defra monitor the scheme closely to ensure operators adhere to the stringent requirements set for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the seasonal workers, including routinely visiting farms to see conditions first hand. The scheme places numerous requirements on the operators to monitor and ensure welfare, such as facilitating moves to different participating growers should a worker wish to change employer.

If anyone has reason to believe that abusive practices may be taking place, they should report this through our formal channels so that the information is placed in the hands of the relevant authorities for assessment and potential investigation.

- Full details of how to report information to the Home Office are available on our website at: www.gov.uk/report-immigration-crime
- Allegations of abuse should also be reported to the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority. Details of how to do this are available on the GLAA website, at: www.glaa.gov.uk/report-issues/english-report-form/

■ **Slavery**

Jess Phillips:

[121076]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2022 to Question 11027 on Slavery, in what way her Department's new guidance and policy on consideration of evidence differ from what happened previously.

Jess Phillips:

[121077]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 110727 on Slavery, if she will provide an example of what would be considered a piece of information or evidence that is based in fact in a case of child sexual exploitation; and if she will publish the guidance that decision makers use to identify an objective factor.

Robert Jenrick:

The updated Reasonable Grounds Guidance is expected to be published on 30 January 2023 as part of the Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland. This will contain details of what constitutes an objective factor and how decision makers will use the guidance to consider all referrals, including child victims of sexual exploitation.

We also believe that this builds on and simplifies much of the current guidance to ensure decision making at the Reasonable Grounds stage is robust and consistent while still providing scope to consider instances where a referral may be received with very little additional information.

■ Violent and Sex Offender Register

Rachel Maclean:

[\[117806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to prevent registered sex offenders changing their gender without the knowledge of the police.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Public protection is a priority for this Government. Qualifying offenders are required to notify certain personal details to the police in person annually or whenever the details change. This system is often referred to as the 'sex offenders' register' and requires offenders to provide their local police station with a record of (amongst other things) their: name, address, date of birth, passport details and national insurance number. While there is no legal requirement to notify the police of change of sex or gender, registered sex offenders are required to notify any name changes or changes to passport details.

Failure to comply with the notification requirements is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum of five years' imprisonment.

We are committed to ensuring that the system and the monitoring that underpins the management of these offenders is as robust as it can be, and that the relevant safeguards are in place. In March 2022 former chief constable Mick Creedon was appointed to conduct an independent review into the police management of registered sex offenders. The findings have been delivered to the Government, and we are carefully considering them.

■ Visas: Students

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[117792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the rules on graduate visas in instances where international students are unable to apply for a new visa before their current one expires due to extenuating circumstances.

Robert Jenrick:

Graduates must have successfully completed a degree, or other eligible qualification, at undergraduate level or above whilst sponsored by a higher education provider (HEP) with a track record of compliance. They must be in the UK at the time of their application and have existing valid permission as a student. Student permission already includes post study period of up to 4 months from end date of course. The length of the post study period is determined by the duration and level of study.

These requirements determine the window of opportunity for making a successful Graduate application. The Graduate route provides an opportunity for international students who have been awarded their degree to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, at any skill level for 2 years, or 3 years for doctoral students, therefore only those with valid Student permission who are in the UK at the time of application are eligible. Exceptional circumstances which prevent someone from meeting these requirements will be considered by decision making teams on a case by case basis.

Though we have no current plans to alter these requirements, the Government keeps all immigration routes under review.

■ Wind Power: Migrant Workers

Karl Turner: [\[120951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 109533 on Wind Power: Migrant Workers, if it is her Department's policy not to collect or store data on the number of overseas nationals granted permission to work in UK waters under concessions to immigration rules.

Karl Turner: [\[120952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 109530 on Wind Power: Migrant Workers, on what information she based the decision to extend the agreement on Offshore Wind Workers Immigration Rules concession 2017 from 1 November 2022 to 30 April 2023; and if she will set out with whom that agreement was made.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office does not collect or store data on the number of overseas nationals working under the concession in the offshore wind farm industry in the UK from 2017 to date.

All concessions are temporary and are only put in place in exceptional circumstances. 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.

■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[120143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy to implement all the recommendations of the report by Wendy Williams entitled Windrush Lessons Learned Review, published on 19 July 2018.

Robert Jenrick:

Since the injustices of Windrush came to light, there has been a concerted effort across the Home Office to right the wrongs suffered by those affected. This work continues and the department is making sustained progress delivering on the

recommendations of the Lessons Learned Review and the commitments made in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan (2020).

Wendy Williams acknowledged that our ambition to achieve genuine cultural change requires ongoing reflection and a commitment to constant improvement. The Home Office keeps HASC updated on progress against the recommendations and will continue to do so.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Queen Elizabeth II: Death

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[118859\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what was the total cost of Operation Marquee; from which sources that funding was obtained; whether any other scheme or programme budgets have been detrimentally affected by the cost of Operation Marquee; what assessment he has made of the scope and delivery of Operation Marquee; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Charles Walker:

[Holding answer 12 January 2023]: The total cost of Operation Marquee for the House of Commons is still being determined. We will proactively publish this figure alongside details of the costs incurred.

The House of Commons finance and information compliance teams are working alongside the respective teams in the House of Lords to ensure aligned and complete publications of costs.

The cost of Operation Marquee has been funded from the House of Commons 2022–23 Estimate. The House has not required additional funding from HM Treasury to cover the cost of Operation Marquee.

Team budgets, including programme budgets, were not reduced in order to fund Operation Marquee. Costs incurred by Teams in relation to Operation Marquee were funded by requests from central contingency and managed by the finance team.

The feedback from Members and the public was that Operation Marquee was successfully delivered and the Commission recognises the crucial part played by the House service in that process.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Agreements: Dispute Resolution

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[117617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, in reference to the answer to Question 454 in the oral evidence given to the International Trade Select Committee on

30 November 2022, if she will publish the analysis her Department has carried out on the long-term benefits of ISDS versus the risk.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[119141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her oral evidence before the International Trade Committee on 30th November, HC 16 Q454, whether her Department has (a) published or (b) provided information to that Committee on her Departments analysis of investor state dispute settlements.

Nigel Huddleston:

[Holding answer 12 January 2023]: Inclusion of Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) in UK treaties is considered where it is in the UK's interests and where we agree with partners that it can play a useful role in supporting the bilateral investment relationship. These considerations are negotiation sensitive, and therefore not appropriate for publication.

Investment protections and ISDS can provide reassurance to UK investors to make substantial long term foreign investments. UK investment overseas contributes to economies across the globe, strengthens international trade and security and supports developing countries.

The UK has never had a successful ISDS claim against it.

■ Trade Agreements: Gulf Cooperation Council

Richard Thomson:

[\[117832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government plans to take steps to include international human rights safeguards in a Free Trade Agreement between the United Kingdom and Gulf Cooperation Council.

Greg Hands:

The UK is a leading advocate for human rights around the world. We remain committed to the promotion of universal human rights, and, when we have concerns, they are raised directly with partner governments, including at ministerial level. This is undertaken separately to negotiations on free trade agreements.

■ Trade Agreements: India

Steve McCabe:

[\[117429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she will take to enable parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed UK-India free trade agreement.

Greg Hands:

The Government has put in place enhanced scrutiny arrangements for free trade agreements, going beyond the statutory requirements.

We have provided extensive information to Parliament, including our strategic approach and regular updates following each of the six rounds of negotiations so far.

In addition, Ministers regularly meet with the International Trade Select Committee and International Agreements Select Committees.

The UK-India Free Trade Agreement will be subject to the usual procedures under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act. In addition, the Government will commission and publish the advice from the independent Trade and Agriculture Commission to inform parliamentary scrutiny.

JUSTICE

■ Bail

Steve Reed: [\[117607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time spent on bail has been in each year since 2010.

Edward Argar:

This information is not centrally recorded in the Court Proceeding Database held by the Ministry of Justice and to obtain it would involve a manual interrogation of court records which would result in a disproportionate cost to the department.

■ Children: Separated People

Tom Hunt: [\[117907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government is taking steps to ensure that the legal framework adequately allows grandparents to maintain relationships with their grandchildren following parental separation.

Mike Freer:

The Government understands the difficulties that some grandparents face in continuing relationships with their grandchildren following disputes arising from parental separation and that grandparents often play an important role in children's lives and can provide stability in families.

Grandparents who are excluded from the lives of their grandchildren and are unable to agree an informal, family-based arrangement with their grandchildren's parents can attempt mediation before applying for a court order. The existing legal framework allows all grandparents to seek leave of the court to make an application for a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. The court will determine based on the individual facts of the case, whether they can spend time with their grandchildren and if so, what sort of contact would be in the child's interest. The child's welfare will be the court's paramount consideration in these cases.

■ Convictions

Steve Reed: [\[117606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convictions in absence have there been in each of the last 12 years.

Edward Argar:

Information on the number of convictions in absence is not centrally recorded in the Court Proceeding Database held by the Ministry of Justice and to obtain it would involve a manual interrogation of court records. Extracting this information would, therefore, result in a disproportionate cost to the department.

County Courts: Wales**Jo Stevens:**[\[121051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the scale of backlogs at County Courts in Wales; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce delays to hearing cases in those courts.

Mike Freer:

A breakdown of the outstanding caseload in each region of England and Wales is not published.

We continue to work, in close partnership with the judiciary, to improve the service in the county courts. We are replacing inefficient processes with our reformed digital services, using available courtroom capacity and supporting the use of remote hearings (where a judge deems it appropriate) to maximise the number of sitting days used in the jurisdiction.

The MoJ and the judiciary have taken and are taking action to increase judicial capacity. This includes a recruitment programme of up to 1,000 judges and tribunal members in 2022/23, across all jurisdictions. HMCTS is also working to ensure we have sufficient staff resource in place to support the number of sitting days used across jurisdictions.

Crimes of Violence: Sentencing**Alberto Costa:**[\[119188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of including (a) affray, (b) wounding, (c) actual bodily harm and (d) possession of an offensive weapon under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme.

Edward Argar:

The Government keeps the scope of the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme under consideration and understands that a case may be made for additional offences to be included within the scheme. We will listen to any representations made to this effect.

As a general rule, it is right that there is finality to sentencing. That is why Parliament intended for this to be an exceptional power reserved for the most serious cases, including all indictable-only offences, and certain triable either-way offences such as some terrorism offences and child sex offences.

■ Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board

Afzal Khan: [\[120187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the membership of the Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board.

Mike Freer:

The first Criminal Legal Aid Advisory Board (CLAAB) meeting took place in October 2022, where CLAAB membership was discussed. The CLAAB membership currently includes representatives from the Bar Council, the Law Society, Criminal Bar Association, London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association, Criminal Law Solicitors' Association, CILEX and Ministry of Justice officials.

The CLAAB's purpose is to provide independent advice to the Lord Chancellor on the operation and structure of the existing and future criminal legal aid fee schemes in England and Wales, and to assess how these schemes should change and modernise as the criminal justice system changes and develops.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Wales

Jo Stevens: [\[121054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many criminal cases were withdrawn due to (a) court delays and (b) case backlogs in Wales in the latest period for which data is available.

Mike Freer:

We do not collect data on the reasons why a case is dropped by the prosecution, and it is therefore not possible to attribute dropped cases to court delays. There are a number of reasons why a case may be dropped, including if there is a lack of evidence or if the prosecution is no longer in the public interest.

A case is considered dropped when the prosecution notifies the court that they wish to discontinue proceedings before the indictment has been lodged – this does not require a court hearing and the case is closed administratively. These cases will have a formal verdict of not guilty.

■ Energy: Meters

Rachael Maskell: [\[117679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many court warrants have been granted for energy companies to switch customers to pre-payment meters in the last 12 months.

Mike Freer:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave on 13 January 2023 to question UIN 114829.

■ Judiciary: Equality

Afzal Khan:

[120186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the diversity of the judiciary.

Mike Freer:

The Ministry of Justice, as a member of the Judicial Diversity Forum (JDF), works closely with the judiciary, the Judicial Appointments Commission, the Legal Services Board and the legal professions to take actions to increase judicial diversity.

In December, the Judicial Diversity Forum published its priorities and actions for 2023 <https://judicialappointments.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/JDF-Priorities.pdf> which includes MoJ's priorities: :

1. Leading the Pre-Application Judicial Education programme, which support lawyers from groups under-represented in the judiciary to be prepared for applying for a future judicial role.
1. Publishing comprehensive data in the annual combined Diversity of the Judiciary Statistics
1. Implementing the necessary steps for increasing CILEX lawyers eligibility for a wider range of judicial roles
1. Reviewing the application processes and barriers for non-traditional lawyers seeking judicial office.

The Government has also invested over £1 million to support the recruitment of new and diverse magistrates, the Government's top priority for the magistracy. A new digitised recruitment process alongside an inclusive marketing campaign was launched in January 2022 as part of this programme of work, targeting underrepresented groups to ensure the magistracy is reflective of the communities it serves. A new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) was also introduced, allowing the MoJ to monitor the diversity of applicants which will help inform future recruitment activity.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Asylum

Daisy Cooper:

[117864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the availability of qualified legal aid solicitors for asylum seekers.

Mike Freer:

The Government is committed to ensuring that those seeking asylum in this country have access to publicly funded legal advice and representation. In 2021-22, we received over 35,000 applications for legal aid for asylum cases, spending over £32 million.

Access to legal aid is a key part of a fair immigration system, which is why we are spending around £8m expanding access to legal aid, helping victims of modern

slavery, individuals prioritised for removal and individuals appealing an age assessment decision.

The Legal Aid Agency keeps market capacity under constant review and takes immediate action when gaps appear.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Sir Stephen Timms:

[119867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to reply to the letter dated 6 October 2022 from the Rt Hon Member for East Ham.

Mike Freer:

The Ministry of Justice takes the handling of correspondence seriously and apologises for the delay in replying to the Rt Hon Member for East Ham. I confirm that a response will be sent this week.

■ **Powers of Attorney**

Kim Leadbeater:

[117921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to (a) publicise and (b) promote the (i) role and (ii) importance of lasting power of attorney orders.

Mike Freer:

The Public Guardian is committed to making Lasting Power of Attorney attainable and accessible for all and I recognise that awareness of OPG's services is key to achieving this.

OPG's targeted Your Voice Your Decision campaign has sought to raise awareness of the benefits of LPAs and tackle common misconceptions. This has included targeted commercial and community radio advertising and working with partners to reach key audiences.

A range of social media channels are used to explain how OPG's services can be accessed and how applications can be completed accurately. OPG maintains regular dialogue with key stakeholders to raise awareness about OPG's services and to highlight the importance of planning for the future and considering whether a lasting power of attorney is the right option. OPG also works collaboratively with stakeholders to help users make and use LPAs effectively, including through presentations delivered by OPG at stakeholder events.

The Government is currently supporting the Power of Attorney Private Member's Bill. This will make possible reforms that will modernise and strengthen the process and enable individuals to make an LPA completely online for the first time. An improved paper process will also be introduced for those who are unable to or choose not to use the internet.

■ Prison and Probation Service: Staff

Rachel Maclean:

[117803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether HM Prisons and Probation Service's Pride in Prison and Probation staff network has (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff employed to support it; and whether that staff network receives funding from the service to cover its (i) operating costs and (ii) activities.

Rachel Maclean:

[117804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether HM Prisons and Probation Service has had recent discussions with the Pride in Prison and Probation staff network on the care and management of transgender people within the Prison and Probation service.

Damian Hinds:

The Pride in Prison and Probation (PiPP) staff network has a full-time national lead, on loan from their usual business area in His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). No HMPPS staff are employed in a part time capacity to support the network. Staff networks are not allocated a budget: if funding is requested to deliver specific activities, a business case would need to be submitted.

PiPP is represented on HMPPS' Transgender Advisory Board, which reviews HMPPS policy on the care and management of individuals who are transgender.

HMPPS policy sets out that transgender individuals must be subject to a robust risk assessment when considering to which part of the estate they are allocated. This assessment considers a wide range of factors including offending history and anatomy. Currently, over 90% of transgender women are held in the men's prison estate.

We are strengthening this policy so that transgender women who have birth genitalia and/or have committed sexual offences cannot be held in the general women's estate, subject to an exemption policy for truly exceptional cases.

■ Prisoners: Cost of Living

Stephen Morgan:

[117919]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on the prison population in England and Wales.

Damian Hinds:

The Government recognises the impact of rising prices on all parts of society. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living>.

■ Prisons: Ethnic Groups

Stephen Morgan:

[117917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to improve prison safety for people from ethnic minorities.

Damian Hinds:

Ensuring the safety of every member of staff and prisoner is a key priority and we set out ambitious plans to strengthen our approach to safety in the [Prisons Strategy White Paper](#).

We are committed to understanding and tackling disparities that emerge in the treatment of and outcomes for ethnic minority prisoners. This is why in December 2020 we launched the [Race Action Programme](#), which aims to increase the diversity of our workforce and address the risk of bias in our policies.

On 13 December HM Inspectorate of Prisons published a thematic report on the experiences of adult black male prisoners and black prison staff. A number of key issues were identified, and the department is committed to ensuring that the necessary improvements are made to drive forward positive change. As an immediate response to the report the department is establishing an expert group of HMPPS leaders to ensure engagement from all stakeholders and develop priorities nationally and regionally. Building on the work already in place to improve outcomes, a comprehensive action plan will be formed to provide robust short-, medium- and longer-term responses to the findings with full consultation with leaders, staff and prisoners to ensure their voices are heard as we decide on next steps.

■ Prisons: Mental Health Services

Stephen Morgan: [\[117916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of mental health support provision in the Prisons Estate.

Stephen Morgan: [\[117918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of trends in the level of mental ill health in prisoners on HM Prison Service.

Damian Hinds:

In response to both the Justice Select Committee's inquiry on Mental Health in Prisons and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's inspection of the Criminal Justice Journey for Individuals with Mental Health Needs and Disorders, health and justice partners set out a wide range of commitments to improve mental health support in prisons, committing to ensuring that people in prison have access to an equivalent standard, range, and quality of health care in prisons to that available in the wider community.

Since the inquiries, the Government has published a draft Mental Health Bill, which is now subject to pre-legislative scrutiny. The Bill includes vital reforms to support people with serious mental illnesses in the criminal justice system. This includes speeding up access to specialist in-patient care and treatment by ending the use of prison as a 'place of safety' and establishing a new statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers from prison to hospital.

In partnership with the Centre for Mental Health, NHS England recently completed a national mental health needs analysis for prisoners. This data will feed into a refreshed mental health service specification by April 2023 to ensure that services continue to be tailored to the needs of people in prison.

The Ministry of Justice is committed to continuing to work closely with NHS England to improve services in prison, ensuring that people have access to timely and effective mental health care. This ongoing commitment is reflected in the new National Partnership Agreement on Health and Social Care in England, which is due to be published shortly.

■ Prisons: Wales

Jo Stevens:

[\[121053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse has been of prison maintenance in Wales in the latest 12 month period for which data is available.

Damian Hinds:

The cost to the public purse for maintaining the public sector prisons in Wales in 2021/22 was £15.3m.

■ Probate

John Spellar:

[\[117447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many probate cases are under consideration in England; and what proportion of those cases have been waiting for a decision for six weeks or more.

Mike Freer:

The total amount of unassessed probate cases where evidence has been received to enable a case to be assessed is 12,923.

4805 of these cases are over 6 weeks since the date the evidence was received.

In addition, there are 38,245 cases which are either waiting for evidence, such as the original will, to arrive, are subject to a legal hold following an application from another party or have been stopped due to an error or missing documentation and are waiting for a response from the applicant.

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.

■ Rape: Trials

Steve Reed: [\[117601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time was for rape cases to be completed in court in the latest period for which data is available.

Steve Reed: [\[117602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time was for rape cases to be completed in court in each year since 2010.

Edward Argar:

Timeliness estimates for defendants dealt with for all rape at criminal courts since 2010 (Table 1) and for the latest quarter (Table 2) can be found in the attached spreadsheet.

The length of time a case takes in court depends on a variety of factors including complexity of the case, pleas and other factors.

In June 2021, we published the End-to-End Rape Review Report and Action Plan. We committed to delivering real improvements to transform support for victims and working with the police and the CPS to more than double the number of adult rape cases reaching court by the end of this Parliament.

The volume of adult rape cases going through the system has significantly increased: there were 440 Crown Court receipts in the second quarter of 2022, up 91% from the quarterly average in 2019.

Adult rape convictions have also increased: there were 532 convictions in the year to June 2022, up 65% compared to the year to June 2021.

We have taken decisive steps to improve timeliness at Court:

- We have removed the limit on sitting days, extended the use of 30 Nightingale courtrooms beyond March 2022, and are extending our plans for judicial recruitment to increase sitting capacity and improve waiting times for victims.
- To provide additional capacity in the Crown Court, Magistrates' Court sentencing powers have been extended from 6 to 12 months for a single Triable Either Way offence to allow more cases to be heard in the Magistrates' Court.
- Over the next three years we are investing additional funding for the Criminal Justice System to help improve waiting times for victims of crime and reduce the Crown Court backlog.

We have also:

- Fully rolled out pre-recorded cross examination (Section 28) for victims of sexual and modern slavery offences in all Crown Court locations across England and Wales. This special measure allows victims to pre-record evidence, spares them the glare of a live courtroom trial and allows them to give evidence in advance of the trial and then move on with their lives more quickly.

- Announced a Specialist Sexual Violence Support project in three Crown Court locations.
- More than quadrupled funding for victim support from £41m in 2009/10 to £192m by 2024/25, and are increasing the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Abuse Advisors to over 1,000 by 2024/25.
- Launched a single source of 24/7 support for victims of rape and sexual abuse meaning every victim can now access free, confidential emotional support whenever and wherever they need it.

Attachments:

1. Table [2023-01-11 PQ 117601 117602 table.xlsx]

Steve Reed:

[\[119126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many rape trials were adjourned due to a defendant failing to attend court in each of the last twelve years.

Steve Reed:

[\[119127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many rape trials were adjourned due to a lack of court staff in each of the last 12 years.

Edward Argar:

Information on adjournments due to a defendant failing to attend court or due to a lack of staff is not held.

■ **Rape: Victims**

Steve Reed:

[\[117603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the number of rape victims who withdrew from their cases in each of the last 12 years.

Edward Argar:

Victims can withdraw from the criminal justice process at any stage and some of this information is published for adult rape as part of our [Criminal Justice Delivery Data Dashboard](#) and the associated publications the dashboard data is derived from.

In June 2021, we published the End-to-End Rape Review Report and Action Plan with the aim of more than doubling the number of adult rape cases reaching court by the end of this Parliament.

The volume of adult rape cases going through the system has already significantly increased: there were 440 Crown Court receipts in the second quarter of 2022, up 91% from the quarterly average in 2019. Adult rape convictions have also increased: there were 532 convictions in the year to June 2022, up 65% compared to the year to June 2021.

We are taking strong action to address victim attrition, including rolling out pre-recorded cross examination (Section 28) for victims of sexual and modern slavery offences in all Crown Court locations across England and Wales, more than

quadrupling funding for victim support from £41m in 2009/10 to £192m by 2024/25, increasing the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Abuse Advisors to over 1,000 by 2024/25 and in December we launched a single source of 24/7 support for victims of rape and sexual abuse meaning every victim can now access free, confidential emotional support whenever and wherever they need it.

■ Reoffenders

Steve Reed:

[\[119997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of courts backlogs on trends in the level of reoffending.

Damian Hinds:

The Government is committed to supporting the recovery of the courts to drive down the backlog and ensure victims see justice served sooner.

Between 2009/10 and 2019/20, the overall proven reoffending rate has decreased from 30.9% to 25.6%. In the 2021 Prisons Strategy White Paper, we set out our ambitious plans to go further to drive down re-offending, getting offenders into skills training, work and stable accommodation. The Government's 10-Year Drug Strategy also set out our plans to get more prison-leavers into substance misuse treatment to help them turn their back on crime.

Jo Stevens:

[\[121050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people serving sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection recalled to prison in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022 after being charged with a new offence were (i) convicted, (ii) acquitted and (iii) had the charge dropped.

Damian Hinds:

The data required to provide an answer about those offenders serving an IPP sentence in the community who were recalled in connection with having been charged with a further offence and who were subsequently (i) convicted, (ii) acquitted and (iii) had the charge dropped, could be provided only at disproportionate cost, as central data is not stored in a way that it can be filtered by the required fields.

■ Treatment of, and Outcomes For, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System Independent Review

Afzal Khan:

[\[120185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 95928 on the Lammy Review, how many of the accepted recommendations of that review have been implemented in full.

Mike Freer:

We welcomed the light shone on the criminal justice system by David Lammy's 2017 Review, and we accepted 33 of the 35 recommendations from it, rejecting only the 2 that were matters for the independent judiciary and therefore the Government is not

able to take a position on. Since the Government published the response, we have been clear that where a recommendation could not be implemented in full or exactly as set out, we would take alternative action to achieve the same aim. As such, we committed to actions against each of the 33 accepted recommendations.

Of those actions we committed to in 2017, almost all have been completed, with work done against each of the accepted 33 recommendations. There are 4 recommendations with actions outstanding from our original commitments.

Whilst most of the actions from 2017 have been completed, we recognise these actions were a start, not a complete solution. As such, we are going beyond just these commitments, and the recommendations, in our work to address race inequalities in the criminal justice system, such as the work outlined in the Inclusive Britain Strategy.

■ **Victims' Commissioner: Public Appointments**

Janet Daby:

[\[120163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to announce the appointment of the new Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales.

Edward Argar:

A campaign to recruit a new Victims' Commissioner is underway, and we expect to identify a new Victims' Commissioner by the spring.

Janet Daby:

[\[120166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on victims of crime of the vacancy for the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales.

Edward Argar:

A campaign to recruit a new Victims' Commissioner is underway, and we expect to identify a new Victims' Commissioner by the Spring. The Office of the Victims' Commissioner continues to operate during this interim period, and we are working closely at Ministerial and official level with the sector to ensure the voices of victims and witnesses continue to be heard.

In May 2022, we published our landmark draft Victims Bill and wider package of measures, to improve victims' experiences of the criminal justice system. The Bill will enshrine the overarching principles of the Victims' Code in primary legislation; increase oversight of how criminal justice agencies treat victims; and enable improvements in the quality and consistency of support services for victims.

Alongside these measures, we are more than quadrupling the funding for victim and witness support services by 2024/25, up from £41m in 2009/10.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Antisemitism****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[117512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of instances of antisemitism towards the Jewish community in the last 12 months.

Lee Rowley:

Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we welcome the recent report from Lord Mann, the Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism. We are already taking a strong lead in antisemitism in all its forms. The Home Office is providing £14 million this year through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant to provide protective security measures at Jewish schools, colleges, nurseries and synagogues; the Department is providing £500,000 to the Holocaust Education Trust from 2020/21 to 2022/23 to deliver their Lessons from Auschwitz project, as an example. We will continue to work together with Lord Mann on this vital issue.

■ Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[119880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November to Question 90729 on Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, whether an assessor to conduct the assurance review of BCP Council's governance and finance arrangements has been appointed; and whether the final report of the review will be published before the May 2023 local elections.

Lee Rowley:

A reviewer of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's governance and finance arrangements will be appointed in due course. I will write to local MPs once the appointment has been made.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Catherine West:**[\[117763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2022 to Question 49746 on Buildings: Insulation, when he plans to publish further details on the funding scheme for buildings between 11 and 18 metres.

Lee Rowley:

We have launched a new scheme to provide funding for the remediation or mitigation of life safety fire risks related to external wall system defects. This is for medium-rise buildings (11-18 metres) where the developer of a building cannot be identified, traced, or held responsible. This scheme opened in November via an initial pilot, targeting a small number of buildings that have interim measures or simultaneous

evacuation measures in place. The wider rollout of the scheme to other buildings will commence in 2023. Further details on eligibility and the application process will be announced as soon as possible.

■ Capital Investment

Lisa Nandy:

[\[119991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many expressions of interest his Department received for the establishment of Investment Zones.

Lee Rowley:

The Expression of Interest for Investment Zones under the previous administration, launched on 2 October 2022, received submissions from 76 Authorities, for 626 potential sites.

■ Community Housing Fund

Sarah Olney:

[\[117773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of reinstating the Community Housing Fund on levels of housing supply.

Sarah Olney:

[\[117774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to reinstate the Community Housing Fund.

Sarah Olney:

[\[117775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many units of housing were delivered as a result of funding under the Community Housing Fund.

Lucy Frazer:

When the Homes England Community Housing Fund (CHF) programme closed in 2020, it had built up a pipeline of project anticipating the delivery of 10,780 homes outside London. Within London, the CHF is being delivered by the Greater London Authority which, in January 2023, reported a development pipeline of 1194 homes. The 2021/22 round of the CHF was delivered by the Community Led Homes partnership, and has supported projects anticipating the delivery of 1263 homes.

The most recent round of the CHF closed in March 2022. The government is considering what support it may provide to the community-led housing sector and a decision will be made in due course.

■ Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Solihull

Julian Knight: [\[117625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council from his Department's Council Tax Support Fund.

Lee Rowley:

Funding allocations provided to local authorities under the Council Tax Support Fund are set out [here](#).

■ Council Tax: Shared Housing

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[117731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had recent discussions with the Valuation Office Agency on changes to the liability for council tax of bedrooms in single shared houses.

Lee Rowley:

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed. Policy announcements will be made in the usual way, as appropriate.

■ Domestic Abuse: Solihull

Julian Knight: [\[117632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as part of his Department's Local Authority Domestic Abuse Duty New Burden Funding.

Felicity Buchan:

Information on local authority allocations of Domestic Abuse Duty New Burden Funding and Homelessness Prevention Grant is available [here](#).

■ Domestic Violence: Refuges

Rachel Maclean: [\[117805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what guidance he has issued to providers of domestic violence refuges regarding the provision of single-sex facilities.

Felicity Buchan:

DLUHC have not issued any guidance to providers of domestic abuse refuges with regard to the provision of single sex facilities.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[119056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential benefits of utilising the sight loss registers to ensure that all blind and partially sighted people are fully informed about the new Voter ID requirement.

Lee Rowley:

The Electoral Commission have launched a communications campaign to help voters understand the new requirement to present identification to vote. This has included work with civil society groups and other stakeholders, including the RNIB and Thomas Pocklington Trust, to support groups who might need further assistance to ensure they have accepted identification and understand the policy.

The maintenance and use of sight loss registers is the responsibility of local authorities and Government [guidance](#) states specifically that local authorities may use these registers to provide blind and partially sighted people with information about electoral events in accessible formats.

■ Empty Property: York

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an estimate of the number of unoccupied dwellings in (a) York and (b) York Central constituency.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an estimate of the number of second homes in (a) York and (b) York Central constituency.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of trends in the level of (a) empty and (b) second homes in (i) York and (ii) York Central over the last year for which data is available.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of second home prevalence on housing (a) availability and (b) costs in areas where housing accommodation is limited.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[120013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of the 23.1 per cent increase in house prices in York in 2022 on access to the residential property market in that city for (a) young people and (b) those on low incomes.

Rachael Maskell:**[120014]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to tackle housing scarcity for (a) first-time buyers and (b) social housing tenants in areas with high levels of (i) short-term holiday accommodation, (ii) second homes and (iii) housing costs.

Lucy Frazer:

The department collects and publishes data on empty properties and second homes that are liable for council tax at a local authority level. The latest statistics from October 2022 are published [here](#).

In order to support communities affected by short-term lets, in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill we committed to introducing a new registration scheme in England. The register will improve consistency in standards across all types of guest accommodation and will deliver much needed evidence and data about the number and location of short term lets in England.

Since 2010, over 819,000 households have been helped to purchase a home through government-backed schemes. This government has cut Stamp Duty Land Tax, expanding First Time Buyers Relief, and extended the mortgage guarantee scheme for a further year to maintain availability of mortgages for buyers with only a 5% deposit. Our new First Homes policy brings homes for sale at a discount or at least 30% to full market values, making both deposits and mortgage requirements.

Our £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme will deliver thousands of affordable homes both for rent and to buy right across the country. The Levelling Up White Paper committed to increasing the supply of social rented homes and a large number of the new homes delivered through our Affordable Homes Programme will be for social rent.

The government has committed to bringing forward discounted homes for first-time buyers, prioritised for local people and key workers. cheaper and opening up the dream of home ownership to even more people. Crucially, the discount is passed on to all future purchasers in perpetuity, so these homes will keep helping first-time buyers onto the property ladder for generations to come.

■ Exercise

Tracey Crouch:**[117558]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support he is providing to local planning authorities to help them facilitate increased levels of physical activity among people in their areas.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government recognises through our National Planning Policy Framework that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.

The Framework is clear that local planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Local planning authorities through their local plans should then seek to accommodate this.

Ultimately local authorities are responsible for this provision in their area, and they are best placed to know what their communities need.

■ Ground Rent

Justin Madders: [117643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average cost per annum of ground rent for all categories of property under leasehold agreement.

Justin Madders: [117644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average increase per annum in ground rent for all categories of property under leasehold agreement in each of the last five years.

Justin Madders: [117645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average annual (a) ground rent, (b) service charge, (c) administration charge and (d) other costs associated with owning a leasehold property.

Nickie Aiken: [117930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to protect leaseholders who are subject to RPI ground rents and who have not been within the scope of the Competition and Markets Authority's work on ground rents.

Lucy Frazer:

The department conducted an Impact Assessment for the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022, which reported data on the level of ground rent in England and Wales. The Impact Assessment is available on the UK Parliament website [here](#).

The English Housing Survey reports data on leaseholder charges, including data on the level of service charges and ground rents. The report is available from the department's website [here](#).

The 2021 report by Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research also examined leasehold charges. It is published [here](#).

The Government has legislated via the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 to protect future leaseholders from ground rents and we are due to bring forward further leasehold reforms later in this Parliament.

We understand the difficulties some existing leaseholders face with high and escalating ground rents. Unfair practices have no place in the housing market. This is

why we asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to investigate potential mis-selling of homes and unfair terms in the leasehold sector.

The CMA have secured commitments benefiting over 20,000 leaseholders, including commitments to return doubling ground rent terms to original rates. These settlements will help to free thousands more leaseholders from unreasonable ground rent increases. The CMA continue to engage with a number of firms and we urge other developers to follow suit.

Nickie Aiken:

[117929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent progress his Department has made on amending provisions within the Housing Act 1988 on the treatment of long residential leases as rental tenancies when a leaseholder's annual ground rent exceeds £1,000 in Greater London or £250 in the rest of England.

Lucy Frazer:

The government is committed to ensuring that where a leaseholder's ground rent exceeds £1,000 per year in Greater London or £250 per year outside London, they will not be subject to mandatory possession orders for arrears of ground rent in the future.

Whilst we cannot set out the precise details of legislation at this stage, we have been clear about our commitment to addressing this issue.

■ **Hinduism: Hate Crime**

Andrew Rosindell:

[117491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help protect Hindu communities from (a) religious- and (b) racially-motivated hate crime.

Lee Rowley:

There is no place in our country for hatred towards Hindus in this area. We have some of the strongest legislation in the world which aims to protect Hindus from both racially and religiously motivated crime. We encourage those who have experienced hatred to come forward to the Police or to report to the Police online portal True Vision. The Home Office's Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme has also provided physical security protection measures to places of worship across England and Wales that are particularly vulnerable to religiously motivated hate crime, including 26 Hindu temples.

■ **Holiday Accommodation: Change of Use**

Rachael Maskell:

[117680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Department's plans to consult on a change to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 to enable local areas to better control changes of use to short-term

lets, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of such a change on the number of properties that are already used as short term holiday lets as of January 2022.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Department's plans to consult on a change to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 to enable local areas to better control changes of use to short-term lets, whether he expects to include in that consultation a proposal that a change of use application would be needed if a property is to revert from use as a short term holiday let to residential use; and what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of his proposed changes on the number of properties available for residential use in areas which have an above average number of properties in use as short term holiday lets.

Lucy Frazer:

The government has committed to consult on the introduction of a new planning use class for short-term lets. Further information will be provided in due course.

■ Homelessness

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[117909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effect of the cost of living crisis in trends of the level of homelessness.

Felicity Buchan:

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken decisive action. The Autumn Statement announced £26 billion for 2023-24 designed to support the most vulnerable households, building on the £37 billion of support provided this year. We are also providing an additional £50 million, through a top up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, for local authorities to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless this winter.

■ Homelessness: Solihull

Julian Knight:

[\[117624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council through his Department's Homelessness Prevention Grant.

Felicity Buchan:

Information on local authority allocations of Domestic Abuse Duty New Burden Funding and Homelessness Prevention Grant is available [here](#).

Housing: Hornsey and Wood Green

Catherine West: [\[117771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has taken recent steps to increase the construction of (a) social housing and (b) affordable homes in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency.

Chi Onwurah: [\[120108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is taking steps to help provide new rented homes which are affordable for people earning the National Living Wage in Newcastle Central.

Lucy Frazer:

The provision of affordable housing is part of the government's plan to build more homes and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.

Since 2010, we have delivered over 632,600 new affordable homes, including over 441,612 affordable homes for rent, of which over 162,800 homes for social rent. Our £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme will deliver tens of thousands of affordable homes for both rent and to buy right across the country.

The Levelling Up White Paper committed to increasing the supply of social rented homes and a large number of the new homes delivered through our Affordable Homes Programme will be for social rent.

The department records funding allocation for this programme on a regional basis. As of the end of November 2022 a total of £3.4 billion had been allocated to contractors in London from the 2021-2026 Programme, while a total of £289,409,600 was allocated to the North East.

Housing: Older People

Matthew Pennycook: [\[120033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to launch the Task Force on Older People's Housing.

Lucy Frazer:

Announcements will be made in the usual way.

Landlords: Databases

John Spellar: [\[117434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many landlords are registered on rogue landlords databases in England.

Felicity Buchan:

There are currently 57 entries on the Database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents.

Local authorities are responsible for uploading and maintaining records on the Database. Where records have expired, local authorities are required to remove the entry from the Database.

■ Leasehold

Justin Madders: [\[117650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on leaseholders.

Lucy Frazer:

The government recognises the challenge many households, including leaseholders, are facing with the cost of living. We are spending over £37 billion on support in 2022/23 to help. This includes the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS), which is helping 27 million households with energy bills over the winter. The Energy Price Guarantee will also save a typical household £900 this winter by reducing, compared to the undiscounted price of energy, the amount that can be charged per unit of gas or electricity, to an annual equivalent of around £2,500 for a typical household. Support has also been provided to households through the £150 Council Tax rebate.

■ Leasehold Advisory Service

Justin Madders: [\[117646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Leasehold Advisory Service's support for (a) leaseholders and (b) freeholders.

Justin Madders: [\[117647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Leasehold Advisory Service at protecting the rights of leaseholders.

Justin Madders: [\[117648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the annual cost to the public purse is of Leasehold Advisory Service.

Justin Madders: [\[117649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the support provided by the Leasehold Advisory Service to seeking more information on cladding.

Lucy Frazer:

The Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) exists to provide leaseholders and park home owners with the advice and information they need to understand their rights and responsibilities and to engage confidently with third parties like freeholders, managing agents and site owners, including on fire safety issues like cladding.

LEASE continues to receive positive feedback from customers who have received advice.

The department meets with LEASE regularly as part of sponsorship oversight and this includes scrutiny of performance and financial management of LEASE's £1.9 million annual budget.

■ Leasehold: Sales

Justin Madders:

[\[117651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many and what proportion of new homes sold between 17 December 2019 and the introduction of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 on 30 June 2022 were leasehold properties.

Lucy Frazer:

Land Registry data reports that between January 2020 to June 2022, there were 66,197 new homes built that were sold as leasehold (33.7% of all new homes sold). However, Land Registry data has a reporting lag such that data on sales within the past 12 to 18 months is subject to upward revision.

■ Local Government Finance

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[114612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps is he taking to reduce the inflationary pressures on local authority budgets.

Lee Rowley:

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 makes available an additional £5 billion to councils in England, an increase of 9% in cash terms compared to 2022/23.

This builds on the substantial funding made available for this year.

Furthermore, the Energy Bill Relief Scheme is providing a discount on energy prices this winter for councils whose bills have been significantly inflated by the global energy crisis.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[117908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effect of trends in the level of Local Housing Allowance on the affordability of local rents for private renters.

Felicity Buchan:

In April 2020 we boosted investment in the Local Housing Allowance by nearly £1 billion and rates have been maintained at their increased level in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This increase was worth over an extra £600 on average in 2020-21 for 1.5 million claimants.

Government recognises that some private renters may need additional support. For those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available from local authorities. Since 2011 the Government has provided almost £1.6 billion in DHP funding to local authorities.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mr John Baron:

[\[114553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he will respond to correspondence dated (a) 11 October 2022, (b) 31 October 2022, (c) 2 December 2022 regarding a constituent ref JB38651.

Felicity Buchan:

I apologise for the delay in responding to my Hon. Friend's correspondence. The Department attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence from Honourable Members. A response was issued to my Hon. Friend on 13 January 2023.

■ **Night Shelter Transformation Fund: West Midlands**

Julian Knight:

[\[117626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of his Department's Night Shelter Transformation Fund for the West Midlands.

Felicity Buchan:

Our £10 million Night Shelter Transformation Fund 2022-25 provides faith and community groups with funding to provide self-contained emergency accommodation. Through this fund we have allocated £378,627 to faith and community groups across the West Midlands

These initiatives are part of the £2 billion of funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years in the West Midlands and across England.

■ **Planning Permission**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[117496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to increase the speed of planning decisions.

Lucy Frazer:

The powers in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will enable us to create a more consistent, streamlined and digitally enabled approach to planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed. When utilised with existing powers, this will enable us to create an end to end system which is faster and more accessible to communities.

In addition, we have announced our intention to increase planning fees to support the additional resourcing of local authority planning departments. Together with a new

planning performance framework, we will ensure delivery of a high quality and timely planning service.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Catherine West: [\[117768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reasons the Government did not introduce legislative proposals to end Section 21 evictions in 2022.

Dan Carden: [\[120168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will bring forward urgently legislative proposals on renters reform.

Felicity Buchan:

We will do so in this Parliament as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Private Rented Housing: Greater London

Catherine West: [\[117769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average increase in rent for private properties in London following the increase in the cost of living in the last 12 months; what comparative assessment he had made of the affordability of those increases on people on average earnings in London; and if he will make a statement.

Felicity Buchan:

The latest data published by the ONS shows that private rents in London rose by 3.5% in the 12 months to November 2022, compared to 4.1% on average across the rest of England. The most recent English Housing Survey from December 2022 shows that between 2021 and 2022, the average proportion of household income (including housing support) that private renters in England spent was 33%.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Lisa Nandy: [\[119988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the oral contribution of 9 January 2023 from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Official Report, column 255, on Interest Rates and Inflation: Inequality and Levelling Up, whether the additional funding to that originally forecast and increase in the pot to be shared out from £1.7bn to £2.1bn referred to in that answer constitute newly allocated money or a redistribution of funds from elsewhere in the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund; and whether that additional funding will be provided in Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund or used to top up projects which have been allocated funding in Round 1 of the Levelling Up Fund.

Dehenna Davison:

Levelling up remains a key priority for this Government. As outlined on the 9 January, the Government intends to allocate up to £2.1 billion through the second round of the Levelling Up Fund – an increase from the £1.7 billion previously referenced by the Chancellor at the autumn budget. This funding will be awarded from the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund. I look forward to this Government announcing the outcome of the second round by the end of January.

Rents: Greater London**Catherine West:**[\[117770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had recent discussions with the British Landlords Association on rent increases in London.

Felicity Buchan:

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on gov.uk.

Social Rented Housing: Inspections**Steve McCabe:**[\[117424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring The Regulator of Social Housing to conduct routine inspections of small social housing providers.

Dehenna Davison:

The same standards apply to all providers regardless of size, and the regulator has the same expectations of all providers in terms of delivering good quality homes and services.

Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance**Alberto Costa:**[\[117661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of taking steps to ensure social housing providers adopt priority registers that ensure the most vulnerable people are prioritised when raising housing concerns.

Dehenna Davison:

Local authorities have the freedom to tailor their allocation priorities to meet the needs of their local communities, including the most vulnerable people. In framing their social housing allocation scheme, they must ensure that reasonable preference (priority) is given to people who are homeless, in overcrowded housing or who need to move for medical or welfare reasons. This is to ensure that the priority for social housing goes to those who need it most.

Furthermore, as outlined in separate allocations guidance, local authorities have the power to frame their allocation scheme to give additional preference to particular

descriptions of people who fall within the statutory reasonable preference categories and have urgent housing needs.

■ **Social Services: Solihull**

Julian Knight: [117627]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council from his Department's Services Grant.

Julian Knight: [117628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the provisional financial allocation is to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council through the New Homes Bonus.

Julian Knight: [117629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council from his Department's Social Care Grant.

Julian Knight: [117630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council from his Department's Discharge Funding Grant.

Julian Knight: [117631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the financial allocation was to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council through his Department's Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Funding Grant.

Lee Rowley:

Provisional allocations for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Services Grant, New Homes Bonus, Social Care Grant, Discharge Funding Grant and Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Funding Grant in 2023/24 for those respective grants can be found [here](#).

Final allocations for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council in 2022/23 for those grants can be found [here](#). Please note that Discharge Funding Grant and Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Funding Grant did not exist in 22/23.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Integrated Schools: Northern Ireland

Ian Paisley:

[117591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the current status is of the outstanding (a) development proposals affecting integrated schools and (b) other Northern Ireland Department of Education development proposals.

Mr Steve Baker:

Development proposals affecting schools in Northern Ireland is a devolved matter, under the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Department of Education (NIDoE).

A full list of development proposals and their live status is available on the NIDoE website at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/current-development-proposals>.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna:

[121101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether his Department is taking steps to help minimise the number of staff in voluntary organisations who have been given a protective notice due to the ceasing of funding from Northern Ireland Departments at the end of the 2022-23 financial year.

Mr Steve Baker:

As the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland set out in his statement to Parliament on 24 November 2022, he is disappointed to have inherited a budget with a funding gap of some £660 million. The Secretary of State did not want to be in the position of having to set the Budget, but he has done so to protect Northern Ireland's finances and maintain delivery of public services. The Budget is the best outcome deliverable at this late stage of the financial year and it means that difficult decisions have to be made in very difficult circumstances.

I want to acknowledge the excellent work of voluntary organisations and the important services that they provide for communities in Northern Ireland. However, the decisions regarding the specific funding allocations for these organisations are a matter for the Department of Communities in Northern Ireland.

We remain firmly convinced that a restored devolved, power-sharing government, in line with the vision of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, should take the decisions on the issues that matter most to the people of Northern Ireland, including on funding for voluntary organisations.

TRANSPORT■ **A1 (M): Repairs and Maintenance****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[119925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the southbound carriage of the A1M near junction 5 to be resurfaced and the potholes and current rough road surface to be addressed.

Mr Richard Holden:

National Highways' inspectors carry out weekly safety inspections of the A1(M). Recent weekly inspections identified two safety critical defects in the area on 19 December 2022 and 28 December 2022 and both have been made safe.

Currently a resurfacing scheme for lanes one and two of the southbound A1(M) between junctions 6-5 is planned for the financial year 2024/25.

Where safety critical defects, including potholes, are identified, they are made safe within 24 hours and a permanent repair is made within 28 days.

■ **A5: Road Traffic****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[120905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the cost of delays on the A5 corridor; and what assessment he has made of the implications of those costs for his policies.

Mr Richard Holden:

National Highways are currently finalising the Midlands and Gloucestershire to Wales Route Strategy, which provides a detailed assessment of the western section of the A5 corridor. This includes an assessment of challenges and issues on the route, including delay, and sets out a series of objectives and locations for further investigation which will improve safety, network performance, the environment and support growth. These reports are a key component of National Highways research which will be used to support the development of the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) and inform the long-term planning of the strategic road network (SRN). The interim findings of these strategies will be available in the coming months.

■ **Air Routes: Belfast****Stephen Farry:**[\[117836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Aer Lingus ceasing to provide a Belfast to London service on air connectivity between Northern Ireland and England.

Jesse Norman:

British Airways, Aer Lingus's IAG partner, has picked up the services previously operated by Aer Lingus between Belfast and London, meaning that there has been no reduction in capacity on the route.

Air connectivity between Northern Ireland (NI) and Great Britain (GB) is currently very strong with several competing services between Belfast and London, and routes from NI to several cities throughout the UK.

■ Buses and Pedestrians: Accidents

Matt Western: [\[119085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many accidents involving both buses and pedestrians were recorded in England in the 12 months preceding (a) January 2023 and (b) each preceding month for the last two years.

Matt Western: [\[119086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many accidents involving both buses and cyclists were recorded in England in the 12 months preceding (a) January 2023 and (b) each preceding month for the last two years.

Matt Western: [\[119087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many accidents involving both buses and scooters were recorded in England in the 12 months preceding (a) January 2023 and (b) each preceding month for the last two years.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department collects data on personal injury road collisions reported to the police. The latest published final figures are for 2021.

The number of personal injury collisions in England in each month of 2021 involving both buses and pedestrians, buses and pedal cyclists and buses and e-scooters are shown in the table.

The number of personal injury collisions each month involving both buses and pedestrians, buses and pedal cyclists and buses and e-scooters, 2021, England.

MONTH	BUS AND PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS	BUS AND PEDAL CYCLE COLLISIONS	BUS AND E-SCOOTER COLLISIONS
January	20	11	1
February	23	6	0
March	30	24	0
April	39	21	2
May	50	29	4
June	45	29	3
July	41	24	1

MONTH	BUS AND PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS	BUS AND PEDAL CYCLE COLLISIONS	BUS AND E-SCOOTER COLLISIONS
August	44	24	3
September	50	17	4
October	61	23	3
November	58	20	5
December	54	14	0

■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions

John Spellar:

[\[117446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many new net zero emission buses were funded by his Department in the last five years; what the power source was for those buses; and how many and what proportion of those buses were manufactured in the UK.

Mr Richard Holden:

We have committed to funding 4,000 zero emission buses (ZEBs) this Parliament. Across the UK an estimated 3,250 ZEBs have been funded so far.

Between financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23 the Department for Transport has provided funding for 2,594 zero emission buses. The number of buses ordered and delivered may change following the outcome of procurement processes undertaken by local transport authorities or bus operators.

Table 1 below presents the number of zero emission buses funded between financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23.

	NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES	NUMBER OF BATTERY ELECTRIC BUSES	NUMBER OF HYDROGEN FUEL CELL BUSES
2018-19	76	43	33
2019-20	27	27	0
2020-21	556	556	0
2021-22	1298	1154	144
2022-23	100	100	0
TCF 2018-19 to 2022-23*	46	46	0

	NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES	NUMBER OF BATTERY ELECTRIC BUSES	NUMBER OF HYDROGEN FUEL CELL BUSES
London 2020-21 to 2022-23**	491	491	0
Total	2594	2417	177

*46 zero emission busses were funded through the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) between financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23.

**491 zero emission buses were introduced in London in financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23 as a result of Department for Transport funding to Transport for London.

Table 2 provides information, where available, on the bus manufacturer of these zero emission buses.

BUS MANUFACTURER	NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES	PERCENTAGE OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES
Alexander Dennis Ltd	436	17%
Wrightbus	188	7%
Switch Mobility	26	1%
Volvo	6	0%
Supplied by Pelican Bus & Coach UK and manufactured by Yutong	221	9%
Supplied by Harris Group and manufactured by Higer	3	0%
Information not held by the Department	491	19%
Bus manufacturer subject to outcome of procurement process by local transport authority or bus operator	1223	47%
Total	2594	

■ Department for Transport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**Emily Thornberry:** [\[118897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for December 2021, what was the (a) nature and (b) purpose of the training event for which a speaker was hired from UK Champions PLC on 3 December 2021; what was the name of the speaker who appeared at that event; and for how long and on what topic that speaker spoke.

Jesse Norman:

The event was for the Department for Transport's Aviation Directorate to come together as a team after Covid restrictions on office working. The speaker was from UK Champions PLC and spoke for 45 minutes about her career and experience as one of the highest-ranking female officers in the armed forces; and about the importance of inclusive leadership, teamwork and retention of diverse talent in challenging times.

Emily Thornberry: [\[118909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for November 2021, for which team were Mind Gym paid £5,400 on 15 November 2021 to facilitate an away day; how many individuals took part; in which location was it held; and for what purpose was it required.

Jesse Norman:

The Department for Transport has a budget for the procurement of training by senior managers in line with agreed business objectives. This training was delivered at the Kia Oval by MindGym to approximately 90 individuals from the Transport Security, Resilience and Response Directorate to build and improve resilience.

Emily Thornberry: [\[118915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 107064, how many purchases with a value less than £500 were made against his Department's budget through a Government procurement card in 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Department made 9,942 transactions in 2021 on purchasing goods and services with a value of less than £500 on a government procurement card. The majority of these transactions (7,387) were for payments of less than £50.

■ Department for Transport: Remote Working**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[118954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of their Department's employees work from home at least one day a week.

Jesse Norman:

The Department does not collect this information centrally.

■ Electric Scooters

Darren Jones:

[\[117821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of applying regulations on the use of mopeds to e-scooters.

Jesse Norman:

Under current legislation, e-scooters are classed as motorcycles, within the subclass of mopeds, as defined in Section 185 of the Road Traffic Act. This means the legal requirements that apply to mopeds also apply to e-scooters. However, they were not designed with e-scooters in mind and consequently it is very difficult for e-scooters to comply. The regulatory requirements for micromobility were considered as part of the Future of Transport Regulatory Review. It was concluded that a new 'Low-Speed Zero Emission' vehicle category would be created, separate to the cycle and motor vehicle categories, when parliamentary time allows. E-scooters are expected to be the first example of the new category. The Department will consult before any new arrangements come into force, and all interested parties will have a chance to shape the new regime.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Sarah Olney:

[\[120073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric vehicle charging points there has been in each region of the UK in each of the last five years.

Jesse Norman:

The Department holds data on the number of publicly available electric vehicle charging devices in the UK as provided by the electric vehicle and charging point platform Zap-Map.

It also holds information on chargepoints and sockets that have been applied for and installed under one of the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) provided grant schemes in public, residential and workplace locations. Information on chargepoints that have been privately installed are not held, therefore the total count of charging devices in the UK will be higher than the figures given below.

DfT began collecting the number of publicly available chargepoints at midnight on 01 October 2019. This data is given in the table below:

Table 1: Total number of publicly available charging devices, as at midnight 01 October 2022 from 2019 onwards

REGION NAME	OCTOBER 2019	OCTOBER 2020	OCTOBER 2021	OCTOBER 2022
United Kingdom	15,116	19,487	25,927	34,637
North East	738	849	916	1142
North West	1,204	1,403	1,725	2,188

REGION NAME	OCTOBER 2019	OCTOBER 2020	OCTOBER 2021	OCTOBER 2022
Yorkshire and the Humber	664	996	1,327	1,839
East Midlands	743	1,029	1,413	1,842
West Midlands	815	1,141	1,723	2,516
East of England	909	1,229	1,667	2,269
London	4,360	5,655	7,865	11,028
South East	1,966	2,649	3,416	4,562
South West	1,150	1,505	1,873	2,388
Wales	529	675	994	1249
Scotland	1,743	2,038	2,676	3,272
Northern Ireland	295	318	332	342

Data on electric vehicle charging devices installed under each OZEV funded grant scheme are given in the following tables.

Table 2a: Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (EVHS) charging devices installed each year, as of 1 October 2022

REGION	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
United Kingdom	21,614	25,993	54,197	115,799	70,682
North East	690	681	2,188	4,842	2,535
North West	1,982	2,199	6,005	13,034	8,269
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,564	1,859	4,614	9,566	5,774
East Midlands	1,703	1,959	4,143	9,783	5,983
West Midlands	1,795	2,067	4,747	10,499	6,597
East of England	2,464	2,964	5,893	12,958	7,808
London	2,018	2,902	4,168	8,120	4,778
South East	4,509	5,431	10,167	21,057	12,117

REGION	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
South West	2,011	2,481	4,982	9,929	5,751
Scotland	1,729	2,060	3,728	8,439	5,942
Wales	661	664	1,985	4,605	2,903
Northern Ireland	397	350	807	1,871	1,288
Unknown	91	376	770	1,096	937

Table 2b: Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Grant (EVCG) which launched in April 2022: Charging sockets installed, as of 1 October 2022

YEAR	CHARGING SOCKETS INSTALLED
2022	972

Note: regional breakdowns of these figures are not yet available.

Table 3: On-Street Residential Scheme (ORCS) number of completed installations each financial year, from the scheme start date in 2019, as of 1 October 2022

REGION	FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING (FYE) 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020	FYE 2021	FYE 2022	GRAND TOTAL
North East	0	6	5	25	0	36
North West	0	74	94	22	1	191
Yorkshire and the Humber	0	0	41	38	0	79
East Midlands	0	27	47	125	14	213
West Midlands	0	72	171	229	155	627
East of England	0	44	34	112	0	190
London	50	77	496	536	44	1,203

REGION	FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING (FYE) 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020	FYE 2021	FYE 2022	GRAND TOTAL
South East	0	96	250	107	27	480
South West	0	1	0	11	21	33
Wales	0	10	105	5	0	120
Scotland	0	22	28	18	41	109
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	50	429	1,271	1,228	303	3,281

Table 4a: Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) total number of sockets installed by region, as of 1 October 2022. Yearly installations by region are not available due to the small size of the data set.

REGION	SOCKETS INSTALLED
United Kingdom	36,275
North East	1,644
North West	4,131
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,789
East Midlands	3,403
West Midlands	3,710
East of England	4,519
London	2,225
South East	5,308
South West	3,272
Scotland	2,212
Wales	1,376
Northern Ireland	686

Table 4b: Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) total number of sockets installed each year, as of 1 October 2022

YEAR	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
Sockets Installed	1,656	4,522	6,257	11,093	11,891

* 2022 only includes data up to 1 October.

Data from the tables above cannot be combined to create a total, as charging devices from Table 3 are within public areas and there could already be included within the public charging devices dataset provided by Zap-Map.

■ Electric Vehicles: Greater London

Sarah Olney:

[\[120072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric vehicles were purchased in London in each of the last five years; and what proportion of all electric vehicles purchased in that period in England were purchased in London.

Jesse Norman:

The number of battery electric vehicles registered for the first time in London and England are outlined below:

YEAR	LONDON	ENGLAND	LONDON / ENGLAND (%)
2017	2,892	14,031	21%
2018	2,918	16,336	18%
2019	5,345	39,187	14%
2020	10,143	104,974	10%
2021	21,863	191,826	11%
Year to Sep-2022	19,536	175,977	11%

Source: DfT and DVLA

■ Jet Zero Council

John Spellar:

[\[117448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Jet Zero Council includes representatives of trades unions.

Jesse Norman:

The British Airline Pilots Association receives regular updates and engagement as a result of its associate membership of the Jet Zero Council. If other trade unions are

interested in associate membership, the Department encourages them to contact the Jet Zero Council secretariat via JetZeroCouncilSecretariat@dft.gov.uk.

■ **Large Goods Vehicles: Dorset**

Sir Christopher Chope: **[119886]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2023 to Question 113160 on Large Goods Vehicles: Dorset, whether it is the policy of Highways England to retain the lorry park at Brocks Pine; and what representations have been received by Highways England on retaining the lorry park.

Mr Richard Holden:

National Highways (which has replaced Highways England) has no role in the operation of the facility, and it is not a NH site or on NH land.

National Highways has not called for the closure or relocation of the 'lorry park' facility within Avon Heath Country Park.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Lighting**

Stephen Farry: **[120201]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of the brightness of modern LED vehicle headlights on people who have vision difficulties including incipient cataracts.

Mr Richard Holden:

No specific assessment has been carried out of the potential impact of the brightness of LED headlights on people with vision difficulties including incipient cataracts. However, 2018 research into emerging risks concluded overall that there is no direct adverse health effects from LED emission in normal use. Furthermore, LED headlights are subject to the same detailed requirements as other lighting technologies which include, limits on light intensity to control brightness and regulated beam patterns to minimise the occurrence of glare.

■ **Motorways**

Jim Shannon: **[118927]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of smart motorways on (a) levels of congestion and (b) driver safety.

Mr Richard Holden:

National Highways produces annual smart motorways stocktake progress reports which cover the latest safety data and progress on delivering the 2020 Stocktake actions. National Highways published its [Smart motorways stocktake - Second year progress report 2022](#) in May 2022. The latest data (2016 to 2020) shows that, overall, in terms of serious or fatal casualties, smart motorways are the safest roads on the Strategic Road Network. The next annual report is due to be published in Spring 2023.

National Highways also produces Post Opening Project Evaluation (POPE) reports 'one year after' and 'five years after' the opening of a road scheme covering all scheme impacts, including journey time reliability and safety. Reports are published on the National Highways [website](#).

■ **Parking: Private Sector**

John Spellar: [\[117445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications for vehicle details by private car parking companies were received by the DVLA in 2022.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency received 36,252,255 applications for registered keeper details in 2022, of which, 10,605,732 were from private parking companies.

■ **Railways: Chester**

Samantha Dixon: [\[117902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the High-Level Output Specification and Statement of Funds Available for the railways, published on 1 December 2022, on what date he expects (a) to publish the next iteration of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline and (b) to make a statement on proposed improvements to Chester railway station.

Huw Merriman:

Following the Autumn Statement on 17 November we are in the process of reviewing the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) and will make the outcome public once that work is complete.

Having provided feedback on an initial Strategic Outline Business Case submitted by Cheshire West and Chester Council for enhancements at and around Chester Station, DfT officials look forward to receiving and considering an updated proposal from local stakeholders by March 2023.

■ **Railways: Lockerbie**

Ian Murray: [\[114623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data his Department holds on the average weekly level of cancellations and delays from Lockerbie railway station for (a) Transpennine Express trains and (b) Avanti West Coast trains, including those trains cancelled the day before travel, in the last 12 months.

Huw Merriman:

The Department does not routinely hold this data. It is the responsibility of train operating companies to collect this information.

■ Railways: Strikes

Alan Brown: [\[121012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if rail operating companies are indemnified and receive compensation when strikes occur among (a) train drivers and (b) signalmen.

Huw Merriman:

No compensation has been paid by the Department to train operators to cover lost revenue due to strike action. Under the terms of the operator agreements put in place since the onset of COVID, the Government is on revenue risk not operators and hence operators are not financially affected by any fluctuations in revenue.

■ Removal Services and Storage

Darren Jones: [\[117822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of creating a single point of contact for the removals and storage sector.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department for Transport has a central, cross-cutting freight and logistics team which serves as the primary point of contact for, and works closely with, the freight and logistics sector. This DfT team also works closely with other governmental departments on policy overlaps including storage, as this is led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities.

■ Roads: Accidents

Stephanie Peacock: [\[119163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce the number of speed-related traffic accidents.

Mr Richard Holden:

Figures for Great Britain's traffic fatalities per million population have been among the lowest in the world for many years. In 2021, Great Britain had the fifth lowest rate of road fatalities per million people among European countries with a population over 1 million.

The Government believes that any form of dangerous or inconsiderate driving behaviour is a serious road safety issue. All available research shows a link between excessive speed and the risk of collisions.

We expect all drivers to observe the speed limit, and enforcement is a matter for the police. Policing of our roads, and how available resources are deployed, is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local issues.

The Government is progressing a four-year review into roads policing and traffic enforcement. The Department for Transport will be looking at this with the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the National Police

Chiefs' Council. We aim to identify ways of increasing capability and capacity across a range of agencies. This review will not only highlight where police forces are doing good work: it will show what more can be done to improve road safety.

The Department has also announced plans to set up a Road Safety Investigation Branch to identify the underlying causes of road traffic collisions. This will bring roads into line with modes such as rail, which have long benefitted from an accident investigation branch.

■ Roads: Construction

Alex Sobel: [\[117807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of building new roads on climate targets.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Government always considers the climate impact of its actions, which is why the UK has been so successful in reducing our carbon emissions to date. In the case of road building, that involves looking at embedded carbon, where DfT projects have pioneered reducing the carbon associated with construction, and carbon from vehicles operating on a new road. Where new road infrastructure can alleviate serious congestion, this offers a prospect of reducing carbon emissions from vehicles.

■ Speed Limits

Scott Benton: [\[117964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of 20mph zones on levels of traffic congestion.

Scott Benton: [\[117965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of 20mph zones on the safety of pedestrians.

Scott Benton: [\[117966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the average cost of erecting the signage required for a 20mph zone.

Scott Benton: [\[117968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of levels of public support for 20mph zones (a) nationally and (b) in local areas where zones have been created.

Scott Benton: [\[117969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the potential impact of the introduction of 20mph zones on the number of road fatalities; and what the evidential basis is for this estimate.

Scott Benton:

[117970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the introduction of 20mph zones on the level of CO2 emissions.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department has not undertaken any recent assessments on 20mph roads or the impact on road users and has no current plans to do so.

The Department published a comprehensive three-year evaluation of the effect of 20mph signed-only limits on 22 November 2018.

The headline findings were:

- 20mph limits are supported by the majority of residents and drivers
- There is insufficient evidence to conclude that there has been a significant change in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph limits in residential areas.
- In one city centre case study there has been a significant reduction in collisions and casualties.

Local traffic authorities are responsible for their procurement procedures, and the Department for Transport would not be able to estimate the average cost of erecting signage.

The causes of congestion can be systemic, for example increasing population and urbanisation, or more localised, for example network pinch points, inadequate public transport or road works. It is for traffic authorities to decide what systems to put in place to help them manage their road networks as efficiently as possible.

The Department is fully committed to reducing emissions from road transport. We recently published the Transport Decarbonisation Plan [Transport decarbonisation plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan) which identified policy measures to decarbonise road traffic and all other forms of transport, in order to ensure the transport sector delivers its contribution to upcoming carbon budgets, and put us on a pathway to net zero.

■ Trailers: Driving Instruction

Karin Smyth:

[121069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of drivers taking the trailer safety accreditation scheme.

Mr Richard Holden:

The scheme is an industry-led initiative, overseen by the National Council for Accredited Trailer Towing. Data reported the DVSA since the scheme was launched on 18 May 2022 show 120 drivers have completed an accredited training course. The DVSA does not hold data on the number of drivers who might have completed trailer safety training courses outside the accredited scheme.

TREASURY

■ Beer: Regulation

Stella Creasy:

[\[119960\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke, (b) replace or (c) retain the Beer Regulations 1993.

James Cartlidge:

Tax matters, including the Beer Regulations 1993, are matters for HM Treasury and are kept under constant review, with any announcements made at fiscal events.

Now that the UK has left the EU and is free to set its own excise rules, the Government is undertaking the biggest reform of alcohol duties for over 140 years. The new simplified alcohol duty system, based on the principle of taxing alcohol by strength, will be implemented from 1 August 2023. We are introducing Draught Relief, reducing the duty on draught beer and cider by 5%, a measure not possible when we were members of the EU. This will directly support community pubs as over 75% of their sales come from beer and cider.

■ Blockchain: Innovation

Antony Higginbotham:

[\[120136\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to support the growth of blockchain innovation in the UK.

Andrew Griffith:

The Treasury is responsible for considering the implications of distributed ledger technology (DLT) and blockchain in the Financial Services sector; this includes activities relating to cryptoassets.

The government's ambition is to make the UK a global hub for cryptoasset technology and investment. In April 2022, the government set out a number of reforms which will see the regulation and aspects of tax treatment of cryptoassets evolve.

The Financial Services and Markets Bill ensures that the Treasury can establish the framework for regulating cryptoassets and stablecoins. The government has consulted on the regulation of stablecoins and will consult on its approach to regulating a broader set of investment-related cryptoasset activities in due course. The government believes that having robust and effective regulation will boost innovation - by giving people and businesses the confidence they need to use new technologies safely.

The government has taken a range of broader measures to support blockchain innovation in the UK. The Treasury will set up a Financial Market Infrastructure (FMI) Sandbox in 2023, which will allow firms to experiment with new technologies and innovations, including DLT, in providing the infrastructure services that underpin

markets. The Treasury is taking powers through the Financial Services and Markets Bill to implement one or more sandboxes.

The government is also exploring the use of DLT in debt instruments to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of financial technology development.

Further consultation on cryptoassets is expected to be published shortly.

■ **Customs (Import Duty) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018**

Stella Creasy:

[120936]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Customs (Import Duty) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 are within the scope of (a) Clause 1 or (b) any other section of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reformation) Bill.

Victoria Atkins:

The Customs (Import Duty) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 are part of the new domestic customs legislation that gives effect to the UK's new standalone customs regime. The regulations are not retained EU law and therefore not within the scope of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reformation) Bill.

■ **Economic Growth**

Julian Sturdy:

[120917]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using new and innovative methods to generate economic growth and revenue, in particular in relation to cryptocurrency such as bitcoin, in the context of the current economic climate.

Andrew Griffith:

The government's ambition is to make the UK a global hub for cryptoasset technology and investment. In April 2022, the government set out a number of reforms which will see the regulation and aspects of tax treatment of cryptoassets evolve. This included confirming the intention to regulate cryptoassets known as stablecoins and to introduce a 'financial market infrastructure sandbox' to enable firms to experiment and innovate. The government will consult on its approach to regulating a broader set of investment-related cryptoasset activities in due course.

The UK is committed to creating a regulatory environment in which firms can innovate, while crucially maintaining financial stability and regulatory standards so that people and businesses can use new technologies both reliably and safely. Recent events in the crypto market reinforce the case for timely, clear and effective regulation.

These measures will help to ensure firms can invest, innovate and scale up in this country.

■ Electricity Generation: Taxation

Mark Pawsey: [\[117569\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether organisations which generate energy for their own use will be included in the Electricity Generator Levy.

Mark Pawsey: [\[117570\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Electricity Generator Levy will only apply to net exports of energy from an organisation.

Mark Pawsey: [\[117571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of applying the Electricity Generator Levy to (a) water companies, (b) local authorities and (c) other organisations that generate energy for their own use on (i) water bills and (ii) council tax rates.

Mark Pawsey: [\[117572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Electricity Generator Levy will apply to Food Waste Anaerobic Digestion generation.

James Cartlidge:

Tax matters, including the Excise Duties (Deferred Payment) Regulations 1992, are matters for HM Treasury and are kept under constant review, with any announcements made at fiscal events.

All required legislation relating to excise duties and Retained EU Law will be made via the Finance Bill (or subordinate tax legislation) which is usual and appropriate for tax provisions.

■ Energy Bills Rebate: Billing

Jonathan Edwards: [\[119965\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of instructing energy utilities to include energy support payments in bills before VAT is calculated.

Victoria Atkins:

Under the Energy Bills Support Scheme, the Government is paying £400 of the cost of domestic customer's energy bills. VAT law applies a reduced rate of 5 per cent VAT to supplies of energy made to domestic customers.

■ Energy: Disability

Rachael Maskell: [\[117672\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the £150 million additional energy support package for disabled people was calculated at the rate proposed.

James Cartlidge:

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 Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. This is additional to the £150 payment for recipients of disability benefits in 2022/23 already announced as part of the Cost of Living package in May 2022.

The Disability Cost of Living payment will be paid on an individual basis, so multiple individuals on disability benefits in the same household will each receive the Disability Cost of Living Payment. Individuals on disability benefits in a household receiving means-tested benefits will also receive the £900 Cost of Living Payment, and disabled pensioner households will receive the £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment. Payments have been set at this level to protect the most vulnerable, whilst taking every possible step to limit the overall cost to taxpayers.

These households will also benefit through the uprating of their benefits by September CPI (10.1%) from April 2023, ensuring they retain their value in relation to prices.

■ Energy: VAT**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[119966\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of temporarily pausing VAT on (a) domestic and (b) non-domestic energy bills.

Victoria Atkins:

The Energy Price Guarantee is a scheme that caps the unit price households pay for electricity and gas, which means that a typical household will have to pay bills equivalent to no more than £2500 a year on their energy bills this winter. This is expected to save consumers who use both gas and electricity around £900 this winter. The scheme as currently designed will last until 31 March 2023. As announced at Autumn Statement 2022, the EPG will increase to £3000 from April 2023 until April 2024. This new approach is expected to save around £14 billion to April 2024, ensuring fiscal sustainability, whilst targeting support to those most in need.

The Government recognises that families should not have to bear all of the VAT costs they incur to meet their needs, with domestic fuels such as gas, electricity and heating oil already subject to the reduced rate of VAT at 5 per cent of VAT. The Government's package of support to help households with their energy bills is more generous than an additional VAT cut on domestic fuel and power, and there would be no guarantee that suppliers would pass on the discounts from this relief to all customers.

Separately, I would point out that VAT is a tax on consumption paid by consumers. In general, businesses operate as part of the VAT collection process, paying VAT on their sales but recovering VAT on their purchases. This means that VAT registered

businesses can normally reclaim any VAT incurred, so a VAT reduction would not benefit them.

■ **Excise Duties (Deferred Payment) Regulations 1992**

Stella Creasy:

[\[120937\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether they intend to (a) retain, (b) revoke or (c) replace the Excise Duties (Deferred Payment) Regulations 1992.

James Cartlidge:

Tax matters, including the Excise Duties (Deferred Payment) Regulations 1992, are matters for HM Treasury and are kept under constant review, with any announcements made at fiscal events.

All required legislation relating to excise duties and Retained EU Law will be made via the Finance Bill (or subordinate tax legislation) which is usual and appropriate for tax provisions.

■ **Gold and Foreign Exchange Reserves: Venezuela**

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[120154\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the decision by the Bank of England not to release gold deposited by the government of Venezuela on perceptions of the safety of the UK as a place to store assets.

Andrew Griffith:

Holding gold reserves on behalf of foreign central banks is a matter for the Bank of England. Furthermore, the issue regarding control of the gold reserves is the subject of ongoing litigation and it would not be appropriate for HMT to comment. Neither HMT nor HMG are a party in the legal case. As such, HM Treasury has not made an assessment of the potential impact of the decision by the Bank of England not to release gold deposited by the government of Venezuela on perceptions of the safety of the UK as a place to store assets.

■ **Goods Vehicle Movement Service**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[120960\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many hours the Goods Vehicle Movement Service has not been operational in January 2023.

Victoria Atkins:

The Goods Vehicle Movement Service has remained operational in January 2023 but experienced technical difficulties on 1 and 2 January which affected a limited number of movements. This was rectified by 21:00 on 2 January.

■ Health Services: Pay

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[121048\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on its policy of offering one-off payments to health service workers; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of such payments being classed as cost-of-living payments rather than income for tax and benefit purposes.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in delivering our world class public services.

It is for the Welsh Government to allocate their funding in devolved areas, including for public sector pay, as they see fit and they are accountable to the Senedd for these decisions.

In England, the Government accepted the pay recommendations of the independent Pay Review Bodies for the NHS for 2022/23. These gave the highest uplifts in nearly twenty years, reflecting the vital contributions public sector workers make to our country and the cost of living pressures facing households. All NHS pay bands have received a £1,400 increase with those at the lowest end seeing a pay rise of 9.3%. We invited the unions to sit down with us and we have started discussions on the evidence we will be submitting to the independent pay review bodies for 2023/24, and to put forward their own evidence for discussion.

■ Housing: Disability

Drew Hendry:

[\[120082\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential benefits of extending VAT relief for home disability adaptations to self-installed adaptations when a recognised need for the home modifications has been identified by an individual's professional support team.

Victoria Atkins:

VAT has been designed as a broad-based tax on consumption, and the twenty per cent standard rate applies to the vast majority of goods and services. While there are exceptions to the standard rate, these have always been strictly limited by both legal and fiscal considerations.

One such exception is the VAT relief for items which have been designed solely for use by a disabled person, which benefit from a VAT zero-rate. Self-installation of home modifications which meet this criteria will benefit from the relief, however any general purpose items will be subject to VAT at the standard rate. This boundary ensures that goods and services which are objectively the same do not have different VAT treatments, enabling HMRC and businesses to determine with confidence what is, and is not, eligible for VAT relief.

Given this, although the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to change the VAT treatment of self-installed home adaptations

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Customs

Ruth Cadbury:

[120070]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the Goods Vehicle Management System was not operational in January 2023; and how much it cost to fix that system.

Victoria Atkins:

On 1 January 2023, there was a technical issue with the Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS) which affected some traders' ability to move goods using the service. The issue was swiftly fixed at no additional cost and GVMS continues to work well.

■ Members: Correspondence

Bill Esterson:

[119983]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the letter from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on funding for British Steel.

John Glen:

The Chancellor engages regularly with the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Secretary of State for Levelling up, House and Communities on a range of matters. It would not be appropriate to comment on commercial discussions.

■ National Income

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[117940]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by how much gross domestic product per hour of work has changed since 2010; and if he will make a comparative estimate of the level of change in other G7 countries.

Andrew Griffith:

UK output per hour worked has grown by 6.5% during the period 2010 to 2021 (inclusive) with an average annual growth rate of 0.5% according to the OECD. Among the G7 economies Italy has grown by 6.0% over the same period, while information about other G7 economies can be found at the following link: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=PDB_LV. Estimates of hours worked in 2020 and 2021 were impacted by the pandemic and labour market support schemes, which varied by economies and may affect comparability of these figures.

■ Orchestras and Theatre: Tax Allowances

Barbara Keeley:

[119935]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 12 December 2022 to Written Question 105279 on Orchestras and Theatre: Tax Allowances, what the average wait time was for the 15 per cent of valid claims for Theatre and Orchestra Tax Reliefs who were not paid within 28 days of receipt.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC constantly monitors payment times. It is important that these reliefs are easy to access and meet the needs of the claimant organisations. However, this must be balanced against the need to ensure that taxpayer money is not paid out in respect of fraudulent or incorrect claims.

We are unable to provide an average wait time for claims which were not processed within 28 days, as any figures could be misleading, given the range of reasons why these claims are not paid within 28 days. These range from simple administrative issues such as missing payment details, to more complex issues requiring the claim to be reviewed in more detail before payment can be released.

Barbara Keeley:[\[119936\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 12 December 2022 to Written Question 105279 on Orchestras and Theatre: Tax Allowances, what proportion of the 85 per cent of valid claims for Theatre and Orchestra Tax Reliefs which were paid within 28 days of receipt were (a) Theatre Tax Relief and (b) Orchestra Tax Relief.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC aims to pay claims for all tax reliefs as soon as possible. Since 1 April 2022, 85 per cent of valid claims for Theatre and Orchestra Tax Reliefs have been paid within 28 days.

Of those, 85 per cent are Theatre Tax Relief and 15 per cent are Orchestra Tax Relief.

Personal Income**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[117941\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by how much median household income per person has changed in absolute terms since 2010; and if he will make a comparative estimate of the level of change in other G7 countries.

Andrew Griffith:

The government understands that people are worried about the rising cost of living. The government has announced further support for next year designed to target the most vulnerable households. This cost of living support is worth £26 billion in 2023-24, in addition to benefits uprating, which is worth £11 billion to working age households and people with disabilities. This support for 2023-24 is in addition to the generous support already in place to support households this year.

The Department for Work and Pensions annually publishes their estimate of UK median household income in their households below average income publication. These estimates show the weekly UK median household income before housing cost in 2010/11 was £502 and in 2020/21 was £539. The weekly UK median household income after housing cost in 2010/11 was £432 and in 2020/21 was £472. All statistics equivalised in 2020/21 prices.

Based on internationally comparable OECD data, household disposable income per capita in the UK (in nominal US dollars, adjusted for purchasing power parity) has grown by 30% during the years 2010 to 2020. This is equivalent to an average annual growth rate of 2.6% over this period. By comparison, the equivalent growth rate over the same period was 2.2% for Italy, 2.5% for Japan, 3.3% for France and Canada, 4.0% for the US and 4.1% for Germany.

■ Private Equity

Tulip Siddiq:

[117741]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the review of the impact of private equity launched in July 2021 will conclude, and if he will place a copy of the findings of that review in the House of Commons Library.

Andrew Griffith:

The Treasury did not formally review private equity in 2021, although it did consult in July 2021 on reforms to the UK's regime for wholesale capital markets, including public equity markets, through the Wholesale Markets Review (WMR). The Government's objective for the WMR is to deliver a framework that is fair, outcome-based and supports openness and competitiveness, whilst maintaining the highest regulatory standards.

The Government published its response to the WMR consultation on 1 March 2022 and is delivering the most urgent reforms that received strong support from industry as part of Financial Services and Markets Bill. Changes where respondents indicated that fast implementation is less paramount will be delivered via the Government's wider programme to enact the repeal of retained EU law in financial services.

■ Public Sector: Borrowing

Jim Shannon:

[118931]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of Government borrowing in the last five years.

John Glen:

Trends in the level of borrowing in the last five years reflect the UK dealing with the consequences of significant global shocks.

By 2018-19, the Government had succeeded in reducing the deficit from the 2009-10 peak by four-fifths. However, following the actions taken during the pandemic, borrowing reached a post-war high in 2020-21. While it decreased in 2021-22, this still remained more than double the level seen in 2019-20. Borrowing is expected to increase this year as the Government has taken action to support families and businesses with their energy bills.

You can find recent borrowing figures in HM Treasury's Autumn Statement 2022 document, found here: [AUTUMN STATEMENT 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1061211/autumn-statement-2022.pdf)

■ Solar Power: VAT

Darren Jones: [117841]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the rate of VAT is for battery upgrades to existing domestic solar installations.

Victoria Atkins:

Battery storage supplied as part of an installation of solar panels will benefit from the VAT zero rate until 31 March 2027.

Battery storage itself has not been added to the list of qualifying materials and therefore will continue to be standard rated when installed separately, including where such storage is an upgrade to an existing solar panel installation.

■ VAT: Registration

John Redwood: [117390]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has a target for the maximum timescale between an application being submitted for VAT registration and it being granted.

Victoria Atkins:

As noted in Question UIN 112030, HMRC aims to turnaround most VAT registrations within 40 working days, although some cases do take longer due to additional compliance checks or complexity. In 2022, 76 per cent of registrations were issued within 7 calendar days.

John Redwood: [117391]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of recent trends in the time taken to process businesses' applications for VAT registration.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer my honourable friend to the answer that I gave on 5 January 2023 to PQ UIN 112030.

Mr Toby Perkins: [120956]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many VAT de-registrations there were by VAT quarter between 2015 and 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

VAT de-registrations statistics can be found in the publication [HMRC Value Added Tax \(VAT\) annual statistics](#), in Table 2 of the [publication tables](#).

A summary is provided below showing the total number of VAT de-registrations from January 2015 to September 2021 by calendar year and quarter.

NUMBER OF VAT DE-REGISTRATIONS BY YEAR AND QUARTER

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Q1	48,699	50,189	71,520	55,291	76,011	58,292	49,981
Q2	47,382	52,611	88,656	57,100	66,985	46,448	67,695
Q3	45,446	50,158	58,727	44,619	56,392	49,875	49,901
Q4	46,744	48,109	50,381	59,842	57,322	48,104	N/A
Total	188,271	201,067	269,284	216,852	256,710	202,719	N/A

The latest published de-registration statistics in the HMRC VAT annual statistics publication provide figures up to the month of September 2021.

There will be an update to these statistics as part of the next HMRC VAT annual statistics publication which has been announced for release on 24 January 2023 and this publication will provide more up to date figures.

■ Wind Power

John Spellar:

[\[117438\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue accrued to the Crown Estate from offshore wind leases in the last year.

James Cartlidge:

The Crown Estate operates as an independent commercial business, in line with The Crown Estate Act and the Framework Agreement with HM Treasury. The Crown Estate returns 100% of its net revenue to HM Treasury each year, totally over £3billion in the last decade.

The Crown Estate publishes its revenue performance for each business unit on an annual basis. These accounts are laid in Parliament.

For the financial year 2021/22, The Crown Estate generated £113.3million from its marine business, which includes offshore wind leasing activity alongside other seabed leasing activity. The seabed is a valuable national asset, and through The Crown Estate's leasing and investment activity appropriate value is being secured to the benefit of the nation.

WALES

■ Wales Office: Remote Working

Dr Matthew Offord:

[118944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what proportion of his Department's employees work from home at least one day a week.

David T C Davies:

The proportion of my Department's employees who work from home for at least one day a week varies based on business needs. Over the past two years, the Civil Service as a whole has had to work in a more agile way whilst still delivering essential public services.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Civil Partnerships and Marriage

Hilary Benn:

[117475]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she plans to take steps to enable opposite-sex couples to convert a civil partnership to marriage.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government Equalities Office ran a consultation on the future of conversion rights in England and Wales in 2019.

We continue to analyse the public responses to the consultation, and intend to publish the government's response and bring forward any necessary legislation as soon as possible.

All updates on the outcome of this consultation, including on the ability for opposite-sex couples to convert their civil partnership to marriage, will be made available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/civil-partnerships-next-steps-and-consultation-on-conversion> in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme: Disability

Marsha De Cordova:

[122261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce waiting times for Access to Work grants for disabled people.

Tom Pursglove:

Access to Work has received a significant increase in applications over the last year and have recruited new staff to meet the increased demand and reduce the time it takes to make decisions. Customers making new applications where they are starting work within the next 4 weeks, or have a grant coming to an end that requires renewal,

are prioritised to ensure customers are able to enter and remain in the labour market. We are also transforming the Access to Work service through increased digitalisation, that will make the service more efficient, will make the application process easier, and improve the time taken from application through to decision.

■ **Confined Spaces Regulations 1997**

Stella Creasy:

[119964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, whether he has plans to (a) revoke, (b) replace or (c) retain the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997.

Mims Davies:

The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 define the risks of working in confined spaces and require dutyholders to assess those risks and put precautions in place for work to be carried out safely.

The Regulations implement provisions of Council Directive 92/57/EEC - Temporary or Mobile Construction Sites and are subject to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill 2022 (REUL Bill) currently passing through Parliament.

With the introduction of the REUL Bill, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) remains focused on ensuring that regulatory frameworks maintain the United Kingdom's high standards of health and safety protection and continue to reduce burdens for business. HSE's approach aligns closely with the Government's pledge to do more for business to help promote growth by removing disproportionate burdens and simplifying the regulatory landscape. Our standards of health and safety protections are among the highest in the world. HSE will continue to review its retained EU Law to seek opportunities to reduce business burdens and promote growth without reducing health and safety standards.

■ **Cost of Living Payments**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[120842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will consider the potential merits of providing support with essential living costs for people who have no recourse to public funds; and if he will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to PQ[27675](#).

■ **Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit: Work Capability Assessment**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[120095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time is between an application being submitted for a Work Capability Assessment and decision being made for (a) Universal Credit and (b) Employment and Support Allowance.

Jonathan Ashworth:**[120096]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is between an initial application and a Work Capability Assessment being held for (a) Universal Credit (LCW and LCWRA elements) and (b) ESA.

Jonathan Ashworth:**[120098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is between a Work Capability Assessment being held and a decision being made for (a) Universal Credit (LCW and LCWRA elements) and (b) ESA.

Tom Pursglove:

The full information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

DWP publishes Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Work Capability Assessment (WCA) median 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.

Jonathan Ashworth:**[120102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of applicants for (a) Universal Credit and (b) Employment and Support Allowance had their claims rejected following a Work Capability Assessment in each of the last five years.

Tom Pursglove:

DWP publishes Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessment (WCA) outcomes for initial claims on GOV.UK, which can be found [here](#).

The table below shows the latest Universal Credit (UC) No Limited Capability for Work decisions recorded from May 2019 by the month the decision was recorded on the UC system across Great Britain. Where a claimant was found to have no limited capability to work, and that decision was subsequently over-turned by mandatory reconsideration or appeal, then the initial decision is excluded from the table.

Prior to April 2019, some UC claims were recorded on an interim operational system called UC Live Service (UCLS). Figures for UCLS Health claimants are not currently collated, and to develop that information would incur disproportionate cost.

These figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and produced using internal MI, are not quality assured to Official Statistics standards, and may be subject to revision.

	NO LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR WORK
May-19	14,890
Jun-19	6,520
Jul-19	11,280
Aug-19	7,630

	NO LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR WORK
Sep-19	5,470
Oct-19	4,670
Nov-19	7,790
Dec-19	9,360
Jan-20	12,240
Feb-20	11,820
Mar-20	14,990
Apr-20	820
May-20	440
Jun-20	410
Jul-20	350
Aug-20	570
Sep-20	1,230
Oct-20	990
Nov-20	1,210
Dec-20	410
Jan-21	620
Feb-21	790
Mar-21	2,840
Apr-21	5,160
May-21	6,750
Jun-21	11,060
Jul-21	11,460
Aug-21	9,510
Sep-21	11,090
Oct-21	10,600

	NO LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR WORK
Nov-21	4,560
Dec-21	4,710
Jan-22	9,150
Feb-22	12,180
Mar-22	15,640
Apr-22	11,230
May-22	8,260
Jun-22	9,990
Jul-22	8,540
Aug-22	9,390
Sep-22	9,980

■ Employment Schemes

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[121078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people started employment following their participation in the Local Supported Employment programme in each of the last five years.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[121079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were in employment six months following the end of their participation in the Local Supported Employment programme in each of the last five years.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[121080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department spent on the Local Supported Employment programme in each of the last five years.

Tom Pursglove:

The Proof of Concept for Local Supported Employment (LSE) went live in November 2017 and ran for 18 months in nine local authorities. The figures in the table below are taken from management information supplied by the participating local authorities. It includes the total number of referrals to the service, the total number of starts on the service and the number of job starts.

	REFERRALS	STARTS	JOB STARTS
Totals	580	560	260

We do not hold information on the numbers in employment six months following the end of their participation in the Local Supported Employment programme.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics but is provided in the interests of transparency.

Definitions

- Referrals are the number of claimants confirmed as eligible by Jobcentre Plus.
- Starts are the number of claimants who started on the provision.
- Job starts are all job starts regardless of number of hours.
- All numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.
- Claimants are defined here as Employment and Support Allowance claimants and Universal Credit claimants with limited capability for work, who had a learning disability or autism and who were known to adult social care or were in contact with secondary mental health services.

The next stage of LSE began in November 2022, operating across 29 local authority areas, running until March 2025. Grant funding represents an investment of £7.3 million over the next three years.

■ **Employment Schemes: Disability**

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[122293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress his Department has made on supporting disabled people into work.

Tom Pursglove:

In 2017, the Government set a goal to see a million more disabled people in employment between 2017 and 2027. Between Q1 2017 and Q1 2022, the number of disabled people in employment increased by 1.3m – meaning the goal was met after only five years. Our goal to reduce the disability employment gap remains. We will continue to galvanise action across, and outside of, Government to ensure we are ambitious about the employment of disabled people, and supporting them to start, stay and succeed in work.

■ **Employment Schemes: West Midlands**

Julian Knight:

[\[117636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to support employment support groups in the West Midlands region.

Guy Opperman:

The DWP National and local teams are working closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to address skills gaps and specific needs within the communities of the West Midlands. This includes working on a joint launch of 'Multiply', a key Government initiative to support working people with numeracy skills.

The team have also developed a "Community Hub" strategy to support citizens with access to a range of employment related support within their community with the first hub opening in Erdington in the latter part of 2022.

Across the West Midlands, our Jobcentres teams are working in partnership with various sectors to understand their specific needs and address skills gaps. For example, DWP is a key stakeholder in the Hospitality Taskforce set up to highlight the opportunities available in this sector and led by the West Midlands Mayor. Other sector with specific focus includes construction, personal care and digital.

In Walsall the local team are working with key partners including the Local Authority, Combined Authority and Walsall College on the delivery of the 'Skills Pathfinder', a joint approach to addressing the needs of jobseekers in the current labour market. The pathfinder approach has been running for just under 12 months.

■ Jobcentres: Disability**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[113190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 20 September to UIN 48246, when his Department last held discussions with (a) Mind (b) Sense (c) Mencap and (d) the National Autistic Society on training for Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisors.

Guy Opperman:

DWP meet with organisations such as Mind, Sense and Mencap regarding learning for Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisors on a regular basis.

Since July, we have been working with the National Autistic Society to produce learning products, which will provide improved customer service.

■ Jobcentres: Pay**Ronnie Cowan:****[117665]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2022 to Question 67074 on Jobcentres: Pay, what recent estimate he has made of when holiday pay will be issued to Jobcentre staff.

Mims Davies:

DWP is committed to making statutory holiday payments in respect of overtime and other similar payments to colleagues and continues to work to implement a solution to enable these payments as soon as is practicable. Work is continuing to overcome significant system challenges. As a result, the Department is not yet in a position to provide a definitive estimate of when these payments will be made to colleagues.

■ Older Workers

John Spellar:

[117435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to reduce barriers to older workers seeking to re-enter the workforce.

Guy Opperman:

The Government is making a number of interventions to address this issue. The government is providing over 20m over the next three years for an enhanced offer for people aged 50 and over to remain in and return to work.

Eligible older job seekers on Universal Credit will receive more intensive, tailored support, on top of the support that work coaches offer all claimants.

Full-time 50+ Champions are now in every JCP district across GB, to upskill Work Coaches in supporting over 50s return to work.

We are also expanding delivery of the Mid-Life MOT, which supports those in their 40s, 50s and 60s to take stock of their finances, skills and health. As part of the expansion the Mid-Life MOTs will be delivered online, in the private sector and in Job Centres.

The introduction of this package of support illustrates the Government's recognition of the different situations, transitions and barriers currently faced by the over 50s in the labour market. We continue to work in addition with Andy Briggs the Older worker Champion.

■ Pension Credit: Females

Ruth Cadbury:

[120041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the level of take up of pension credit by women living in the London Borough of Hounslow; and if he will make a statement.

Laura Trott:

The latest Pensions Credit take-up statistics from 2019 to 2020 can be found at: [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2019-to-2020). These statistics do not break down to geographical areas lower than Great Britain.

■ Pensions

Claire Hanna:

[117890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the cost of living crisis, if he will make it his policy to review the decision on frozen overseas pensions.

Laura Trott:

UK State Pensions are up-rated overseas where there is a legal requirement to do so – for example where there is a reciprocal agreement in place that allows for up-rating.

The policy on up-rating is longstanding and has been supported by successive Governments for over 70 years. The Government has no plans to change this policy.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Kate Osamor: [\[117739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 110773 on Social Security Benefits: Appeals, if he will make an assessment of the causes of the rates of revision of decisions on Mandatory Reconsideration.

Tom Pursglove:

The department is committed to making the right decision as early as possible in the claims process. At mandatory reconsideration, decisions are reviewed, with the existing evidence considered together with any new evidence provided by the claimant. Decisions will be changed if the evidence supports this.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[120843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the accuracy of decisions on the right to (a) Employment Support Allowance; (b) Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work and (c) Personal Independence Payments for people with disabilities; and if he will make a statement.

Tom Pursglove:

The department is committed to making the right decision as early as possible in the claims process. At each stage of the decision-making process, all material evidence is carefully considered to help ensure that the decision made is as accurate as possible. Of the 4.7 million PIP initial decisions made from April 2013 to June 2022, 4% have been overturned at appeal. Similarly, of the 3.3 million ESA WCA decisions completed for claims with start dates between October 2013 and March 2022, 2% have been overturned at appeal. Similar information on the accuracy of Universal Credit WCA decisions is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Dan Carden: [\[117888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the treatment of 1950s born women affected by changes to the state pension age, what assessment he has made of the implications for her policies of the tribunal report by Dr Joceylynne Scutt published on 13 July 2022; and if she will make a statement.

Laura Trott:

No assessment has been made.

■ Unemployment: Disability

Virginia Crosbie: [\[121103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's review into economic inactivity will take into account the (a) barriers to employment faced by disabled people and (b) the support needed to overcome those them.

Virginia Crosbie: [\[121104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's review into economic inactivity will consider the potential merits of additional specialist support for disabled jobseekers.

Tom Pursglove:

The review will identify and understand the barriers preventing people from joining the workforce and/or resulting in people leaving the workforce early. Disabled people and people with health conditions are a key focus of the review.

This review will build on the government's existing package of support to help disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work.

Virginia Crosbie: [\[121105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that a) work coaches and b) disability employment advisers understand the barriers to employment faced by disabled people.

Tom Pursglove:

DWP Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisers (DEA) undergo comprehensive learning to support customers with additional or complex needs, particularly disabilities, and they continue to build on this in the workplace through accessing point of need learning products.

The learning provides Work Coaches with the knowledge and skills to enable them to:

- treat each claimant as an individual;
- to be aware of and support, claimants with their disability and the impacts of their condition;
- help overcome any barriers; and
- support them into moving closer to the working environment.

Learning includes the DWP Fundamental Learning Journey which contains a number of training courses that cover disability awareness:

- becoming Disability Confident - seeing past the misconceptions that can exist around disabilities and being able to have open, honest, and well-informed conversations with disabled colleagues in order to create, or contribute to, an inclusive work environment in which disabled colleagues can thrive;

- helping customers who need additional support – working with customers who need additional support either because they are in a vulnerable situation, are disabled, or suggest suicide or self-harm, or requires additional customer service skills; and
- vulnerable customers and complex needs.

Work Coaches are also signposted to tools, guidance support and websites to effectively use resources from both internal and external sites. This ensures that they access the most up to date advice and expertise on a particular health condition.

Similarly to the Work Coach, DEAs also undergo a complete learning journey, sharing the same objectives to support them when working with claimants who have disabilities or health conditions. The learning includes facilitated workshops, self-paced open learning, and e-learning. Our DEAs support Work Coaches with expert knowledge on how to support disabled customers, building the skills and capability of Work Coaches, and influencing employer engagement in local communities. They can also provide direct support to customers with a health condition or disability where additional support can benefit the customer.

In 2022, we introduced the Health Adjustments Passport (HAP) across the Jobcentre Plus network, following a period of testing in our Health Model Offices. The Passport is a tool used to capture potential workplace adjustments or in-work support needs of customers, and to identify those potential barriers to employment before the claimant is job-ready. Work Coaches have been trained by DEAs to support customers with health conditions or disabilities to complete the HAP. The Passport aims to enable effective conversations about workplace adjustments at an early stage in the customer's journey into work.

■ Unemployment: Health

Stephen Morgan:

[\[122236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the (a) level of employment and (b) number of people who are out of work due to health problems.

Tom Pursglove:

Beyond the standard offer available from Jobcentre Plus, there are a range of Government initiatives supporting disabled people and people with health conditions, to start, stay and succeed in work.

These include:

- increasing Work Coach support in Jobcentres for people with health conditions receiving Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance;
- Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentres offering advice and expertise on how to help disabled people and people with health conditions into work;
- the Work and Health Programme and Intensive Personalised Employment Support, providing tailored and personalised support for participants;

- Access to Work grants towards extra costs of working beyond standard reasonable adjustments;
- Disability Confident encouraging employers to think differently about disability and health, and to take positive action to address the issues employees face in the workplace;
- the Information and Advice Service providing better integrated and tailored guidance on supporting and managing health and disability in the workplace; and
- support in partnership between DWP and the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services, which combines psychological treatment and employment support for people with mental health conditions.

Stephen Morgan:

[122237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of support it provides to people out of work due to health problems.

Tom Pursglove:

A range of Government initiatives are supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. All initiatives remain under constant review, to ensure that they are meeting the needs of disabled people, and people with health conditions.

Stephen Morgan:

[122238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department are taking to help reduce the number of people who are out of work due to ill mental health.

Tom Pursglove:

A range of Government initiatives are supporting disabled people and people with health conditions, including mental health conditions, to start, stay and succeed in work.

These include:

- increasing Work Coach support in Jobcentres for people with health conditions receiving Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance;
- Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentres offering advice and expertise on how to help disabled people and people with health conditions into work;
- the Work and Health Programme and Intensive Personalised Employment Support, providing tailored and personalised support for participants;
- Access to Work grants towards extra costs of working beyond standard reasonable adjustments;
- Disability Confident encouraging employers to think differently about disability and health, and to take positive action to address the issues employees face in the workplace;

- the Information and Advice Service providing better integrated and tailored guidance on supporting and managing health and disability in the workplace; and
- support in partnership between DWP and the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services, which combines psychological treatment and employment support for people with mental health conditions.

■ Universal Credit: Deductions

Stephen Crabb:

[\[117527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in receipt of Universal Credit and subject to deductions (a) with and (b) without children had (i) up to five per cent, (ii) between six and 10 per cent, (iii) between 11 and 15 per cent, (iv) between 16 and 20 per cent, (v) between 21 and 25 per cent and (vi) more than 25 per cent of the Standard Allowance deducted in the most recent month for which data are available; and what the average deduction was for each category.

Stephen Crabb:

[\[117528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in receipt of Universal Credit and subject to deductions who were (a) assessed and (b) not assessed to have (i) limited capability for work and (ii) limited capability for work and work-related activity had (A) up to five per cent, (B) between six and 10 per cent, (C) between 11 and 15 per cent, (D) between 16 and 20 per cent, (E) between 21 and 25 per cent and (F) more than 25 per cent of the Standard Allowance deducted in the most recent month for which data is available; and what the average deduction was for each category.

Stephen Crabb:

[\[117529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in receipt of Universal Credit and subject to deductions with (a) no one and (b) at least one person in work had (i) up to five per cent, (ii) between six and 10 per cent, (iii) between 11 and 15 per cent, (iv) between 16 and 20 per cent, (v) between 21 and 25 per cent and (vi) more than 25 per cent of the Standard Allowance deducted in the most recent month for which data are available; and what the average deduction was for each category.

Guy Opperman:

The requested information is provided in the attached spreadsheet. Table 1 provides the number of Universal Credit households broken down by the level of deduction and Table 2 provides the average deduction amount for each of the Universal Credit household types requested that have at least one deduction.

Attachments:

1. Attachment [Table 1 and 2.xlsx]

■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

Rachael Maskell:

[\[117705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2022 to Question 74764, what data his Department holds on how many and what proportion of applicants for Universal Credit declared a disability when making their claim.

Guy Opperman:

Under Universal Credit if a claimant has a health condition that they wish to tell the Department about, the claimant is prompted to record this in a free-text field during the original application process or as a change of circumstances during an ongoing claim. Health information is used to provide a tailored approach to support the claimant. The Department does then centrally record this information.

■ Universal Credit: Equality

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[121084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 September 2022 to Question 48353 on Universal Credit: Equality, if he will publish the equality analysis of the planned rise in the Administrative Earnings Threshold for Universal Credit.

Guy Opperman:

The Department will consider publication in due course.

■ Universal Credit: Young People

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[120077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department provides for young people in supported housing when they earn enough to take them off Universal Credit and lose their entitlement to full housing benefits.

Mims Davies:

DWP provides a range of employment support to different groups including young people who may live in Supported Housing. This includes helping claimants to make a Universal Credit claim as well as providing specialised tailored support through Jobcentre Plus including eligible access to the Flexible Support Fund, individual Work Coach support and priority access to the Work and Health Programme.

The income taper in Housing Benefit ensures claimants will always be financially better off working than not being in work.

■ Work Capability Assessment: Expenditure

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[120104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on the operation of Work Capability Assessments in each of the last five financial years.

Mims Davies:

The Department has spent the following amounts on the operation of Work Capability Assessments in each of the last five financial years

£M	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Total	216.2	190.6	251.9	205.5	217.6

Notes

Sourced from DWP internal Management Accounts. The figures also include estimated DWP level 1 operating costs including both direct delivery staff and non-staff costs.

This data is derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only, and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standards. It should therefore be treated with caution.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Reform of the Clandestine Entrant Civil Penalty Scheme

The Minister of State for Immigration (Robert Jenrick):

[\[HCWS497\]](#)

This Government is determined to crack down on illegal migration, to dismantle the organised criminal gangs behind it and to keep our borders safe and secure.

For over twenty years, we have run a scheme to help us to do just this – the Clandestine Entrant Civil Penalty Scheme. The Scheme is designed to complement law enforcement activity against criminals. It does this through tackling negligence by people who are not criminals but whose carelessness nonetheless means that they are responsible for a clandestine entrant gaining access to a vehicle.

During the financial year 2020-2021, there were 3,145 incidents where clandestine entrants were detected concealed in vehicles, despite the Covid-19 pandemic causing a lower volume of traffic. This rose to 3,838 incidents during the financial year 2021-2022.

The Government is therefore concerned that the Scheme is not having enough of an effect. Existing penalty levels have not changed since 2002. Drivers and other responsible persons are not taking the steps required to secure their vehicles, and clandestine entrants are continuing to use these routes to come to the UK.

The Government committed to reform the Scheme in 2021, running a consultation in the summer of 2022. We are today publishing our response to that consultation, setting out plans to deliver what will be the first overhaul of the Scheme since 2002.

Our reforms, including new penalty levels, have been designed to strike a better balance between disincentivising negligence and failures to comply with vehicle security standards, while ensuring that the regime is not overly burdensome on industry.

We will now be commencing relevant parts of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and further commencing relevant parts of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. We are also laying a statutory instrument to set out new security standards for all vehicles and to establish new maximum penalty levels. We are laying a new statutory code of practice to set out the circumstances in which a person might be eligible for a reduction in the level of their penalty. We are in addition publishing an economic note and an equality impact assessment.

It is our intention, subject to the will of Parliament, for these reforms to take effect on Monday 13 February 2023. Between now and then, we will deliver a four-week period of engagement with drivers and industry, to make sure they know about the changes that are coming and to support compliance.

The Government is committed to working with individuals and companies to support growth while delivering a strong and effective border. These reforms will help us to do just that.

A copy of the consultation response and the economic note will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

We are publishing further information on Gov.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clandestine-entrant-civil-penalty-scheme>

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Green Freeports in Scotland

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove): **[HCWS498]**

On 13 January, the UK and Scottish governments jointly announced that the Firth of Forth, and Inverness and Cromarty Firth have been successful in their bids to establish two new Green Freeports.

Green Freeport status will support the creation of over 75,000 new, high-skilled jobs, drive growth and level up areas that have been previously overlooked. These areas will be backed by up to £52 million in UK Government funding, and potentially hundreds of millions in locally retained business rates, to upgrade local infrastructure and stimulate regeneration. This is alongside a generous package of trade and innovation support for businesses locating there.

The Inverness and Cromarty Firth, and the Firth of Forth are excellent locations for these new Green Freeports, ensuring the benefits are felt right across Scotland. I wish to share my congratulations with the successful locations. Their strong bids demonstrated how they will regenerate their local communities, deliver decarbonisation, establish hubs for global trade and pioneer industries of the future.

Freeports are at the vanguard of Levelling Up: driving growth, creating jobs and, in turn, transforming the communities that surround them. Green Freeports in Scotland will build on the UK Government's successful Freeport programme in England, where all eight Freeports are open for business, with sites in Plymouth and South Devon, Solent, and Teesside, Liverpool, and the East of England, recently being granted final government approval. Green Freeports are a tangible example of what can be achieved and delivered when Scotland's two governments work together.

This Government remains committed to ensuring that the whole of the UK can reap the benefits of our Freeports programme. We will be making a Freeports announcement relating to Wales shortly and we continue discussions with stakeholders in Northern Ireland about how best to deliver the benefits associated with Freeports there.