

## Daily Report

Monday, 23 January 2023

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 January 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 23 January 2023). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

## CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>7</b>	■ Small Businesses: Ealing North	12
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	7	■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Ealing North	13
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	7	■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Sefton Central	13
■ District Heating: Battersea	7	■ Social Rented Housing: Energy	14
■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Ealing North	7	■ Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill: Impact Assessments	14
■ Energy Bills Rebate	8	■ Voluntary Organisations: Energy	14
■ Energy Bills Rebate: Park Homes	8	<b>CABINET OFFICE</b>	15
■ Energy Charter Treaty: Climate Change	9	■ Blood: Contamination	15
■ Energy: Licensing	9	■ Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	15
■ Energy: Meters	10	■ Cabinet Office: Equal Opportunities	16
■ Energy: Prices	10	■ Dominic Raab	17
■ Housing: Ealing North	10	■ Ministers: Public Appointments	17
■ International Labour Organization: Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill	11	■ Procurement Bill (HL): Wales	17
■ Investment Security Unit: Parliamentary Scrutiny	11	<b>DEFENCE</b>	18
■ Liberty Steel: Redundancy	11	■ Afghanistan: Refugees	18
■ Members: Correspondence	12	■ Ajax Lessons Learned Review	18
■ Renewable Energy: Ealing North	12	■ Armed Forces: Housing	20

■ Artillery: Procurement	20
■ BAE Systems: Contracts	20
■ Brunei: Military Bases	20
■ Cameroon: Military Aid	21
■ Challenger Tanks: Storage	21
■ Conflict Prevention	22
■ EU Defence Policy	22
■ Independent Inquiry into Alleged Unlawful Activity by British Armed Forces during Deliberate Detention Operations in Afghanistan	22
■ Military Aircraft: Crew	23
■ Ministry of Defence: Staff	25
■ Nepal: Military Bases	26
■ Qatar: Military Bases	26
■ Singapore: Military Bases	28
■ Somalia: Unmanned Air Vehicles	28
■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict	29
■ Ukraine: Artillery	29
■ Ukraine: Guided Weapons	30
■ Ukraine: Humanitarian and Military Aid	30
■ Ukraine: Military Aid	30
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	32
■ Boxing	32
■ Dormant Assets Scheme	33
■ Internet: Males	33
■ Museums and Galleries: STEM Subjects	34
■ Music: Tourism	34
■ Tourism: India	35

EDUCATION	35
■ Adult Education: Finance	35
■ Apprentices	36
■ Apprentices: Degrees	37
■ Assessments: Visual Impairment	38
■ Free School Meals	38
■ Further Education: Capital Investment	39
■ Further Education: Energy	39
■ Further Education: Teachers	40
■ Further Education: VAT	41
■ Pupil Exclusions	41
■ Pupils: Bullying	42
■ School Rebuilding Programme	43
■ Schools: Uniforms	43
■ Students: Loans	44
■ Teachers: Strikes	44
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	44
■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers	44
■ Avian Influenza: Compensation	46
■ Biodiversity: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	46
■ Birds: Conservation	46
■ Convention on Biological Diversity	47
■ Countryside: Access	47
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Remote Working	49
■ Dogs: Animal Breeding	50
■ Eggs: Production	50
■ Environment Protection	51

■ EU Law	51	■ Haiti: Humanitarian Situation	67
■ Farmers: North West	51	■ Human Rights	67
■ Farms: Solar Power	53	■ Iran: Demonstrations	68
■ Fisheries: North Atlantic Ocean	53	■ Mohammed al-Roken	69
■ Fisheries: Russia	54	■ Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Situation	69
■ Food Supply	54	■ Nigeria: Development Aid	69
■ Highly Protected Marine Areas	55	■ Nigeria: Military Aid	70
■ Landscapes Review	55	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	71
■ Livestock: UK Trade with EU	55	■ Ambulance Services: Vehicles	71
■ Meat: UK Trade with EU	56	■ Bereavement Counselling	71
■ Members: Correspondence	56	■ Breast Cancer: Screening	71
■ Poisoning: Nature Conservation	56	■ Cancer: Medical Treatments	72
■ Shellfish: North East	57	■ Care Homes: Visits	72
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	58	■ Cervical Cancer: Screening	72
■ Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals	58	■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	73
■ Andrey Dmitriev	58	■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Endoscopy	73
■ Business: Ethics	59	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	74
■ Cameroon: Ethnic Groups	59	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	74
■ Cameroon: Humanitarian Aid	60	■ Dementia: Health Services	75
■ Cameroon: Violence	60	■ Dementia: Music Therapy	75
■ Colombia: Peace Negotiations	60	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Redundancy Pay	75
■ Colombia: Trade Unions	61	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Staff	76
■ Developing Countries: Malaria and Tuberculosis	61	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Waste	76
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	62	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions	76
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Waste	66	■ Doctors: Bureaucracy	77
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions	67	■ Health Professions: Recruitment	77
		■ Health Services: Autism and Learning Disability	77

■ Heart Diseases: Screening	78	■ Members: Correspondence	96
■ Hospitals: Construction	78	■ Passports	96
■ Hysteroscopy	79	■ Passports: Applications	96
■ Hysteroscopy: Counselling and Pain	79	■ Psilocybin: Misuse	97
■ Hysteroscopy: Pain	80	■ Refugees: Afghanistan	98
■ Immunotherapy	80	■ Spiking	100
■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control	81	■ Visas: Afghanistan	102
■ Liver Diseases: Death	82	■ Visas: Africa	103
■ Long Covid: Social Services	82	■ Visas: Doctors	104
■ Mental Health Services	82	■ Visas: India	104
■ Midwives	83	■ Visas: Ukraine	104
■ Nab-paclitaxel	83	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	105
■ NHS	84	■ Arms Trade: Serbia	105
■ NHS: Housing	84	■ Department for International Trade: Redundancy Pay	105
■ NHS: Managers	85	JUSTICE	105
■ NHS: Ministers of Religion	85	■ Courts: Standards	105
■ NHS: Staff	85	■ Energy: Meters	106
■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures	90	■ Homicide and Rape: Sentencing	107
■ Nurses: Labour Turnover	90	■ Prisoners: Gender Recognition	107
■ Prostate Cancer: Screening	90	■ Prisons: Staff	108
■ Social Services: Finance	91	■ Remand in Custody: Prisoners' Release	108
■ Social Services: Staff	92	■ Reoffenders: Convictions	108
■ Terminal Illnesses: Children	92	■ Youth Courts: Wales	110
HOME OFFICE	93	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	111
■ Asylum: Rwanda	93	■ Housing: Construction	111
■ Asylum: Sefton	93	■ Levelling Up Fund	111
■ Asylum: Torture	93	■ Levelling Up Fund: Birmingham City Council	112
■ Cocaine	94	■ Local Government: Standards	112
■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide	94	■ Parish and Town Councils: Debts	113
■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme	95		
■ Immigration: EU Nationals	95		

■ Property: Heating	115	■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland	123
RESTORATION AND RENEWAL CLIENT BOARD	115	WORK AND PENSIONS	124
■ Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body	115	■ Cost of Living Payments: Universal Credit	124
SCOTLAND	116	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Standards	125
■ European Union: Scotland	116	■ Employment Schemes: Mental Illness	125
■ Gender Recognition: Scotland	116	■ Health and Safety: Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs	126
TRANSPORT	117	■ Household Support Fund	126
■ Aviation: Fuels	117	■ Restart Scheme: Standards	127
■ Blue Badge Scheme	117	■ Universal Credit	127
■ Bus Services: Standards	117	■ Universal Credit: Young People	128
■ Cycling: Safety	118	<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>129</b>
■ Driving Tests: Waiting Lists	118	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	129
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	118	■ Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Situation	129
■ Great British Railways	119	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>130</b>
■ Motor Vehicles: Lighting	119	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	130
■ Railways: Finance	120	■ Mental Health Update	130
■ Roads	120	■ Mental Health: Expectation of Mental Health Spend	131
■ Southeastern: Timetables	120	HOME OFFICE	132
TREASURY	121	■ Strengthening the Control of Explosives Precursors and Poisons	132
■ Civil Service: Codes of Practice	121	TRANSPORT	133
■ Imports	121	■ Draft Regulations: The Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) (Amendment) Regulations 2023	133
■ Orchestras and Theatre: Tax Allowances	121		
■ Revenue and Customs: Disclosure of Information	122		
■ Taxpayer Protection Taskforce	122		
■ Treasury: Holiday Leave	123		
■ Treasury: Staff	123		

**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

#### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Janet Daby:**

[903189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made with Cabinet colleagues of the impact of the cost of living crisis on levels of fuel poverty.

**Graham Stuart:**

The official fuel poverty statistics, including the impact of high energy prices on fuel poor households, are due to be published next month.

**Gerald Jones:**

[903194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made with Cabinet colleagues of the impact of the cost of living crisis on levels of fuel poverty.

**Graham Stuart:**

The official fuel poverty statistics, including the impact of high energy prices on fuel poor households, are due to be published next month.

#### ■ District Heating: Battersea

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[126802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a list of all registered district heat networks in Battersea constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Data collected through the Heat Networks (Metering & Billing) Regulations can currently only be published in an aggregated manner, due to the Privacy Notice. The Government is considering options to amend the Privacy Notice to facilitate publication that will provide greater public transparency about heat networks operating in the UK, and support the Heat Network Zoning programme.

#### ■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Ealing North

**James Murray:**

[126846]

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

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme is set out clearly in legislation so is applied in a uniform way by all licensed suppliers. The regulations include a robust compliance and enforcement regime to ensure requirements are being met. Suppliers are also

required to inform customers about the details of support, including the amount of the discount and discounted supply price, in a fair and reasonable manner.

■ **Energy Bills Rebate**

**Shabana Mahmood:**

[\[123908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2022 to Question 104179 on Energy Bills Rebate, what steps he will take against businesses that are not passing on the discount from the Energy Bills Support Scheme to non-domestic customers with private wire electricity networks.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will provide support of £400 for energy bills for around 900,000 households without a direct relationship with a domestic electricity supplier. This is expected to include households on private wire networks. On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022, the Government announced that the application portal for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is due to open later in January, with a dedicated customer helpline available to assist customers without online access.

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[126599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to issue Local Authorities with guidance on making payments through the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) is due to be launched later this month, and local authorities will be provided with guidance ahead of this. The Government will also be hosting webinars ahead of the scheme launch to provide additional information to Local Authorities on the role they will play in delivering the EBSS AF.

■ **Energy Bills Rebate: Park Homes**

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[124169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received on behalf of people for whom a park home is their sole or main residence, who are not currently eligible for assistance through the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme or any other related forms of assistance with the rising cost of energy bills.

**Graham Stuart:**

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State receives representations on a wide range of issues. Officials at the Department for Business have had a number of conversations with stakeholder groups, including those who represent park home residents, to discuss the alternative funding arrangements under the Energy Bills Support Scheme AF. The Energy Bills Support Scheme AF will provide a discount of £400 on energy



bills for around 900,000 households without a relationship with a domestic electricity supplier, including park homes.

## ■ **Energy Charter Treaty: Climate Change**

**Hywel Williams:**

**[126559]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the potential impact of the Energy Charter Treaty on climate targets; and if he will publish a criteria for how the Energy Charter Treaty could be updated in order to be compatible with international climate goals.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK Government has kept all the Devolved Administrations informed of modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty and its impacts. At the Energy Charter Conference on 22 November, the decision to adopt the modernised Treaty was postponed and the UK is closely monitoring the positions taken by other Contracting Parties.

In the event that the modernised ECT is adopted, the Government will lay an Explanatory Memorandum in Parliament which will include an assessment of how climate provisions have been strengthened to ensure compatibility between the ECT and modern international agreements, including the Paris Agreement.

## ■ **Energy: Licensing**

**Dan Carden:**

**[126778]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with Ofgem on publishing an update on the compliance action being taken against energy suppliers found to be in breach of their licensing conditions.

**Graham Stuart:**

The energy regulator Ofgem is responsible for ensuring energy suppliers comply with their regulatory obligations. Ofgem publishes the outcome of its compliance and enforcement here: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-policy-and-regulation/compliance-and-enforcement/retail-compliance-and-enforcement>.

Ofgem has recently carried out a number of Market Compliance Reviews over the market, these are aimed at driving up standards across the market. Energy is an essential service and customers need confidence in their energy suppliers. The Government has asked Ofgem to take action to address weaknesses that have been identified. Ofgem plans to provide ongoing updates on progress against those actions. Further detail of the review can be found following this link: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/17-energy-suppliers-need-do-more-help-vulnerable-customers-winter>.

**■ Energy: Meters****Anne McLaughlin:**[\[126699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Eltham of 17 January, Official Report column 161 when he plans to send a letter to Ofgem on forcible installations of prepayment energy meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

The letter will be sent, and published, once advice on this matter has been fully considered.

**Dan Carden:**[\[126776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer by the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation to the Question from the hon. Member for Glasgow North on 17 January 2023, Official Report, column 173, when the roundtable will be convened; if he will take steps to publish the outcome of those discussions; and if he will make a statement.

**Graham Stuart:**

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has set out his 5-point plan regarding prepayment meters and Ministers will keep the House updated as this progresses.

**Dan Carden:**[\[126777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish (a) the letter from his Department to Ofgem on forced prepayment meter installations and (b) Ofgem's response to that letter.

**Graham Stuart:**

Letters will be published, as appropriate, on the GOV.UK website as this matter progresses.

**■ Energy: Prices****Kirsten Oswald:**[\[122154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on plans to support residents without a domestic energy supply with rising energy bills.

**Graham Stuart:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular conversations with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues.

**■ Housing: Ealing North****James Murray:**[\[126844\]](#)

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

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is committed to improving the energy performance of homes across the country, including in Ealing North.

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.

**International Labour Organization: Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill****Angela Rayner:**[\[126682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings, discussions or correspondence Ministers have had with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill; and whether the ILO has made any formal assessment of that proposed legislation.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Department has not had any meetings or correspondence with the ILO about this specific legislation. However, the ILO has been clear over many years that minimum service levels can be appropriate in public services of fundamental public importance. Accordingly many countries in Europe and around the world who are signatories to the ILO have had these in place for many years.

**Investment Security Unit: Parliamentary Scrutiny****Alicia Kearns:**[\[R\] \[124158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has taken steps to ensure that (a) reviews and (b) interventions made by the Investment Security Unit under the National Security and Investment Act are subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

*[Holding answer 19 January 2023]:* Transparency and accountability to Parliament are fundamental parts of effective government. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is therefore considering a Memorandum of Understanding regarding scrutiny of his use of the National Security and Investment Act 2021 with the BEIS Select Committee.

**Liberty Steel: Redundancy****Bill Esterson:**[\[122127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his Department's policies of job cuts at Liberty Steel.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

*[Holding answer 18 January 2023]:* The recent announcement of redundancies at Liberty Steel is a commercial decision for the company.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Richard Thomson:**[\[122506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the e-mails from the hon. Member for Gordon of 13 September, 14 October and 2 December 2022 on potentially vulnerable customers and energy contracts.

**Graham Stuart:**

My Hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business, wrote to the Hon. Member on 13 January 2023 about vulnerable customers and energy contracts.

■ **Renewable Energy: Ealing North****James Murray:**[\[126845\]](#)

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

**Graham Stuart:**

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

■ **Small Businesses: Ealing North****James Murray:**[\[126843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many SMEs in Ealing North constituency have received Government funding for support during the cost of living crisis.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

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

Businesses in Ealing North will have benefitted from the Government's reversal of the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs approximately £4,200 on average, the cut to fuel duty for 12 months and raising the Employment Allowance to £5,000. The Energy Bill Relief and Energy Bill Discount Schemes will protect SMEs from high energy costs over the winter. The Autumn Statement, announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years, reducing the burden of business rates for SMEs.

The Government is providing financial support - 206 SMEs in Ealing North have received Start Up loans to the value of £2,203,440, as of December 2022.

### ■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Ealing North

**James Murray:**

[\[126847\]](#)

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 Ealing North constituency since the introduction of that fund.

**Graham Stuart:**

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period.

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 in November 2022, will allocate up to £800m of grant funding, with successful projects likely to be notified in March 2023. BEIS will be publishing official statistics on the number of measures installed and households upgraded through SHDF Wave 1 by geographical area on 26th January 2023.

### ■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Sefton Central

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[125331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 95828 on Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Sefton Central, whether his Department holds information on the reason that Sefton Council did not apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund does not hold information on reasons why councils did not apply for funding.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[125332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 102814 on Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Sefton Central, which regions in (a) England and (b) Scotland were awarded the most grant funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in 2021.

**Graham Stuart:**

The successful projects within the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator were announced on 23 March 2021. The SHDF Demonstrator awarded £62m of grant funding, matched with £84m of co-funding from the Local Authorities. The region with the greatest amount of grant funding in England was London, with around £29m of grant funding. The largest grant funding award in Scotland was around £2m worth of grant funding to Aberdeen City Council.

**■ Social Rented Housing: Energy****Bill Esterson:**[\[125330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2022 to Question 106366 on Rented Housing: Energy, if his Department will make an estimate of number of social houses that will have energy efficiency measures installed in the first six months of the Social Housing Regulation Bill receiving Royal Assent.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) will upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below EPC C. The Government launched Wave 1 of the SHDF in August 2021. It has awarded around £179m of grant funding for delivery from 2022 into 2023 and will see energy performance improvements to up to 20,000 social homes. The Wave 2.1 competition, which closed in November 2022, will look to allocate up to £800m of grant funding to 2024/25 to support the installation of energy performance measures in social homes in England. Successful projects are likely to be notified in March 2023.

**■ Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill: Impact Assessments****Beth Winter:**[\[126855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons his Department did not submit an Impact Assessment for the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill to the Regulatory Policy Committee in advance of its First Reading.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Department is currently finalising an impact assessment of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill. This will be published shortly.

**■ Voluntary Organisations: Energy****Liz Twist:**[\[125449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the average increase in energy costs for (a) sports and (b) community organisations using alternative fuels since 1 January 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

BEIS does not hold information at that level of detail for sports and community organisations.

Latest published statistics on standard grade burning oil show prices were 30.7% higher in December 2022 compared to January 2022 (with prices peaking in June 2022). The price of coal (domestic use only) increased by 29.0% in December 2022 compared to January 2022.

**Notes:**

- 1). The latest published data for standard grade burning oil and coal is up to December 2022.
- 2). Standard grade burning oil is sourced from BEIS [Monthly and annual prices of road fuels and petroleum products](#) (table 4.1.1).
- 3). BEIS figures are based on mid-monthly figures rather than first day of the month.
- 4). ONS data is sourced from [RPI: Average price of smokeless fuel per 50kg](#) dataset within the Consumer price inflation time series

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Blood: Contamination

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[123891\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to make interim compensation payments to the estates of (a) people who have died as a result of infected blood products and (b) to people affected whose children or parents have died.

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[124034\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his planned timetable is for the payment of compensation to the estates of people who died as a result of infected blood products.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon Member to the statement I made in the House on 15 December where I announced that the moral case for compensation was formally accepted. I also set out the work being carried out across government in consideration of the compensation framework study - which included specific reference to those groups who were not able to claim interim compensation.

This work is intended to ensure that the Government is prepared to act swiftly in response to Sir Brian Langstaff's final report when it is delivered.

### ■ Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[118889\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's publication of spending over £500 with a Government procurement card, for how many (a) individuals and (b) nights and in which cities accommodation was purchased at the Four Seasons Hotel on (i) 4 January 2021, (ii) 23 September 2021 and (iii) 8 November 2021; and what the purpose was for each of those stays at those hotels.

**Jeremy Quin:**

(i) The COP26 President, the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, three of his Private Office, and the UK COP26 Envoy stayed at the Four Seasons Hotel in Seoul, South Korea for two nights in October 2020 to meet with government ministers, parliamentarians, businesses and international organisations.



(ii) Accommodation was purchased at the Four Seasons Hotel in Amman on 23 September 2021 for the Acting National Security Adviser and two NSA officials for two nights each. The purpose was to attend a UK-Jordan Strategic Dialogue.

(iii) The COP26 President stayed in the Four Seasons Hotel in Seoul for two nights accompanied by three members of his Private Office during a trip to South Korea. The purpose of the trip was to meet with senior Korean government ministers, Civil Society private sector organisations in relation to driving forward the COP26 President Designate's climate priorities ahead of the UK led COP26 Summit in Glasgow.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[126568]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2023 to Question 118912 Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, whether the 9,164 transactions were all of a value less than £500.

**Alex Burghart:**

I have asked officials to review the figure provided, and can confirm that there were 9,164 transactions with a value less than £500.

## ■ Cabinet Office: Equal Opportunities

**Chris Stephens:**

**[R] [126707]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure his Department complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code; and whether that monitoring data gathered is shared with union representatives.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Cabinet Office complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code and relevant legislation including GDPR and Equality Act 2010. We collect diversity information and community background information during the job application process and on our workforce through our HR platforms. All personal and sensitive data collected is used in accordance with the Privacy Statement agreed by employees on the HR platforms.

This information is used to understand the workforce size and shape, as well as the level of turnover and diversity in our workforce. The data is used to help us invest in skills, and to inform our HR strategy and policy. Diversity and inclusion data also helps us understand how representative we are and identify those areas we need to improve. The data supports an evidence based approach to diversity and inclusion in the Cabinet Office.

The Cabinet Office meets regularly with the unions and presents and shares information and data requested - where it is appropriate and in line with our privacy statements - to help inform decision making through negotiation and consultation.



**■ Dominic Raab****Steve Reed:**[\[125382\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of individuals listed in each complaint about the conduct of the Rt. Hon. Member for Esher and Walton.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the Hon Member to [PQ99865](#). It would not be appropriate to comment on an ongoing independent investigation.

**■ Ministers: Public Appointments****Angela Rayner:**[\[125383\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department received written communications from the Propriety and Ethics Team on the Rt. hon Member for Stratford-upon-Avon prior to his appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**Angela Rayner:**[\[125384\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether discussions took place between HM Revenue and Customs and the Cabinet Office's Propriety and Ethics team on the appointment of Ministers in 2022.

**Angela Rayner:**[\[125385\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's procedure is for conducting due diligence prior to the appointment of Ministers.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Successive governments have preserved the ability for officials to provide advice to Ministers, including the Prime Minister, in confidence. In order to protect the ability to provide such advice effectively, it is not appropriate to comment on either specific information or advice provided in relation to ministerial appointments, or on the procedures used to provide that advice.

**■ Procurement Bill (HL): Wales****Hywel Williams:**[\[125528\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on their request that (a) concurrent-plus and (b) commencement powers in the Procurement Bill be amended.

**Alex Burghart:**

We have worked closely with Welsh ministers: the Minister of State and the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet Office most recently met the Minister for Finance and Local Government for the Welsh Government in December and my officials are working very closely to discuss the Procurement Bill.

There is regular engagement through the Common Framework for Public Procurement, which was established post-Brexit and is used to discuss emerging themes in policy and legislation relating to procurement.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**John Healey:**

[\[122055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) principals with confirmation of their eligibility for relocation to the UK under the ARAP scheme made before the end of Operation PITTING remain in Afghanistan.

**James Heappey:**

As of 13 January 2023, we estimate that of those approved for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme during Operation Pitting but not yet relocated, seven remain in Afghanistan. We are continuing to actively support them in relocating to the UK.

It is not possible to know definitively whether all of the individuals still to be relocated remain in Afghanistan, as it is incumbent on them informing the MOD casework team if they leave the country.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[124039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the timescales of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

**James Heappey:**

Significant progress has been made to accelerate casework processing, and we are focussing casework resource on finding those Afghan nationals who are eligible for ARAP.

However, timescales can nonetheless vary due to a number of factors, including case complexity, the need to conduct checks with other Government Departments, and our reliance on applicants responding to queries before we can progress cases.

### ■ Ajax Lessons Learned Review

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, what the cost to the public purse has been of the Ajax Lessons Learned Review.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, for what reason the Ajax Lessons Learned Review will not include an examination of potential contractual weaknesses for the Ajax vehicle programme.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, which office in his Department drafted the terms of reference of the Ajax Lessons Learned Review.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, whether Clive Sheldon KC will have the powers to summon witnesses as part of the Ajax Lessons Learned Review.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, what powers Clive Sheldon KC has to summon relevant documents as part of the Ajax Lessons Learned Review.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, what the expected duration is of the Ajax Lessons Learned Review.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120885 on Ajax Lessons Learned Review, which Ministers and officials in his Department will provide evidence to the Ajax Lessons Learned Review.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ajax Lessons Learned Review commenced in May 2022. The Department estimated the cost of the Review to be in the region of £0.5 million and, as of 17 January, has received bills totalling approximately £0.29 million. It is a focused review aimed at identifying lessons and making recommendations to help the Ministry of Defence (MOD) deliver major programmes more effectively in future, and is looking at leadership, culture, governance, and how issues are elevated.

The Terms of Reference were drafted by Head Office officials (not involved in delivering the programme) in consultation with MOD legal advisers and the Second Permanent Secretary, and were published on 29 March 2022. They were announced by way of Written Statement ( [HCWS739](#) ) and placed in the Library of the House and copied to the Public Accounts and Defence Select committees.

Although the review has no statutory powers, the MOD has provided any documents that the review has requested and has encouraged current and former personnel to assist the review if asked to contribute. The MOD has also assisted the review to contact former personnel when it has been asked to do so.

In accordance with his terms of reference, Clive Sheldon KC notified the Second Permanent Secretary in June 2022 that he estimated it would take him a further six months to complete the review. Mr Sheldon is currently in the final stages of drafting his report.

**■ Armed Forces: Housing**

**John Healey:** [\[126530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 119902, if he will place regular updates to dashboards on response rates to heating loss in Service Family Accommodation in the House Library.

**Alex Chalk:**

Data provided from contractors via daily dashboard updates is being interrogated to ensure accuracy. Options for publication will be considered in due course.

**■ Artillery: Procurement**

**John Healey:** [\[126531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral statement of 16 January 2023 on Ukraine: Update, Official Report column 36, what funding has been allocated for a new interim artillery capability.

**Alex Chalk:**

In line with the Defence Secretary's announcement to the House on 16 January 2023, the Army is looking at solutions for an interim artillery capability. It would be inappropriate to comment further whilst commercial options are being explored.

**■ BAE Systems: Contracts**

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[126681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish his Department's contracts with BAE Systems (a) in place, (b) under negotiation and (c) completed in the two years to 18 January 2023; and what the value of each of those contracts is.

**Alex Chalk:**

I will write to the hon. Member shortly, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

**■ Brunei: Military Bases**

**John Healey:** [\[122430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what British military capabilities have been stationed in Brunei in every year since 2021.

**James Heappey:**

Our military presence in Brunei consists of an infantry battalion, the Jungle Warfare Division, the Garrison Headquarters and a supporting helicopter flight. In 2021, the helicopter capability was operated by 667 Squadron Army Air Corps using Bell 212s and the resident infantry battalion role was fulfilled by Second Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (2RGR). In 2022, 1563 Flt RAF was deployed to provide the Garrison with a helicopter capability using the Westland Puma helicopter and First Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (1RGR) was rotated in for the infantry role. This remains the case in 2023.

## ■ Cameroon: Military Aid

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[124152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what military aid the UK has provided to Cameroon in each of the last five years; and how much the UK spent on that aid in each of those years.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[124153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a breakdown of the armed forces' cooperation with the armed forces of Cameroon.

**James Heappey:**

The UK is committed to supporting the Government of Cameroon in its efforts to counter the threat to regional security posed by Boko Haram terrorism. Since 2018, therefore, we have been providing capacity-building assistance to security forces operating in the Far North of Cameroon. Since January 2021 this assistance has been delivered by means of a persistent forward presence. Through this assistance we have helped our partner forces to strengthen their capabilities in cross-agency working, and operating in complex and difficult environments. The latter activity has involved developing skills in patrolling, countering improvised explosive devices, providing medical treatment, and conducting mountain warfare.

The figures on UK Defence expenditure on assistance to Cameroon since 2018-19 are as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	RECORDED UK SPEND ON DEFENCE ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMEROON (£)*
2018-19	745,777
2019-20	1,219,302
2020-21	1,440,256
2021-22	1,174,718
2022-23	1,116,911

\* Does not include support to Operation MANSIO, which could not be disaggregated across multiple partner countries.

## ■ Challenger Tanks: Storage

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[125275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of the UK's Challenger 2 fleet have been in long-term storage.

**Alex Chalk:**

75 surplus Challenger 2 are held in long-term storage. These vehicles are non-operational and are not part of the Army's current active fleet of 227 Challenger 2.

■ **Conflict Prevention****Julian Sturdy:**[\[125334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking with international partners to deter illegal invasions of sovereign territories.

**James Heappey:**

The UK's network of alliances and partnerships is at the heart of our ability to deter and defend against adversaries. The UK takes an integrated approach using all instruments available to government, including the full range of military capabilities and Defence levers, to hold actors to account for unacceptable behaviours. This includes working closely with international partners to demonstrate our collective commitment to deterring and defending against potential adversaries, not least through multilateral fora such as NATO.

■ **EU Defence Policy****John Healey:**[\[125248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 6 January 2023 to Question 117507 on EU Defence Policy, what estimate he has made of when (a) negotiations with participating states in the EU Permanent Structured Cooperation Military Mobility project will be completed and (b) the UK will formally join the project.

**James Heappey:**

We estimate that negotiations with participating states will be completed and the UK will formally join the project by the date of the next project meeting, 16 March 2023.

■ **Independent Inquiry into Alleged Unlawful Activity by British Armed Forces during Deliberate Detention Operations in Afghanistan****John Healey:**[\[126529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the independent inquiry into alleged unlawful activity by British Armed Forces during deliberate detention operations in Afghanistan has started work; what its budget is for 2023; and how many officials from his Department will be on the inquiry team.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Inquiry is independent of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The Inquiry team and MOD officials are working to finalise a budget which supports our resourcing commitments while ensuring value for money.

The Inquiry's ongoing recruitment of its multi-disciplinary team draws from relevant professionals from across Government, the legal profession and MOD officials.

A dedicated Inquiry website is currently under development. Lord Justice Haddon-Cave has said that he will provide an update statement in early February in conjunction with the website launch, which will encourage those who may wish to engage with the Inquiry to come forward.

■ **Military Aircraft: Crew**

**John Healey:** [\[123862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of pilots in squadrons (i) 1(F), (ii) II(AC), (iii) 3(F), (iv) 6, (v) XI, (vi) 12 for UK pilots and (vii) 617 was on 1 December 2022.

**James Heappey:**

I am withholding the information requested as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or the security of the Armed Forces.

**John Healey:** [\[123863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in CXX Squadron was on 1 December 2022.

**James Heappey:**

I am withholding the information requested as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or the security of the Armed Forces.

**John Healey:** [\[125232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 201 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 14 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 13 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 39 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 51 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 30 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron LXX was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 99 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 47 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 10 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 101 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 7 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[125244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 18 was on 1 December 2022.



**James Heappey:**

I am withholding the information requested as its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or the security of the Armed Forces.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Staff****John Healey:**[\[122421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total annual budget was for the global network of British Defence Staffs in each year since 2010.

**John Healey:**[\[122422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total number of staff members was of the global network of British Defence Staffs in each year since 2010.

**John Healey:**[\[122423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Integrated Review, published in March 2021, how much of the £60 million funding for British Defence Staff has been spent.

**James Heappey:**

The total annual budget for the global network of British Defence Staffs (BDS) in each year since 2010 can be found in the table below:

YEAR	TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET OF BDS £MILLION
2010-11	83.3
2011-12	87.5
2012-13	84.5
2013-14	84.9
2014-15	65.4
2015-16	64.4
2016-17	69.8
2017-18	72.1
2018-19	68.4
2019-20	77.4
2020-21	92.5
2021-22	93.2
2022-23	99.7

The Department only holds information on the total number of personnel for the global network of British Defence Staffs since 2018. This can be found in the table below:

YEARS	TOTAL NUMBER OF BDS PERSONNEL
2018-19	539
2019-20	546
2020-21	533
2021-22	508
2022-23	535

As committed in the Integrated Review, we are continuing to invest around £60 million in expanding and improving our global network of British Defence Staffs, increasing it by nearly a third. This will take place over several years through rebalancing Defence assets rather than necessarily recruiting additional staff.

#### ■ Nepal: Military Bases

**John Healey:** [\[122432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what British military capabilities have been stationed in Nepal in every year since 2021.

**James Heappey:**

Over the time period in question, the UK has retained a presence in Nepal sufficient to deliver Gurkha recruitment and welfare services, as well as our defence engagement programme. This includes the Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal in Kathmandu plus British Gurkhas Pokhara and Dharan, which support the delivery of the recruitment process and welfare assistance. Other UK personnel visit Nepal but only those with responsibilities relating to Gurkhas and essential training, plus the UK Defence Section including the UK's Defence Attaché, are stationed there.

#### ■ Qatar: Military Bases

**John Healey:** [\[122056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what UK military capabilities have been stationed in Qatar in each year since 2021.

**John Healey:** [\[122428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what British military capabilities have been stationed in Oman in every year since 2021.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence assesses each request for disclosing information related to stationed military capability on a case-by-case basis. In this case, to maintain the

effectiveness and security of the relevant forces, we cannot disclose what military capabilities are stationed in Qatar or Oman.

**John Healey:** [\[122057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK troops have been stationed in Qatar in each year since 2021.

**John Healey:** [\[122427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel have been stationed in Oman in every year since 2021.

**John Healey:** [\[122429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel have been stationed in Brunei in every year since 2021.

**John Healey:** [\[122431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel have been stationed in Nepal in every year since 2021.

**John Healey:** [\[122433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel have been stationed in the Indian Ocean Territory in every year since 2021.

**John Healey:** [\[123861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel have been stationed in Singapore in each year since 2021.

**James Heappey:**

The information requested by the right hon. Member for the years 2021 and 2022 can be found in the following table:

COUNTRY	YEAR	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL(FULL TIME SERVICE PERSONNEL ONLY)	
2022	Singapore	2021	10
	10		
2022	Brunei	2021	160
	160		
2022	Nepal	2021	20
	20		
2022	British Indian Ocean Territory	2021	40
	40		

COUNTRY	YEAR	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL ( <i>FULL TIME SERVICE PERSONNEL ONLY</i> )	
2022	Oman	2021	80
	70		
2022	Qatar	2021	10
	30		

The figures are provided as at 1 April of each year. Figures for 2023 are not yet available and we can provide an update to the Member when these become ready.

*Notes:*

UK Regulars comprise Full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), High Readiness Reserve (HRR) and Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) personnel.

Figures in this table have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in a "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent the systematic bias caused by always rounding numbers upwards.

## ■ Singapore: Military Bases

**John Healey:**

[\[122058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what UK military capabilities have been stationed in Singapore in each year since 2021.

**James Heappey:**

Over the time period in question (2021 to present), our defence footprint in Singapore has consisted of: the British Defence Singapore Support Unit (BDSSU) that delivers logistic support, including refuelling and resupply capabilities, from Singapore's Sembawang Naval Installation as part of the UK's contribution to the Five Power Defence Arrangements; the Defence Section including our resident Defence Adviser (DA); and the British Defence Staff South East Asia, located in the British High Commission alongside the Defence Section. Other defence assets have visited Singapore in the course of their duties since 2021 but are not stationed there.

## ■ Somalia: Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[125295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in (a) the US and (b) Turkey on (i) the operation of drones in Somalia and (ii) the potential impact of those operations on civilians.

**James Heappey:**

The Secretary of State has not discussed the operation of drones in Somalia with his US or Turkish counterparts.

The UK advocates at all levels of the Somali Government that military planning for security operations against Al-Shabaab should minimise humanitarian impacts and that all security actors should respect International Humanitarian Law, which includes the protection of civilians.

**■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict****John Healey:**[\[125245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 93458 on Ukraine: Armed Conflict, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of Russian personnel in Ukraine (a) killed in action, (b) wounded and (c) deserted from their posts since 24 February 2022.

**John Healey:**[\[125246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2022 to Question 93457 on Ukraine: Armed Conflict, what recent estimate he has made of the number of Russian (a) main battle tanks, (b) armoured fighting vehicles, (c) fixed wing aircraft, (d) helicopters, (e) unmanned aerial vehicles, (f) ships, (g) artillery systems, (h) multiple-launch rocket systems and (i) other capabilities, destroyed in Ukraine since 1 February 2022.

**James Heappey:**

Ukraine has reported that over 100,000 Russian personnel have been killed. They also estimate over 300,000 Russian personnel have been wounded, and thousands more personnel have deserted. The destruction levels of Russia's military equipment continue to be high. We estimate that over 4,500 armoured vehicles, including main battle tanks, 70 fixed wing aircraft, 75 helicopters, 150 unmanned aerial vehicles, 12 naval vessels of all classes, and over 630 artillery systems of all types have been destroyed.

**■ Ukraine: Artillery****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[125273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many rounds of artillery the UK has donated to Ukraine.

**James Heappey:**

The UK has donated approximately 100,000 artillery rounds to Ukraine. As announced by the Defence Secretary on 16 January 2023, the UK will donate a further 100,000 artillery rounds in the coming months.

## ■ Ukraine: Guided Weapons

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[125359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his Ukrainian counterpart on the use of long range missiles in Ukraine.

**James Heappey:**

The Secretary of State for Defence regularly holds discussions with Defence Minister Reznikov on a range of issues, most recently at the Defense Contact Group at Ramstein Air Base on 20 January 2023.

## ■ Ukraine: Humanitarian and Military Aid

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[125458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much (a) military and (b) humanitarian aid the Government has sent to Ukraine since February 2022.

**James Heappey:**

The Government committed £2.3 billion in military support for Ukraine in 2022 and to sustain that level of support in 2023.

The Government has committed £220 million of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and the region.

## ■ Ukraine: Military Aid

**John Healey:**

[\[126532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Ukrainian personnel have been trained under Operation Interflex each month since it began.

**James Heappey:**

As of 20 January 2023, we have trained over 9,900 Armed Forces of Ukraine personnel under Operation Interflex. An approximate cumulative monthly breakdown for this figure, from the start of training on 27 June 2022, is shown in the table below:

MONTH	AUGUST (INCLUDES JUNE AND JULY)	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Recruit training (INTERFLEX) - approximate cumulative total at beginning of month	2,300	4,700	5,500	7,050	9,800
Leadership training	0	0	0	70	150

MONTH	AUGUST (INCLUDES JUNE AND JULY)	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
(INTERFLEX) - approximate cumulative total at beginning of each month					

**John Healey:**

**[126533]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) UK and (b) foreign personnel have been assigned to work on Operation Interflex.

**James Heappey:**

Training of the first tranche of trainees under Operation Interflex began on 27 June 2022. The following table breaks down the numbers of UK and foreign personnel assigned to work on Operation Interflex at the beginning of each month since July 2022 where figures are currently available:

2022						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
UK support – 1,400 snapshot of workforce at beginning of the month		1,400	1,029	953	820	181
Non-UK support – snapshot of workforce at beginning of the month	0	0	371	447	580	13
Total	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	194

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **Boxing**

**James Daly:** [R] [\[125517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support is available to community boxing clubs in England; and if she will make a statement.

**James Daly:** [R] [\[125518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential positive impact of grass roots boxing clubs in their local communities; and if she will make a statement.

**James Daly:** [R] [\[125519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the financial viability of grass roots boxing clubs.

**James Daly:** [R] [\[125520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the (a) contribution of grass roots boxing clubs make to reducing crime and (b) effect of that contribution on reducing costs associated with anti-social behaviour.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Supporting grassroots sport is a key Government priority, we recognise the positive impact participating sport can have on individuals wellbeing and the benefits sport clubs have on local communities.

Sport England - the Government's Arm's Length Body - has invested more than £12 million into boxing over the last five years including £2.3 million to support boxing clubs through the immediate challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government believes that sport has the potential to transform lives and can offer a positive alternative to those who are at-risk of being drawn into serious violence, gang culture and criminal behaviour. Participating in sports such as boxing can teach valuable life lessons, and we believe everyone should have access to these opportunities.

In November 2022, the Ministry of Justice announced a £5 million Sport Fund to deliver "sport for crime prevention" programmes. Funding will deliver grants to around 200 local projects which deliver targeted support for children considered to be at-risk of entering the justice system due to identified need or additional vulnerabilities. The fund will be delivered in partnership with a consortium of national sector-leading experts in the sport for crime prevention space, formed by StreetGames, The Sport for Development Coalition and the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice.



## ■ Dormant Assets Scheme

**Stephen Hammond:**

[\[125307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of including financial education for primary school children in the allocation of the dormant assets identified by the Dormant Assets Act 2022.

**Stuart Andrew:**

- Dormant Assets legislation currently defines financial inclusion as "the development of individuals' ability to manage their finances or the improvement of access to personal financial services".
- To date, the focus of dormant assets funding for financial inclusion has been tackling problem debt and improving access to affordable and appropriate financial products and services for people in vulnerable circumstances.
- At present, the government is considering over 3,300 responses to the public consultation on what the broad social and/or environmental purposes of the English portion of dormant assets should be going forwards.
- The government plans to publish a response in early 2023 setting out these future purposes of the English portion.

**Stephen Hammond:**

[\[125308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her planned timetable is for concluding her Department's assessment of the Dormant Assets Scheme.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The consultation on the English portion of dormant assets funding closed on Sunday 9 October and received over 3,300 responses.

The consultation has enabled the public, civil society sector, and the Dormant Assets Scheme's voluntary industry participants to have their say in how funds are spent in England.

The Government is considering all responses and plans to publish a response in early 2023 setting out the future social and/or environmental purposes of the English portion.

## ■ Internet: Males

**Henry Smith:**

[\[120898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, following the recent award of a contract awarded by the Government for violence against women and girls research with a particular reference to online violence against women and girls, whether this research will also include online violence against men and boys.

**Paul Scully:**

The government is concerned about online safety for all users, including men and boys. This particular research has a focus on online safety for women and girls to understand the drivers of the abuse they can receive online.

It aims to develop an understanding of how design features of online platforms and services can either increase or decrease the risk of online violence against women and girls. Our research will contribute to the UK's commitments under the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.

**■ Museums and Galleries: STEM Subjects****Mark Pritchard:**[\[123895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take further steps to promote STEM subjects through (a) permanent and (b) temporary exhibitions at (i) the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands and (ii) other museums.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Royal Air Force Museum is sponsored by the Ministry of Defence. It welcomes around 900,000 visitors a year to its sites in London and the West Midlands, inspiring everyone with the Royal Air Force story through its unique national collection. Around 64,000 of its visitors are young people participating in formal learning sessions, including STEM subjects, history, and literacy.

In December 2022 the Royal Air Force Museum was awarded investment from The National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund for its 'Inspiring Everyone: Royal Air Force Museum Midlands Development Programme'. This will include a new Learning Centre linked to an innovative exhibition focusing on the critical national role played by the Royal Air Force over the past four decades in particular.

More widely, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport supports museum programming, including education, through Arts Council England. Arts Council England has awarded National Portfolio Organisation status to 82 museums and museum sector organisations in its forthcoming 2023–26 investment round.

Museums are also eligible for National Lottery Project grants.

**■ Music: Tourism****Barbara Keeley:**[\[126575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of creating a hub to provide expertise on touring for the UK music industry.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government supports creative businesses and professionals exporting to Europe - and the world - with a range of export support programmes, including the successful Music Export Growth Scheme (MEGS) and the International Showcase Fund (ISF).

The Department for International Trade also supports creative exporters through a range of export support programmes, including a global Export Support Service, music-focused trade missions in priority markets, and the new Creative Faculty of the Export Academy, which will ensure even more of the UK's world-class music reaches audiences around the world.

In light of this wide range of support, the Government does not intend to establish a new music exports hub during this Spending Review period. The Government will set out its ambition for the creative sector to 2030, including boosting growth and exports, in the upcoming Creative Industries Sector Vision, which will be published in early 2023.

## ■ **Tourism: India**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[124155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of the number of tourists from India who visit Greater Manchester each year; and what assessment her Department has made of the impact of those tourists on the economy of Greater Manchester.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The latest International Passenger Survey from the Office of National Statistics (and supported by VisitBritain) found that in 2019 there were 39,990 visits to Greater Manchester from India.

Visits from India were equivalent to 2% of the total 1.9m international visits (1,894,760) to Greater Manchester that year, and the £52m spend (£51,959,650) from Indian visitors represented 6% of the total spend from international visits of £850m (£850,075,740) in Greater Manchester.

## EDUCATION

## ■ **Adult Education: Finance**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[123915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of reallocating potential underspend from the 16-18 education budget to the adult education budget for further education colleges.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department manages its budget within the Departmental Expenditure Limit to best achieve government objectives, including re-purposing underspends on some budgets to help with pressures and priorities elsewhere.

The department recognises the importance of adult education. Through a range of programmes, we are targeting provision at adults to equip them with the skills employers look for, and the skills that will lead to better jobs, better wellbeing, and better options for the future.

This includes through the Adult Education Budget, apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps, and Free Courses for Jobs.

The Adult Education Budget, worth £1.34 billion this year, funds skills provision for adults to help them gain the skills that they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), worth over £2.6 billion, will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK. The first skills priority for UKSPF will be to help adults improve their maths skills via the Multiply programme, worth up to £559 million.

The department is also investing £1.6 billion through the National Skills Fund across the 2022 to 2025 financial years, including an investment of up to £550 million to significantly expand Skills Bootcamps, and investment to expand the eligibility for delivery of the Free Courses for Jobs offer, which is now open to more adults.

## ■ Apprentices

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[126871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the planned closure of the national traineeship programme on access routes to apprenticeships.

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[126872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of offering the financial value of the traineeship programme to (a) further education colleges and (b) sixth form providers that do not currently deliver traineeships.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department is integrating the traineeship programme into 16-to-19 study programmes and adult education provision from 1 August 2023. This is part of the government's commitment to provide a comprehensive and clear skills offer for employers and individuals.

All the elements of the traineeship programme - English and Maths, work experience, employability and occupational skills and qualifications - will continue to be funded for 16-to-19-year-olds as part of the national 16-to-19 study programme, and for adults through the adult education budget. This means that providers with access to funding will continue to offer traineeship type programmes for young people who need support to get into work, apprenticeships, or further learning.

The department is continuing to work with the sector and Combined Authorities to ensure that there is a smooth transition to ensure that young people can continue to gain the skills they need to support them into apprenticeships, work, or further learning.

The department will also continue to support young people to get the skills they need for apprenticeships or other employment through government-funded programmes such as T Levels and the T Level transition programme, Bootcamps, and Sector-Based Work Academies. The new 'Career Starter Apprenticeships' campaign is also

raising awareness of apprenticeships, which offer great opportunities for those looking for their first role after leaving full-time education.

■ **Apprentices: Degrees**

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[122233]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to promote degree apprenticeships among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Robert Halfon:**

Higher and degree level apprenticeships provide people with high-quality training and are important in supporting productivity, social mobility and widening participation in higher education and employment. The department wants more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to benefit from apprenticeships at all levels.

We are working to expand higher and degree level apprenticeships, ensuring these opportunities are accessible to young people. We are making up to £8 million available in the 2022/23 financial year to higher education institutions through the Strategic Priorities Grant to enable them to grow provision and form new employer partnerships.

We continue to increase outreach to students of all backgrounds through our Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme. The ASK programme, funded at £3.2 million per year, provides schools and further education colleges across England with a free bespoke package of comprehensive information and support about apprenticeships. Ensuring that students of all backgrounds are aware of the benefits of apprenticeships, including degree apprenticeships.

From 2016/17 to the 2020/21 academic year, the ASK programme has worked with 5,000 schools and over 47,500 teachers, reaching over 1.7 million students, and over 230,000 parents.

The department works with employers to showcase higher and degree level apprenticeship vacancies on:

[https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch?\\_ga=2.221953688.101986520.1673884878-1700691710.1661351144](https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch?_ga=2.221953688.101986520.1673884878-1700691710.1661351144).

The listing published in November featured over 300 vacancies across the country from over 60 employers. These vacancies are promoted in schools and colleges through the ASK programme.

We are working with the Office for Students to improve access to and participation in Higher Education. We are also working with UCAS to establish the needs of young people, the people who influence their career decisions, and employers to determine how our respective systems and services can be improved so that more young people consider and secure apprenticeships.

**■ Assessments: Visual Impairment**

**Emma Hardy:** [126772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the implications of the needs of candidates with vision impairments for the development of electronic examinations.

**Emma Hardy:** [126773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what accessible formats her Department has considered for the 2023 exam season; and whether her Department has considered making modified exam papers consistent across all exam boards and qualifications.

**Emma Hardy:** [126774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that exam boards consistently provide current and past exam papers in accessible formats for candidates with vision impairment.

**Nick Gibb:**

This is a matter for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its Chief Regulator, Dr Jo Saxton, to write to the Honourable Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

**■ Free School Meals**

**Rachael Maskell:** [124006]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of widening free school meals criteria.

**Rachael Maskell:** [124007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that all primary school children have access to free school meals.

**Nick Gibb:**

The latest published statistics from the Department are available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

Approximately 1.9 million pupils are claiming free school meals (FSM). This equates to 22.5% of all pupils, up from 20.8% in 2021. Together with a further 1.25 million infants supported through the Universal Infant Free School Meal policy, over one third of school children are now provided with FSM. The Department currently has protections in place, ensuring that eligible pupils keep their FSM entitlement even if their household circumstances improve.

The Department believes that the current eligibility threshold level, which enables children in low income households to benefit from FSM while remaining affordable and deliverable for schools, is the right one. The Department does not have plans to change the current eligibility conditions for FSM but will continue to keep eligibility

under review to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them. The Department continues to monitor current issues that affect disadvantaged families, such as the consequences of the rising cost of living.

## ■ Further Education: Capital Investment

**Grahame Morris:**

[123912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Further education reclassification: government response, published on 29 November 2022, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of new private sector borrowing rules on further education colleges.

**Robert Halfon:**

Following the decision by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to reclassify colleges to the public sector, the department is supporting colleges to meet the requirements of managing public money, while retaining many of their key areas of autonomy and flexibility.

Managing public money means public sector organisations may only borrow from private sector sources if the transaction delivers value for money for HM Treasury. The department has put in place a consents process for any new commercial borrowing that colleges would like to undertake. Department officials are working through the requests for January in priority order and will respond to colleges as quickly as possible.

Where the department has been unable to consent to commercial borrowing, it will consider if there is any scope for finding alternative ways to support projects that colleges were intending, pre-reclassification, to self-fund through commercial borrowing.

In response to the ONS decision on reclassification, the department has designed a package of measures to enable colleges to deliver on the priorities in the Skills for Jobs White Paper, and to continue to invest in their estates. This includes an additional £150 million allocation of capital grant funding for condition improvement for 2023/24. These allocations are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fe-capital-funding#fe-reclassification-capital-allocation>. Allocations will be paid in April 2023.

The department is bringing forward £300 million of funding by March 2023 to smooth the payment profile and help colleges with their cashflow. This was communicated to the sector on 18 January.

## ■ Further Education: Energy

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[119942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on how many FE colleges in England have had an increase in funding smaller than their estimated increase in energy bills in 2022.



**Robert Halfon:**

The department does not collect data regarding energy costs and contracts at institution level that would enable the accurate estimates of increased energy bills required for a direct comparison with allocated funding for the year 2022.

Funding allocations for 16-19 education are published annually here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-allocations#published-allocations>.

Comparison of the allocations for academic years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 will show the 16-19 education funding increases for all institutions.

Until 31 March 2023, further education colleges will continue to benefit from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This will reduce how much they need to spend on their energy and give greater certainty over budgets over the winter months. A new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector was confirmed on 9 January, ahead of the current scheme ending in March. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024.

**Further Education: Teachers****Grahame Morris:****[123914]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to help support recruitment of teachers in further education colleges.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department has launched the national Further Education (FE) Recruitment Campaign and Teach in FE Digital Service, a recruitment campaign that aims to deliver simple, accessible information and comprehensive support for prospective teachers. The campaign is expected to reach millions of prospective FE teaching staff, and target those with valuable experience and skills in industry to train the next generation of technical experts.

The department is also increasing the level of overall investment in the FE sector, which will help colleges to recruit, retain, and develop the staff they need. The 2021 Spending Review made available an extra £1.6 billion for 16-to-19 education in 2024/25 financial year compared with 2021/22. In the 2023/24 financial year, the department will be using £125 million of available funding to invest an extra £85 million to support all institutions' costs by increasing the national funding rate by 2.2% from £4,542 in 2022/23 to £4,642, along with investing £40 million in subject specific funding, including through uplifting 16-to-19 programme costs weights for engineering, construction and digital sector subject areas. This will support additional costs of recruiting and retaining teachers in this high value, vocational provision.

The department is providing bursaries worth up to £26,000 tax-free per individual, to support FE teacher training in priority subject areas for 2022/23.



A teacher training apprenticeship for those planning to work in the FE sector has recently been updated and strengthened, and employers can use levy funding of up to £7,000 per apprentice to put their new teachers through a high quality work-based training programme.

## ■ Further Education: VAT

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[123913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the further education reclassification: government response, published 29 November 2022, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing further education colleges to recover VAT.

**Robert Halfon:**

The government keeps VAT policies under review. Any proposals to changes in the tax system would need to be considered in the context of broader public finances.

## ■ Pupil Exclusions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[124002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the number of children excluded from school; and what steps she is taking to address the root causes of children's negative behaviours.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[124004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of children being excluded have (a) mental health challenges or (b) a neurodiversity diagnosis.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department supports headteachers in using suspension and permanent exclusion as a sanction where warranted as part of creating calm, safe, and supportive environments where pupils and staff can work in safety and are respected.

The Department is providing £10 million for behaviour hubs to enable schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) with exemplary behaviour practices to work in partnership with those that want to see behavioural improvement.

To support staff, the Early Career Framework reforms entitle all early career teachers to two years of professional development in five core areas, including behaviour management.

In July 2022, the Department published updated guidance on behaviour in schools and suspension and permanent exclusion statutory guidance. These documents provide further clarity and support to schools on how to manage behaviour well for all pupils in the school community. This can be accessed here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1101498/Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools academies and pupil referral units in England including pupil movement.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101498/Suspension_and_Permanent_Exclusion_from_maintained_schools_academies_and_pupil_referral_units_in_England_including_pupil_movement.pdf).

The Department's guidance, 'Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees' makes clear governing boards should carefully consider the level and characteristics of pupils who are leaving the school and deploy maximum challenge to the school on any permanent exclusions to ensure it is only used as a last resort.

The Department does not hold the data on what proportion of children being excluded have a mental health challenge or a neurodiversity diagnosis. The Department publishes figures on the proportion and characteristics of pupils excluded from schools in England. To fulfil the commitment to publish exclusion data in a timely manner, in November 2022 the Department published the Autumn term of 2021/22 data. The most recent full academic year, 2020/21, can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england/2020-21>.

## ■ Pupils: Bullying

**Hilary Benn:** [123865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance and training is available for primary schools on tackling pupil bullying.

**Hilary Benn:** [123866]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what advice and training is given to primary schools on tackling pupil bullying.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The government has sent a clear message that bullying should never be tolerated, and we are committed to supporting all schools to tackle it. The department provides advice for schools, which outlines their responsibilities. The advice makes clear that schools should make appropriate provision for a bullied child's social, emotional and mental health needs. It is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>.

The department is providing over £2 million in funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023, to five anti-bullying organisations to support both primary and secondary schools to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying and Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic based bullying.

We have also published, 'Respectful School Communities', a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach that promotes respect and discipline. This is available here:

<https://educateagainsthate.com/school-leaders/?filter=guidance-and-training-school-leaders>.

All schools should set clear, reasonable and proportionate expectations of pupil behaviour in line with the department's guidance on behaviour and discipline in

schools, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>.

It is for individual schools to develop their own best practice for managing behaviour in their school.

## ■ School Rebuilding Programme

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

**[125230]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her planned timetable is for starting work on schools that have been selected for the School Rebuilding Programme; and if she will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

161 of the 400 projects selected for the School Rebuilding Programme are in delivery. Buildings at the most advanced projects will be completed early this year. The schools announced in December 2022 will enter delivery at a rate of approximately 50 per year, over a five-year period from 2023.

The Department is currently undertaking due diligence on these schools. The Department will be writing to all Responsible Bodies with an update on timescales this month.

## ■ Schools: Uniforms

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[122254]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has received any complaints from parents and carers in England since (a) 19 November 2021 and (b) 1 September 2022 on school compliance with the statutory guidance on Cost of school uniforms published on 19 November 2021.

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[122255]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools her Department has contacted about complaints from parents relating to uniform policy costs since 19 November 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

Since the statutory guidance on the cost of school uniform came into effect in September 2022, the Department has not received any complaints about school compliance.

Before this point, any complaints received into the Department regarding the cost of school uniform were not formally recorded as complaints about compliance with the uniform guidance, as the statutory guidance was not yet in force.

The Department is aware of two cases before September 2022 where complaints referenced the uniform guidance. In both cases, the school in question was contacted and reminded of their upcoming statutory obligations to ensure the cost of uniform is affordable.

**■ Students: Loans****Darren Jones:**[\[117875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing an option of a repayment holiday for student loans as part of his package of cost of living support for people on low incomes.

**Robert Halfon:**

The student loan repayment system incorporates a number of protections for those making loan repayments, including for those on low incomes.

Repayments are calculated as a fixed percentage of earnings above the relevant repayment threshold. This is currently £27,295 for a post-2012 undergraduate loan and £21,000 for a postgraduate loan. These do not change as a result of the interest rate charged, or the amount borrowed. If a borrower's income decreases, so does the amount they repay. If income is below the relevant repayment threshold, or a borrower is not earning, they do not have to make repayments. Any outstanding debt, including interest accrued, is written off after the loan term ends, or in case of death or disability, at no detriment to the borrower. There are no commercial loans that offer this level of protection.

To further protect borrowers, the government, by law, must cap maximum student loan rates to ensure the interest rate charged on the loan is in line with market rates for comparable unsecured personal loans. The government monitors student loan rates against the Bank of England's data series for the effective interest rates on new and existing unsecured personal loans.

**■ Teachers: Strikes****Munira Wilson:**[\[126834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether Ofqual intends to (a) adjust exam grade boundaries or (b) provide other support during exams for pupils whose learning is disrupted by the upcoming strikes by the National Education Union.

**Nick Gibb:**

This is a matter for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its Chief Regulator, Dr Jo Saxton, to write to the Honourable Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers****Tony Lloyd:**[\[120890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will outline the process for the recruitment of new operators under the agricultural seasonal worker visa scheme.

**Mark Spencer:**

The recruitment of new operators under the Seasonal Worker visa route is done by a Request for Information (RFI) process. This RFI process has been run three times to date, in 2018, 2021 and 2022, to coincide with the expansion of the Seasonal Workers visa route. A description of how this process was formally completed for the RFI in June 2022 can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/seasonal-worker-visa-route-request-for-information-rfi/seasonal-worker-visa-route-rfi-notice>

**Tony Lloyd:****[120891]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to implement measures to ensure workers on the agricultural seasonal worker visa scheme are not left without work due to the prohibition on workers switching between scheme operators.

**Mark Spencer:**

Recruitment operators can transfer seasonal workers between farms to ensure minimum hours are met or if work runs out, 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 out in the Home Office's Sponsor Guidance 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.

**Tony Lloyd:****[120892]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what minimum hours guarantee is in place for workers on the agricultural seasonal worker visa; and what options are available to workers if little or no work is available.

**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.

**■ Avian Influenza: Compensation****Harriett Baldwin:**[\[109544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to amend the system for compensating businesses affected by avian influenza in the next 12 months.

**Mark Spencer:**

To help producers deal with the impacts of the UK's worst ever avian influenza outbreak on 28 October 2022, Defra announced a new package of measures to support domestic producers with the impacts of avian influenza. This included changes to the compensation scheme allowing compensation to be paid to farmers from the outset of planned culling rather than at the end. This will give earlier certainty about entitlement to compensation, better reflect the impact of outbreaks on premises and lead to swifter payments to help stem any cash flow pressures. Compensation is paid for birds culled by HM Government for avian influenza disease control purposes is designed to promote prompt reporting of suspicion of disease and is only payable for healthy birds as set out in the Animal Health Act 1981. In addition, in consultation with the Food Standards Agency, Defra announced a relaxation to marketing rules to give farmers who rear turkeys and other seasonal poultry products the option to slaughter birds early, to freeze them and then sell them to consumers defrosted between the period 28 November and 31 December 2022. The Welsh Government announced a similar concession on 3 November as did the Scottish Government via legislation on 28 November. This was introduced to help businesses get their birds off the ground early to avoid losing flocks to avian influenza, and to help them plan ahead for Christmas and ensure the supply of turkeys. Defra will continue to review policy options to support the poultry sector.

**■ Biodiversity: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty****Sir Gary Streeter:**[\[119874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021 has applied to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty since 1 January 2023; and if she will make a statement.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, the general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, came into force on 1st January 2023 and applies to National Park Authorities and to Local Authorities which host Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty partnerships.

**■ Birds: Conservation****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[122186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of making it a requirement to include swift bricks in new-build housing in the context of declining swift populations in the UK.

**Trudy Harrison:**

All local authorities have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. As well as this duty, national planning policy states that the planning system should minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. Planning Practice Guidance published to help implement planning policy makes clear that relatively small features can often achieve important benefits for wildlife, with incorporating 'swift bricks' in developments in particular highlighted as an option. Specific biodiversity features, such as swift bricks, would normally be required for developments through either the relevant local plan or through the local authority's development control team.

Through the Environment Act 2021, we have introduced a mandatory duty for developers to deliver a 'biodiversity net gain', which will mean that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than they were before any development.

**■ Convention on Biological Diversity****Alexander Stafford:**[\[120193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department made of the adequacy of the outcomes of COP15 for the Convention on Biological Diversity; and what steps they are taking to achieve targets domestically.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The package agreed at COP15, including the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, represent a historic step forward towards addressing the biodiversity crisis. Setting a clear mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, the commitments expected under its 23 targets, notably to protect 30% of global land and 30% of global ocean by 2030, to end human induced-species extinctions of known threatened species by 2030, alongside the package of international nature finance agreed to support its implementation – put us on the path to nature recovery. The key is now to fully implement this ambitious framework across all Parties.

Domestically, in England, we are setting legally binding targets for biodiversity: to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030; then to reverse declines by 2042. These are complemented by further targets to reduce the risk of species extinction and restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat. Following agreement of the Global Biodiversity Framework at CBD COP 15 we will be setting out our approach to implementing the framework domestically in our Environmental Improvement Plan, due to be published in 2023. The Plan will set out our ambitions and approach to nature recovery, including our legally binding targets and the actions that will drive us towards reaching them.

**■ Countryside: Access****Alex Sobel:**[\[126793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to increase public access to nature in England.



**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government recognises the importance of providing access to the outdoors for people's health and wellbeing and are working to ensure this is safe and appropriate. We want to continue to work with landowners and user groups directly to ensure responsible access is granted in the right places to achieve our 25 Year Environment Plan commitment to make it easier for more people, from every background, to enjoy nature.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides the public a right of access to most areas of mountain, moor, heath, down, registered common land and coastal margin. The Government is delivering a number of policies to increase access to nature including:

- Working to complete the England Coast Path which, at around 2,700 miles, will be the longest waymarked and maintained coast walking route in the world. Over 2,000 miles have now been approved as England Coast Path, with nearly 800 miles already open. It will also create 250,000 hectares of new open access land within the coastal margin.
- Creating a new National Trail across the North of England.
- Carrying out the first review of Open Access Maps since they were created in 2004/05. The review will clarify where rights to access land exist and provide better clarity and consistency on access rights to both landowners and the wider public.
- In the England Trees Action Plan, we committed to the provision of safe and appropriate public access in as many woodlands as possible through a suite of measures from updating Forestry Commission guidance through to plans to encourage improvements to the quality and permanency of existing access. This will include how we might support greater access for all abilities. We will also encourage more access provision through our woodland creation grants. We recently amended the England Woodland Creation Offer to offer a higher incentive for the provision of access to new woodlands, and made more applicants eligible to apply for funding for access.

We are aware that we must balance the needs of all those who live and work in the countryside with those who visit to ensure that public access brings all the benefits we know it can without affecting nature recovery and food production or security.

Access to nature and the countryside is provided for under the Countryside Stewardship Higher and Mid-Tier schemes. Applicants can receive funds to install access capital items, create woodland access where it would benefit people, and provide educational access to school pupils and care farming clients. As we evolve the CS scheme going forward, we expect this to continue. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme also funds the creation of opportunities for people to understand landscapes and cultural heritage, including permissive access. Customers of the English Woodland Creation Offer receive higher payments if woodland is near settlements and provide new long-term permissive access for recreation.



We are exploring how we can pay for actions covering permissive access, managing existing access pressures on land and water, and expanding education access offers. We are also exploring, geographically, where we can support actions to create access and engagement opportunities where they will have the most impact.

**Fleur Anderson:**

[93674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps the Government has taken to improve accessibility of Britain's nature for (a) children and teenagers, (b) low-income households and (c) older people.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We have no plans to change legislation as it is unnecessary to do so to encourage people to enjoy nature. These are just some of the examples of the work being undertaken to increase access for all.

For children and young people the Government has launched the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy a commitment to increase opportunities for all children and young people to spend time in nature, learn more about it, and get involved in improving their environment. This includes the introduction of a new Natural History GCSE, the climate change award which will formally recognise and celebrate the achievements of children and young people and the establishment of the National Education Nature Park an initiative aimed at harnessing the collective potential of the education estate in England to increase and improve biodiversity.

For low-income households the £9 million Levelling Up Parks Fund launched in August 2022 will create or significantly refurbish over 100 green spaces, instilling pride in place, and targets the 100 most deprived urban communities across the UK who also lack accessible green space.

For older people the Green Social Prescribing Programme is targeting under-represented groups and those most affected by health inequalities, and as such includes interventions targeted at older people. For example, in the Greater Manchester site, the programme has set up a dementia gardening and nature arts group at a local GP surgery.

## ■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Remote Working

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[118942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of their Department's employees work from home at least one day a week.

**Mark Spencer:**

As with many departments, Defra has operated using a ratio of desks to staff for a number of years (both pre and post pandemic). Latest occupancy data can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-headquarters-occupancy-data>.

We continue to work in a highly agile way and ask staff to adopt hybrid working with at least 40%-60% of their week worked from one of our office locations.

## ■ Dogs: Animal Breeding

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[113258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to tackle illegal dog fertility clinics.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, only veterinary surgeons are permitted to perform canine artificial insemination. Any non-vet undertaking canine artificial insemination, including the taking of blood samples, is therefore in breach of the Act.

Those operating canine fertility clinics, and owners using their services, are required under The Animal Welfare Act 2006 to protect the animals involved from harm and to provide for their welfare in line with good practice. A breach of these provisions may lead to imprisonment, a fine, or both. Anyone who is concerned about the welfare of breeding dogs should report the matter to their local authority who have powers to investigate.

## ■ Eggs: Production

**Alberto Costa:**

[\[120094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support the Government is providing to UK-based egg producers.

**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. Recognising the challenges that the agricultural industry, including the egg sector, is currently facing due to the rise of input costs as a result of the war in Ukraine, the Government has put in place a number of measures to support supply chains. These include cuts to VAT and fuel duty and support through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. Defra has also recently announced improvements to the Avian Influenza compensation scheme and granted a concession to the rules for the labelling of free range eggs from hens that have been housed longer than the 16-week period for which an automatic derogation applies. I also 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. The meeting was productive and conducted in a constructive manner 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 industry.

## ■ Environment Protection

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

[\[117981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the press release published 28 September 2020 entitled PM commits to protect 30% of UK land in boost for biodiversity, what percentage of (a) land and (b) sea is currently protected.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The UK Government is committed to protecting 30% of land and sea in the UK by 2030 (30by30). On land, 28% of the UK and 26% of England is currently designated as a protected area. We recognise, however, that many of these areas are not delivering for nature as they could. We consulted on our approach to 30by30 in the Nature Recovery Green Paper, which closed in May 2022. We are now in the process of analysing responses and will publish a Government response on conclusion of this exercise.

Nearly 8.3% of the global ocean is now protected. We have established a comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas covering 40% of English waters, and we are now focusing on making sure they are properly protected.

## ■ EU Law

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[109540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether she plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace Commission Regulation (EC) No 98/2002.

**Mark Spencer:**

In reviewing REUL, Defra is committed to ensuring our laws deliver improved outcomes and the highest standards in a way that is tailored to the needs of UK consumers and business. The UK has world leading standards backed by a rigorous legislative framework and it is only right that we should evaluate REUL to ensure it continues to meet our needs. Defra is in the process of analysing and assessing its REUL stock to determine what should be preserved as part of domestic law, and what should be repealed, or amended. This work will determine how we use the powers in the Bill, including, if appropriate, in relation to commission Regulation (EC) No 98/2002.

## ■ Farmers: North West

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[123986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many farmers there were in (a) St Helens, (b) Merseyside and (c) the North West in each year since 2010.

**Mark Spencer:**

Statistical estimates of the number of farmers on commercial agricultural holdings are shown in the table below. Farm labour data is sourced from the Defra June Survey of Agriculture but detailed geographical data are only available in the years where the survey is sent to a larger sample of farms.

Farmer are defined here as full time and part time principal farmers, business partners, directors and spouses.

**Number of farmers in St Helens, Merseyside and the North West 2010 to 2021**

	ST HELENS <sup>(A)</sup>	MERSEYSIDE <sup>(A)</sup>	NORTH WEST
2010	141	405	21,341
2011	:	:	21,758
2012	:	:	21,619
2013	151	429	21,753
2014	:	:	22,022
2015	:	:	22,116
2016	157	442	21,730
2017	:	:	22,051
2018	:	:	22,382
2019	:	:	22,347
2020 <sup>(b)</sup>	:	:	:
2021	131	-	22,440

**Notes**

: represents data that are not available as the survey was too small to produce geographical breakdowns to this level of granularity.

- represents data that has been suppressed to protect confidentiality, due to the small number of values in this cell

(a) Data is only available at this detailed geography in large scale survey years (2010, 2013, 2016, 2021)

(b) It was not possible to run a full-scale June Survey in 2020 due to the Coronavirus outbreak and as a result, regional breakdowns are not available for that year.

Commercial holdings are those registered with the Rural Payments Agency for payments or livestock purposes and with significant levels of farming activity (as recorded in responses to the Defra June Survey of Agriculture or the Cattle Tracing System). Holdings are only included if they have more than five hectares of agricultural land, one hectare of orchards, 0.5 hectares of vegetables or 0.1 hectares of protected crops, or more than 10 cows, 50 pigs, 20 sheep, 20 goats or 1,000 poultry.

Full data series by region, county and local authority are published here:

[Structure of the agricultural industry in England and the UK at June web page.](#)

## ■ Farms: Solar Power

**Jim Shannon:**

**[120969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to encourage farmers to increase their use of solar panels; and whether she is providing specific funding designed to achieve that aim.

**Mark Spencer:**

Protecting our environment, backing British farmers and delivering long-term energy security with more renewables is at the heart of HM Government's manifesto. The Net Zero Strategy sets out a clear vision for a sustained increase in deployment of renewable generation capacity in the 2020s and beyond. In addition, The British Energy Security Strategy set out a series of bold commitments to support and accelerate this as part of a decisive shift away from expensive fossil fuels

HM Government recognises the need to preserve our most productive arable farmland as best as possible. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out clearly that local planning authorities should consider all the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, when making plans or taking decisions on new development proposals. Where significant development of agricultural land is shown to be necessary, planning authorities should seek to use poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

On farm, the Farming Investment Fund seeks to encourage farmers to invest in technologies with improved energy-use efficiency and use of renewable energy. The Farming Innovation Programme supports industry-driven research into innovative technologies. It is funding projects that explore renewable energy sources.

## ■ Fisheries: North Atlantic Ocean

**Derek Thomas:**

**[124033]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will take steps to provide access to the quotas for spurdog following the conclusion of the annual fisheries negotiations with (a) the EU and (b) other North Atlantic states.

**Mark Spencer:**

Following the recent UK-EU agreement on total allowable catches for Northeast Atlantic spurdog in 2023, UK fishing quotas have been published within the Secretary of State determination of fishing opportunities for British fishing boats and presented to Parliament. We are working with the Devolved Administrations and Marine Management Organisation to ensure spurdog quota allocation methods will be in place and will provide industry with clarity over their fishing opportunities for 2023. These will be announced ahead of fishing being allowed in UK waters.

■ **Fisheries: Russia****Virginia Crosbie:**[\[120122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to prevent Russian-owned vessels from fishing in the UK-Faroe Islands special area waters.

**Mark Spencer:**

We were deeply concerned about Russian fishing activity under Faroese licences in the shared UK-Faroes Special Area last year and made this point very clear to the Faroese Government. We have formally requested urgent discussions with them on the issue, which we anticipate will take place in the coming weeks.

■ **Food Supply****Julian Sturdy:**[\[120918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of potential impacts of global food shortages on the UK's domestic food security.

**Mark Spencer:**

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain which has coped well in responding to unprecedented challenges. We enjoy considerable self-sufficiency in food. We produce 61% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year. These figures have changed little over the last 20 years.

Our food import dependency on the Eastern Europe region is very low, and we have strong domestic production of many of the products we do import. We do not expect any significant direct impact on overall UK food supply as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.

We speak regularly with food industry figures, who remain confident in the food supply chain. The capability, levers, and expertise to respond to disruption lie with industry. Government's role is to support and enable an industry-led response.

We continue to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real time intelligence.

## ■ Highly Protected Marine Areas

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[123883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to extend the ban on bottom trawling to cover more Highly Protected Marine Areas.

**Mark Spencer:**

Defra has consulted on five candidate pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). The responses and further evidence we received are still being analysed and we aim to publish a summary of responses in early 2023. Any HPMAs designated would have the highest levels of protection in our seas, banning extractive, destructive and depositional uses, including bottom trawling, to help the protection and recovery of marine ecosystems. Activities of this nature are not compatible with the aims of HPMAs. Any pilot HPMAs would be designated through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 by 6 July 2023. This would be a year from the start of the consultation as required by the Act.

## ■ Landscapes Review

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[126792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the implications for proposal eight of the independent report entitled Landscapes review: final report, published on 27 May 2018, of the decision of the High Court in Darwall and Darwall v Dartmoor National Park Authority of 13 January 2023.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Landscapes Review included proposals to increase engagement with all parts of society, particularly younger and more diverse audiences. Programmes such as Generation Green demonstrate that national-scale partnerships and coordinated collaboration can augment what our lead partners are already doing so well. We are also aiming to establish a new national landscapes partnership that can work with our lead partners to enhance and expand community engagement through national strategic partnerships and collaborative programmes

We are also actively developing opportunities to work across government to strengthen the role that protected landscapes can play in supporting the country's health, wellbeing, and education. A number of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are undertaking initiatives to provide opportunities to connect young people with nature.

## ■ Livestock: UK Trade with EU

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[120088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to facilitate the export of livestock to the EU for breeding purposes.

**Mark Spencer:**

As a result of the UK leaving the EU and becoming an independent trading nation, there are rules to follow and specific actions to take for GB exporters. The UK was granted third country listed status by the EU on 28 December 2020. This meant that, as an independent trading nation and a non-EU country, the UK continues to export goods, including live animals for breeding purposes and animal products, to the EU after 1 January 2021. The sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) chapter of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement puts in place a framework that allows the UK and the EU to take informed decisions to reduce their respective SPS controls, with a commitment to avoid unnecessary barriers to trade. It is in both the UK and EU's interests to use this framework to reduce or streamline SPS checks where possible, ensuring that they are proportionate to the biosecurity risks.

**Meat: UK Trade with EU****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[118939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of current requirements for farmers to provide a vet-signed attestation for meat to be exported to the EU.

**Mark Spencer:**

The EU AHR regulation requires regular on farm veterinary visits for the purpose of biosecurity inspection before animals and products can be exported to the EU. This will be enforced from 13th December 2023. We are currently working with veterinary professionals and industry to see how we can support businesses with this requirement.

**Members: Correspondence****Mr John Baron:**[\[120864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he will to respond to correspondence of (a) 3 October 2022, (b) 1 November 2022, (c) 1 December 2022 and (d) 15 December 2022, from the Hon. member for Basildon and Billericay on a constituent, reference MC2022/19778 and JB39102.

**Mark Spencer:**

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member. A reply will be sent in due course.

**Poisoning: Nature Conservation****Olivia Blake:**[\[122297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help tackle the sale of (a) Ferber Painting Badger Killer, (b) Ferber Painting Hedgehog Killer and (c) other illegal poisons that are used on protected species.



**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government strongly condemns any attempts to harm or kill hedgehogs or badgers with either of the named Ferber Painting products, and the use of any poisons targeted at our protected species. Badgers and hedgehogs are both protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Those found guilty of such illegal activities can expect to face the full force of the law, including potentially severe fines and custodial sentences.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is investigating after being made aware of Ferber Painting products being advertised for sale online for the control of protected species. There are strict regulations in place in Great Britain (GB) to make sure that products for pest control are used properly. Products must be authorised before they can be made available on the market and must be used in accordance with the conditions of that authorisation. There are no such authorisations for the two Ferber Painting products referenced.

It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with the laws that regulate the supply of chemicals in GB, or to use chemicals in a way which harms people, pets, protected species or the wider environment, with penalties that may lead to unlimited fines or imprisonment.

There are robust, multi-agency arrangements in place for enforcing the illegal supply and use of chemicals which include HSE, the Environment Agency, the police and local authorities, with the illegal poisoning of protected species investigated by a dedicated Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme. HSE will be engaging with these agencies where appropriate as part of this investigation.

**■ Shellfish: North East****Alex Cunningham:**[\[123933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of the anonymity of the expert panel on public confidence in the results of the enquiry into crustacean deaths in the North East.

**Mark Spencer:**

The expert panel was set up by the Defra Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Gideon Henderson, to independently scientifically review all the available evidence of the unusual crustacean mortality event in the north-east of England in autumn 2021. The Government Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance, was consulted as the panel was formed and had oversight of the membership and the Terms of Reference

The identities of the panel members have been made public. Names and affiliations of members have been released and published.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[123934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will publish the names of the people on the expert panel set up to investigate crustacean deaths off the North East coast.

**Mark Spencer:**

Names and affiliations of the crustacean mortality expert panel (CMEP) members have been published.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ **Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals****Chi Onwurah:**[\[119045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to help ensure the safety of Afghans who worked for the UK Government.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is for Afghan citizens who worked for or with the UK Government in Afghanistan in exposed or meaningful roles and may include an offer of relocation to the UK. The ARAP scheme launched on 1 April 2021 and remains open. The MOD is the lead department for the ARAP scheme, but the FCDO assesses eligibility for a small number of applicants who state that they worked for or alongside the FCDO. FCDO missions overseas support through providing accommodation in third countries until eligible persons (EPs) travel to the UK. To date, the UK has relocated over 12,000 ARAP EPs and their families to the UK, including over 5,000 since Operation PITTING concluded at the end of August 2021.

■ **Andrey Dmitriev****Tony Lloyd:**[\[125252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the arrest by the Belarusian authorities of former presidential candidate Andrey Dmitriev.

**Leo Docherty:**

The detention of Andrey Dzmitryeu is a further unacceptable act of repression by the Belarusian authorities. It is the right of citizens in a democracy to stand in elections. Mr Dzmitryeu should not face persecution for his political views.

There are nearly 1500 political prisoners in Belarus and we urge authorities to release them all, immediately and unconditionally. We continue to work on accountability measures for human rights violations, including through the International Accountability Platform for Belarus and our sanctions regime.

## ■ Business: Ethics

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[122456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will take steps to require companies to adopt a more compassionate corporate social responsibility for their operations overseas.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK has consistently supported the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on business and human rights, an international framework which encourage businesses to voluntarily conduct due diligence approaches to respecting human rights.

The Government is clear that it expects all UK businesses to respect human rights throughout their operations, in line with the UNGPs and use responsible business conduct guided by international frameworks and domestic legislation. We will continue to work with our international partners and UK & multinational businesses to seek positive change in responsible business conduct. By doing so, this will expand global prosperity and further UK values and influence.

## ■ Cameroon: Ethnic Groups

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[124146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in Cameroon on protecting the cultural identity of Anglophone Cameroonians.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[124147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support English-speaking people in Cameroon with the preservation of their culture.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[124148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Cameroon on support for Anglophone Cameroonians.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK values the relationship with Cameroon, including our linguistic connections and membership of the Commonwealth. For example, the Commonwealth Point of Light awards two Cameroonians for their contributions to important causes annually. In 2022, it was awarded to an activist coordinating humanitarian activities in the South-West (Anglophone) region. The British High Commission in Yaoundé regularly meets with civil society and businesses (including Anglophone representatives) to forge and strengthen relationships. I [Minister Mitchell] met with Cameroon's Minister of Defence earlier this month. I [Minister Mitchell] set out the UK's commitment to supporting a peaceful resolution to conflict in the North-West South-West regions. The former Minister for Africa, Sir James Duddridge MP, confirmed this commitment

to President Biya and Prime Minister Ngute when he visited Cameroon in March 2021.

#### ■ **Cameroon: Humanitarian Aid**

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[124151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the UK has spent on humanitarian aid to Cameroon in each of the last five years.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK has provided food supplies, sanitation, healthcare and social protection to Cameroon over the last five years with over £20 million of humanitarian funding. UK aid in 2021/22 funded assistance to communities in the North-West and South-West regions provided by the World Food Programme and the International Committee for the Red Cross.

#### ■ **Cameroon: Violence**

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[124149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help prevent intercommunal violence in Cameroon.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[124150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government is taking steps to help the government of Cameroon to address security concerns arising from Boko Haram activities.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

I [Minister Mitchell] met with Cameroon's Minister of Defence on 10th January 2023 to set out the UK's commitment to supporting a peaceful resolution to the conflict; the importance of humanitarian access for those in need and investigating reports of human rights abuses. The UK has committed £12.6 million for 2021/22 towards countering violent extremist organisations, which includes targeting military training in Cameroon's Far North (around the Lake Chad Basin). This focuses on the laws of armed conflict, international humanitarian law, and human rights compliance.

#### ■ **Colombia: Peace Negotiations**

**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[122067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support the Colombian Government's Total Peace policy; and what steps he is taking to support peace negotiations with the National Liberation Army and other armed groups.

**David Rutley:**

We commend President Petro's commitment to comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement with the FARC and to addressing other security and social challenges. At the UN Security Council on 11 January, I [Minister Rutley] welcomed

Colombian Government-led efforts to secure a ceasefire with armed groups, including the National Liberation Army, in order to reduce insecurity and alleviate the suffering of conflict-affected populations. To date, the UK Government has 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 can help Colombia overcome the remaining barriers to a broad and lasting peace.

## ■ Colombia: Trade Unions

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[120175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports that retired Petroleum Industry Workers Union (USO) trade unionist Nicodemus Luna Mosquera was murdered along with his nephew Edinson Noviteño Luna in Colombia on 26 November 2022, whether his Department plans to provide support to the USO trade union in that country.

**David Rutley:**

Colombia is an FCDO Human Rights Priority Country, and supporting efforts to improve stability and security in Colombia, including for trade unionists, 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. Through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £74 million in support of Peace Agreement implementation, security, and stability in Colombia since 2015, we will continue to support programmes that help Human Rights Defenders and other groups affected by violence.

## ■ Developing Countries: Malaria and Tuberculosis

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[126580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Government has contributed to the GAVI Matching Fund to tackle TB and Malaria since the fund's launch in 2013; and what information his Department holds on the dates that programme was operating.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK pledged £50 million to the Gavi Matching Fund 2011-2015. £38 million of this commitment was utilised matching private contributions £1 for £1 in support of Gavi's core mission to immunise children against vaccine-preventable diseases. The UK have also committed up to £25 million to Gavi's current Matching Fund, which makes up part of our £1.65 billion commitment to Gavi between 2021 - 2025. The UK's main investments in malaria and tuberculosis are through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the 'Global Fund'). UK leadership helped establish the Global Fund in 2002. Our 2019 commitment included a £200 million 'Malaria Match Fund' which has been delivered in full.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[118863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 108123 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, which country the former Foreign Secretary was visiting or returning from when using the VIP services purchased at Heathrow Airport on 24 March 2022; and on what dates those services were used.

**David Rutley:**

The former Foreign Secretary used Heathrow services on Saturday 25th September 2021 when returning from Mexico. The invoice for the use of the facilities was paid on 24 March 2022.

VIP services are booked to provide swift and secure airport arrival and departure arrangements. We are committed to using public money responsibly and receive a reduced rate for these services.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[118864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 108123 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, for what reason the VIP services purchased for visiting dignitaries at Heathrow Airport on 23 March 2022 using a government procurement card were not covered by the contract agreed by his Department on 1 September 2021 with Heathrow Airport Ltd for the use of VIP suites, procurement reference 283290/1030331.

**David Rutley:**

VIP Suites are booked to provide swift and secure airport arrival and departure arrangements for visiting foreign dignitaries. The FCDO contract with Heathrow VIP covers arrivals and departures for VIPs visiting the UK on State or Guest of Government Visits. The use of suites during other types of official visits by VIPs would be outside the contract and paid using government procurement cards. We are committed to using public money responsibly and receive a reduced rate for these services.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[118866\]](#)

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, how many members of staff received training and consultancy from A Head Space Ltd. on (a) 18 May 2022, and (b) 27 June 2022; and for what purpose that training and consultancy was required.

**David Rutley:**

This represents professional development training for approximately 150 members of staff. Expenditure was subject to normal FCDO controls.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[118867]**

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, what services were purchased by his Department from Ashridge on (a) 1 April 2021 and (b) 17 June 2022; and for what purpose they were required.

**David Rutley:**

This refers to language training and e-learning for Country Based staff in Brazil. Investing in the skills of our people is critical to the delivery of our priorities and goals. It underpins our ability to learn, innovate and continuously improve.

Government Procurement Cards provide an efficient route to enable key staff to procure goods and services necessary to the promotion of British interests overseas. All purchases are subject to authorisation by managers and audit checks. Local budgets are scrutinised for waste, and fraud is monitored by our audit teams to ensure best value to the tax payer.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[118870]**

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, what the (a) purpose of, (b) location of and (c) guest list was for the events for which Mackintosh Catering was paid (i) £4,237.80 on 5 January 2021, (ii) £4,901.40 on 20 September 2021, (iii) £3,549.40 from 14-16 December 2021 and (iv) £7,046.76 on 3 March 2022.

**David Rutley:**

These relate to a range of events held at 10 Downing Street, 1 Carlton Gardens and Lancaster House, including events hosted by the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Chief of Defence Staff for international delegations. The exchange of hospitality has long been an important part of building relations and diplomacy.

The payment dates refer to the dates the caterers were paid, and are not the dates events took place on.

All events took place in-line with HMT guidelines and fully complied with any COVID regulations and social distancing guidance that may have been in place at the time. Expenditure was subject to normal FCDO controls and an appropriate use of public money.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[118871]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Department's publication of spending over £500 with a Government procurement card in December 2021, for what services was Alison Price Catering paid £4,164.84 on 23 December 2021.



**David Rutley:**

This relates to catering and staff costs for two events with international delegations held at Lancaster House in 2021. The exchange of hospitality has long been an important part of building relations and diplomacy.

The payment dates refer to the dates the caterers were paid, and are not the dates events took place on.

All events took place in-line with HMT guidelines and fully complied with any COVID regulations and social distancing guidance that may have been in place at the time. Expenditure was subject to normal FCDO controls and an appropriate use of public money.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[118875\]](#)

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 2021, what supplies or services were purchased from the UK Hypnosis Academy on 3 and 21 January 2021, and for what purpose were they purchased by his Department.

**David Rutley:**

The spend in January 2021 covered Learning & Development courses for DIT staff members, comprising wellbeing strategies and standard management tools for staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. The courses were delivered via Microsoft Teams videoconference. The course did not involve hypnosis, nor include any hypnosis related training.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[118877\]](#)

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, whether the items recorded as purchases from ROYALCOLLECTION.ORG in (i) February 2021, (ii) March 2021, (iii) January 2022, (iv) March 2022, (v) May 2022 and (vi) June 2022 were from royalcollectionshop.co.uk; what the five most expensive items purchased from that supplier were in those six months; and for what purpose were those five items purchased.

**David Rutley:**

This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Government Procurement Cards provide an efficient route to enable key staff to procure goods and services, necessary to the promotion of British interests overseas and the maintenance of our embassies and high commissions. All purchases are subject to authorisation by managers and audit checks. Local budgets are scrutinised for waste, and fraud is monitored by our audit teams to ensure best value to the tax payer.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[118878\]](#)

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, what were the five most expensive items purchased from Royal Crown Derby during the period January 2021 to March 2022 inclusive; and for what purpose those five items were purchased.

**David Rutley:**

This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Government Procurement Cards provide an efficient route to enable key staff to procure goods and services, necessary to the promotion of British interests overseas and the maintenance of our embassies and high commissions. All purchases are subject to authorisation by managers and audit checks. Local budgets are scrutinised for waste, and fraud is monitored by our audit teams to ensure best value to the tax payer.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[118898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for February 2022, for attendance at which event did his Department pay Revolution Events Ltd. £1,557.60 on 21 February 2022; and at which hotel was accommodation booked for staff attending that event.

**David Rutley:**

This was for to pay for staff attendance at the annual Information & Records Management Society Conference in 2022 in Glasgow, a conference managed by Revolution Events Ltd. The conference formed part of staff learning and development and the fee included payment for overnight accommodation and VAT at the Conference hotel, Doubletree by Hilton.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[122078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for September 2021, what items were purchased from Diving Unlimited International on 18 September 2021; and for what reasons these items were required.

**David Rutley:**

This expenditure was made in support of collaborative work being undertaken between the UK Government and Colombian law enforcement partners to tackle serious and organised crime.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[122079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500 for October 2021, what services were purchased from Hot Pink Photo Booth on 5 October 2021, and for what reasons these items were required.

**David Rutley:**

This was to support a guest reception based around the screening of the film "No Time to Die." The event was attended by over 200 people, including senior members

of the US Government. The event promoted the UK Creative Industries and the GREAT brand to attendees.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[122080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's publication of government procurement card spending over £500, what goods or services were purchased from Different Altogether on (a) 17-21 June 2021 and (b) 3-8 November; and for what reasons these items were required.

**David Rutley:**

These payments were for work related to the renovation of the Conference Rooms at the British Embassy Khartoum, as part of the first refurbishment of the building since it was built in 1984.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[122081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 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 chauffeur services purchased from The Travel In Group on 21 December 2021.

**David Rutley:**

The transparency release for government procurement card spending over £500 for December 2021 has no record of chauffeur services or record of a purchase from the Travel In group on 21 December 2021.

There is an entry for the Travel In group on 1 December 2021. This was for the transportation of a delegation of Arab-Israeli entrepreneurs to the London Roadshow, a 5 day event designed to promote the UK as a market of choice for Arab-Israeli led tech start-ups. This option was chosen to ensure the safe transport of the delegation while maintaining compliance with coronavirus restrictions.

#### ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Waste

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[119023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's Greening Government Commitments for 2021-25, how many tonnes of food waste were produced from his Departmental estate in financial year (a) 2021/22 and (b) 2022/23 up to the end of December 2022.

**David Rutley:**

In line with the Greening Government Commitments the FCDO has committed to measure and report on food waste, for estates with over 50 FTE (full time equivalent staff) and or over 500m2 floor area offering a food service.

The requested information for 2021-2022 will be published in the Greening Government Commitments Annual Report for 2021-2022, due later this year. The data for April 1st 2022 to December 31st 2022 will be published in the Annual Report covering 2022-2023.

GGC annual reporting is delayed due to Covid-19 impacts, but government remains committed to reducing the environmental impact of its estate and operations.

Established in 2010, the Greening Government Commitments (GGCs) set out the actions that government will take to improve the environmental impact of the government estate and its operations. They demonstrate how the UK government is leading by example and working to improve the environmental performance of its own estate and operations, in line with our 25 Year Environment Plan commitments to improve the environment within a generation.

Since inception of the GGCs, the UK government has halved its greenhouse gas emissions and waste, in addition to making many other efficiencies. Progress against the commitments is published in GGC annual reports.

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[122096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of (a) ordinary and (b) named-day written questions their Department answered on time in 2022.

**David Rutley:**

Of the PQs received in 2022, the FCDO responded to (a) 82 per cent of Ordinary PQs and (b) 83 per cent of Named day PQs on time.

## ■ Haiti: Humanitarian Situation

**Deidre Brock:**

[\[119206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help address the humanitarian situation in Haiti.

**David Rutley:**

We are aware of the difficult humanitarian situation in Haiti, which is worsened by the chronic security issues caused by armed criminal gangs. We are supporting Haiti through our contributions to the United Nations and other international agencies who have a strong presence on the ground, including the World Bank. Through the British Embassy in Port-au-Prince we remain in regular contact and coordination with these agencies. The UK continues to use our platform both in country and at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to help international efforts in realising a Haitian-led solution to Haiti's multifaceted challenges.

## ■ Human Rights

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[125442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish an updated open societies strategy as part of the 2023 refresh of the Integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK has a long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights across the globe. We are committed to being a force for good in the world, putting human rights, open societies, democracy and the international rule of law at the centre of our foreign policy. We continue to review our policy and guidance in relation to civic space and human rights defenders within the broader strategic framing of open societies and human rights. It is too soon to discuss the outcome of that process but we continue to engage with key stakeholders on these important questions.

**Iran: Demonstrations****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[114838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to support protestors in Iran at risk of execution.

**David Rutley:**

The use of the death penalty against protestors standing up for their basic human rights is abhorrent. The UK opposes the death penalty in all circumstances. On 9 January the Foreign Secretary summoned Iran's most senior diplomat in the UK to condemn these executions in the strongest terms. We have repeatedly delivered the same message to the regime through our ambassador in Tehran, and in London - including when Lord Ahmad spoke to the Chargé d'Affaires on 20 December to protest against the death sentences. On 9 December we sanctioned 10 officials connected to Iran's judicial and prison systems, including six linked to the Revolutionary Courts responsible for protestors' egregious sentences. We will continue to press Iranian regime to end its appalling use of the death penalty as a tool to stifle dissent.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[117464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken steps to help ensure the safety of protestors in Iran.

**David Rutley:**

Since the start of protests in September, the Foreign Secretary has summoned Iran's most senior diplomat in the UK five times to demand an end to the Iranian authorities' worsening crackdown on protests and their use of the death penalty. Lord Ahmad had reiterated this message in his conversations with the Chargé d'Affaires, most recently on 20 December. It has also been relayed to the Iranian authorities through our ambassador in Tehran. With our partners, the UK has also secured the removal of Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the establishment of a UN investigation into the regime's appalling human rights violations. We will continue to hold Iran to account for its actions.

## ■ **Mohammed al-Roken**

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[122476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 3011 on Mohammed Al-Roken, what recent discussions he has had with the United Arab Emirates on Mohammed Al-Roken's release.

**David Rutley:**

We are aware of reports that Mohammed al Roken was arrested in the United Arab Emirates in 2012 and remains in detention. The UK urges all countries to uphold their international human rights obligations and believes that the best approach is to promote and defend universal freedoms. The strength of the UK-UAE relationship means we can discuss issues such as respect for the right to peaceful protest and assembly, the rule of law, freedom of speech and of the press, in a frank and open way. Where the UK has cause for concern, we raise these concerns including at senior level, most recently with the UAE, Director Human Rights. We will continue to seek opportunities to do so at official and Ministerial level.

## ■ **Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Situation**

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[126560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of (a) food, (b) medicine and (c) energy supply in Nagorno Karabakh; and what discussions he has had with his international counterparts on recent developments and ensuring freedom and security of movement along the Lachin corridor.

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK Government has made clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor risks severe humanitarian consequences, particularly during winter. I [Leo Docherty] spoke to Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan on 18 January where we agreed on the importance of the immediate re-opening of the Lachin Corridor and the need to ensure gas and electricity supplies into Nagorno-Karabakh are not switched off. On 18 January officials spoke to the ICRC regarding the humanitarian situation, including the dwindling food and medical supplies, and will remain in contact in the coming weeks to share their assessment of the impact of the closure. The UK Government will continue to engage with counterparts and with humanitarian agencies to support efforts aimed at resolving the current closure of the Lachin corridor.

## ■ **Nigeria: Development Aid**

**Chris Law:**

[\[123969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance he plans to allocate to Nigeria in (a) 2022, (b) 2023 and (c) 2024.

**Chris Law:** [\[123970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance he plans to allocate to Ethiopia (a) 2022, (b) 2023 and (c) 2024.

**Chris Law:** [\[123971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance he plans to allocate to Sudan in (a) 2022, (b) 2023 and (c) 2024.

**Chris Law:** [\[123972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance he plans to allocate to Malawi in (a) 2022, (b) 2023 and (c) 2024.

**Chris Law:** [\[123973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance he plans to allocate to Zambia in (a) 2022, (b) 2023 and (c) 2024.

**Chris Law:** [\[123974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance he plans to allocate to Pakistan in (a) 2022, (b) 2023 and (c) 2024.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The FCDO is committed to transparency with the public and predictability with our partners. We will update on planned Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations for this Spending Review period in due course.

## ■ Nigeria: Military Aid

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[123876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the training and technical assistance provided to the Nigerian military and police through the UK-Nigeria Security and Defence Partnership; what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of violence in Nigeria; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

2022 was one of the worst years on record for levels of conflict and political violence deaths in Nigeria. The country faces multiple security challenges, including terrorism in the North, intercommunal conflicts and criminal banditry in the North West and Middle Belt and violence in the South East and South West. I [Minister Mitchell] discussed rising insecurity with the leading presidential candidates in December 2022 and January 2023. We monitor the progress and effectiveness of all our support

through the UK-Nigeria Security and Defence Partnership and will discuss this in detail with our Nigerian counterparts at the next annual dialogue later this year.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Ambulance Services: Vehicles

**Wes Streeting:** [\[122488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ambulance vehicles NHS ambulance trusts in England had in each of the last ten years.

**Will Quince:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

### ■ Bereavement Counselling

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate access to professional bereavement counselling for all people who require that service.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Bereavement support is commissioned locally, to meet the needs of the local population. In July 2022, NHS England published statutory guidance to support Integrated Care Boards with their duty to commission palliative care services within integrated care systems. The guidance states commissioners should ensure there is sufficient access to bereavement services.

Additionally, the Government is committed to ongoing engagement with the voluntary sector, including the UK Commission on Bereavement, to explore any additional support needed for those who have been bereaved.

### ■ Breast Cancer: Screening

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[119100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of Cancer Alliances are providing funding for multigene assays, including Oncotype DX, in patients with 1-3 node positive breast cancer.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England, under its direct commissioning function, routinely makes available Oncotype DX in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Diagnostic Guidance 34 as set out in its national test directory for cancer.



## ■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[125319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce the time taken between an urgent referral and the commencement of treatment for cancer; and if he will set a target for reducing that time.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 20 January 2023]:* To support elective recovery and reduce waiting times, including in cancer care, the government has taken steps by working with NHS England to publish the delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlogs in elective care in February 2022, and plans to spend more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to help drive up and protect elective activity.

Diagnostics are crucial part of cancer pathways. The Government awarded £2.3 billion at the 2021 Spending Review to transform diagnostic services over the next three years. As part of this investment, up to 160 new Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs) will deliver additional, digitally connected, diagnostic capacity in England, providing patients with a coordinated set of diagnostic checks, including for cancer. To date, there are 89 CDCs currently operational that have delivered over 2.7 million additional tests, as at December 2022, including vital cancer checks. The target for all cancer treatment pathways is for at least 85% of patients to start their first treatment for cancer within two months of an urgent general practitioner referral.

## ■ Care Homes: Visits

**Dan Carden:**

[\[126787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 121128 on Care Homes: Visits, in the context of the 98.6 per cent of care homes stated, how many care homes does that percentage represent; and what proportion of the total homes in England does that figure represent.

**Helen Whately:**

In the week ending 14 December 2022, 12,808 care homes submitted visiting data within the seven days prior to the data extract, of which 12,633 (98.6%) said they were able to accommodate visits in or out in all circumstances. These represent 86.3% of all care homes, if we include the 1,817 care homes that did not submit data within this seven day period and were therefore excluded from the analysis for that month.

## ■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[125346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many smear tests provided by the NHS were performed in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency and (b) the North East in each year since 2015.



**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table shows the data on the number of individuals aged between 25 years old to 64 years old screened by the National Health Service in each year since 2015 in Newcastle upon Tyne Local Authority and the North East. Data for 2021/2022 will be published in due course.

YEAR	NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE LOCAL	
	AUTHORITY	NORTH EAST
2014/2015	14,651	139,977
2015/2016	14,680	139,643
2016/2017	16,285	151,986
2017/2018	15,665	143,423
2018/2019	16,476	152,828
2019/2020	15,996	147,140
2020/2021	17,579	156,615

Note:

1. Data for Newcastle upon Tyne is recorded by local authority, not by constituency.
2. Recording of data runs from 01 April – 31 March the following year.

**■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[\[122208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support patients diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department is developing a cross-Government delivery plan on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). As part of the delivery plan, we are working with other Government Departments and stakeholders to determine ways to improve experiences and outcomes for all people who have ME/CFS.

**■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Endoscopy**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[119990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 109507 on Community Diagnostic Centres: Endoscopy, which two community diagnostic centres will provide endoscopy services; and whether he plans to increase the number of such centres that will provide endoscopy treatments in 2023.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 16 January 2023]:* Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs) in West Berkshire Community Hospital and Hinckley will provide endoscopy services. We are working with NHS England and local systems to increase the number of CDCs, including those providing endoscopy services, and to increase the number being opened in 2023.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control****Kenny MacAskil:**[\[125502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he will take to ensure that the UK has sufficient surveillance capability to identify and monitor potential variants of covid-19.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The United Kingdom has surveillance systems in place to detect the prevalence and spread of new COVID-19 variants. We continue to test symptomatic patients in hospitals using PCR tests, which can then be genomically sequenced to check for new variants. The Office for National Statistics' COVID-19 Infection Survey and other surveillance studies, also check for variants.

The surveillance arrangements we recently put in place in response to the COVID-19 surge in China, and the risk of new variants emerging there, are an example of the UK's ability to respond to new threats and play our part in global surveillance arrangements. We now test a sample of adult passengers arriving on direct flights from China into Heathrow airport, so we can sequence positive results.

The UK's sequencing data is shared rapidly to help support global awareness and health security. In the last 90 days our sequencing programmes have enabled almost 50,000 uploads of sequenced COVID-19 samples onto the international GISAID database. The UK's COVID-19 surveillance programme remains amongst the largest in the world.

These measures will ensure we can work with partners across the UK and globally to identify and respond if a dangerous variant of COVID-19 emerges.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination****Navendu Mishra:**[\[125511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with (a) Moderna and (b) Pfizer on whether they intend to increase the cost of covid-19 booster vaccines in the UK.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 January 2023]:* We remain in regular discussion with Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech on future COVID-19 vaccine supply. We are unable to provide the information requested on costing, as it is commercially sensitive. Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech continue to negotiate vaccine deals with countries across the world

and their ability to negotiate and compete is contingent on pricing information being kept confidential.

■ **Dementia: Health Services**

**Chris Green:**

[\[123967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS England on the 10-year plan for dementia.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department continues to work closely with NHS England on plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

■ **Dementia: Music Therapy**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[124142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of music on the lives of people with dementia; and whether his Department is taking steps to provide funding for music programmes to help support care for people with dementia.

**Helen Whately:**

Music can play an important part in supporting people living with dementia. The Department has commissioned major research on dementia care and living well with dementia from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). This includes research on the methods and effectiveness of music therapy.

In addition, the Department recently awarded £3.6 billion to the National Academy for Social Prescribing to support development of social prescribing. This will develop the evidence base to help thousands of people, including people living with dementia, to access innovative types of support including musical activities.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Redundancy Pay**

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[89871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he received ministerial severance pay when he left this post in September 2022.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2022]:* The Secretary of State did receive a severance payment when leaving his post previously, as set out in legislation (Section 4 of the Ministerial and Other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991). Details of this payment can be found in the annual report and accounts.

On returning to his post in October 2022, The Secretary of State arranged to repay the full amount to the Department.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Staff****Karin Smyth:** [\[122469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff are employed by his Department as of 13 January 2023; and what the cost is of these employees.

**Will Quince:**

As of 13 January 2023, the Department had a headcount of 3,873. The latest staff cost available as of December 2022, was £21,648,341.18 which includes salary, allowances, non-consolidated performance payments, overtime, employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Waste****Emily Thornberry:** [\[119019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's Greening Government Commitments for 2021-25, how many tonnes of food waste were produced from his Departmental estate in Financial Year (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23 up to 31 December 2022.

**Will Quince:**

In line with the Greening Government Commitments, the Department has committed to measure and report on food waste, for estates with over 50 full time equivalent staff and/or over 500m<sup>2</sup> floor area offering a food service.

The requested information for 2021/2022 will be published in the Greening Government Commitments Annual Report for 2021/2022, due later this year. The data for 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022 will be published in the Annual Report covering 2022/2023.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions****Jessica Morden:** [\[122095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of (a) ordinary and (b) named-day written questions their Department answered on time in 2022.

**Will Quince:**

For the period of 4 January 2022 to 28 April 2022, the Department answered 48.06% of Named Day Written Questions on the named day, and 74.0% of Ordinary Written Questions within a timeframe of five working days.

For the period of 10 May 2022 to 21 July 2022 inclusive, the Department answered 66.11% of Named Day Written Questions on the named day, and 73.5% of Ordinary Written Questions within a timeframe of five working days.

As the Table Office is still collating the on-time answering statistics for the period commencing 22 July 2022 up to the end of that year, it is not possible at this stage to provide an official figure for the entire of 2022.

The Department receives the most Written Questions amongst all government departments, and we continue to progress our on-time performance through a post-pandemic recovery strategy.

### ■ **Doctors: Bureaucracy**

**John Redwood:**

[\[123840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the administration and record keeping hospital doctors need to do to ease their jobs whilst recording important information.

**Will Quince:**

Administration and record keeping are overlapping but slightly separate matters. Some hospitals employ doctors' assistants to help with administrative work, especially for doctors working on wards. There are varying practices across different National Health Service organisations regarding who records information in records. The Records Management Code of Practice for Health and Social Care 2021 is a guide to the practice of managing records. All health and care employees are responsible for managing records appropriately. Records must be managed in accordance with the law and each organisation should have a designated member of staff who leads on records management.

### ■ **Health Professions: Recruitment**

**John Redwood:**

[\[123842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what main criteria are considered when hiring NHS medical staff other than their medical qualifications.

**Will Quince:**

Local National Health Service trusts are responsible for managing their own staffing levels, making recruitment decisions and recruiting the number of health professionals with the appropriate skills and qualifications required to meet local service need.

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

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[126573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, under what circumstances it would be permissible for an autistic person or a person with learning disabilities to be placed in an inpatient unit rated as inadequate by the Care Quality Commission.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Health Service are taking action to avoid people with a learning disability and autistic people being admitted to hospital settings rated inadequate by the Care Quality Commission.

There may, however, be exceptional occasions when a person is admitted to a unit rated inadequate. We expect the decision to admit a person to a unit rated

inadequate to be specific to the person, based upon an explicit agreement with the person and their carer and/or family and a balance of risks and benefits to determine whether admission is the most favourable option for that person. The decision to admit will need to take account of a number of factors, including distance from a person's home, family and loved ones and the impact on timing of discharge or transition planning.

We are continuing to monitor this approach by reviewing the number of any exceptional new admissions to these settings.

## ■ Heart Diseases: Screening

**Jim Shannon:**

**[120965]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of genetic testing for heart (a) troubles and (b) disease.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England has undertaken an assessment and continues to review evidence for using genetic testing for certain heart troubles and heart disease through the National genomic test directory. A robust and evidence-based process is in place to ensure that genomic testing continues to be available for all patients for whom it would be of clinical benefit. Examples of genomic testing available in the National Health Service for conditions which can affect your heart include, Familial hypercholesterolaemia, cardiomyopathies, Long QT syndrome, Brugada syndrome, and others.

## ■ Hospitals: Construction

**Karin Smyth:**

**[122473]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will place in the Library copies of the reports from all independent assurance assessments on the New Hospital Programme.

**Will Quince:**

The New Hospital Programme is part of the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) and is regularly assured by the Infrastructure and Project Authority (IPA). The IPA release an annual report which provides an update on all of the Government's major projects within the GMPP.

The most recent report by the IPA which includes detail on the New Hospital Programme can be found at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1092181/IPA\\_AR2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092181/IPA_AR2022.pdf)

## ■ Hysteroscopy

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of guidance for women undergoing hysteroscopy procedures.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will review the adequacy of the guidance for post-menopausal women undergoing hysteroscopy procedures on levels of pain during and after those procedures.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, information on hysteroscopy procedures and pain management is available on the National Health Service website.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) has published a patient information leaflet on outpatient hysteroscopy, which we encourage NHS trusts to make available to patients ahead of the procedure. NHS England are clear that doctors or nurses carrying out hysteroscopies should ensure that before a woman consents to the procedure she must be clear on what to expect and be offered pain relief options.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to help ensure there are effective feedback processes in place for women undergoing hysteroscopy procedures, before and after surgery.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are arrangements in place for patients to provide feedback, raise a concern or complain about their care, including a National Health Service wide complaints system. These arrangements are an important means of enabling the patient's voice to be heard and identifying where and how NHS services can be improved.

Hysteroscopy can be done as day case procedures under general, spinal or epidural anaesthesia, and it is important that all information covering both benefits and risks are provided to women, so they can make informed choices about their care. Doctors or nurses carrying out hysteroscopies should ensure that before a woman consents to the procedure, she must be clear on what to expect and be offered pain relief options. NHS England are clear that all doctors or nurses carrying out hysteroscopies must make sure women are listened to before, during and after their procedure.

## ■ Hysteroscopy: Counselling and Pain

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that there is effective counselling for women ahead of hysteroscopy procedures; and

discuss with medical professionals the potential merits of ensuring that women are offered anaesthetics to address pain during that procedure.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England are clear that all doctors or nurses carrying out hysteroscopies must make sure women are listened to before, during and after their procedure. The National Health Service website advises women that they can speak to the doctor or nurse before having the procedure about what to expect, and to ask them about pain relief options, including the option of local or general anaesthetic.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is updating their best practice in outpatient hysteroscopy guidelines, due to be published in 2023. RCOG is also producing a good practice paper on pain relief and informed decision-making for outpatient hysteroscopy procedures, due to be published in early 2023. We encourage healthcare professionals to refer to these publications.

■ **Hysteroscopy: Pain**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[126714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications of the First Do No Harm report for pain and trauma management for women having hysteroscopy diagnosis tests.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made. The First Do No Harm report does not refer to pain and trauma management for women having hysteroscopy diagnosis tests.

The Government responded to the First Do No Harm report in July 2021 and published an update report in December 2022.

■ **Immunotherapy**

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[\[R\]](#) [\[120847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hospitals in England currently have the capability to undertake CAR-T therapy; and what steps he plans to take to increase the availability of this therapy.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 18 January 2023]:* There are currently 13 National Health Service centres that are able to provide Chimeric Antigen Receptors Cell Therapy (CAR-T) for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia for children and young people up to the age of 25 years old or are able to provide CAR-T for adults with large B-cell lymphoma.

In October 2021, NHS England wrote to all allogeneic transplant centres in England who were not CAR-T providers to invite them to express an interest in becoming a commissioned provider of CAR-T services in adults.



## ■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

**Kenny MacAskill:**

**[125500]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the agreed aims are of the 100 Days Mission established by the UK Government to address the UK's ability to deploy effective diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines within 100 days of a future pandemic threat; if he will publish the amount of public funding spent in relation to that mission; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

100 Days Mission to Respond to Future Pandemic Threats is a global public-private effort to harness scientific innovation to have safe and effective diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines ready to be deployed within the first 100 days of a future pandemic threat being identified and be ready to do so equitably by 2026.

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shares the commitment and vision for the 100 Days Mission (100DM). UKHSA aim to, drive the momentum and coordinate reporting across government and partners, coordinate UKHSA's contribution to the 100DM domestically and internationally and work across UKHSA to ensure we have the right tools to respond to new pandemic threats on behalf of the United Kingdom.

The UK Government has not allocated a specific amount of funding to the 100DM, however, public funding spent by the organisation relate to ensuring capabilities which include pandemic preparedness.

**Kenny MacAskill:**

**[125501]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken following the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit 2022 to increase preparedness for the next Disease X, including on making safe and effective vaccines within 100 days; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The United Kingdom hosted the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit on 8 March 2022. \$1.5 billion was raised for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). Working with CEPI is part of UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) international approach to future pandemic preparedness.

The Centre for Pandemic Preparedness (CPP) has been established in the UKHSA, to ensure the UK's future pandemic response is faster, more effective and more efficient and to reduce the negative impacts of health threats to the UK. UKHSA has also established a new Vaccine Development and Evaluation Centre, which will lead on developing and evaluating new and existing vaccines in collaboration with partners across government, industry and academia, ensuring we have the tools we need to protect health.

The UK is a proud supporter of the G7 100 Days Mission. Our work across the health family to contribute to this ambition will increase preparedness in the event of a next Disease X.

## ■ Liver Diseases: Death

**Jim Shannon:**

**[126652]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce preventable deaths due to late diagnosis of liver disease.

**Helen Whately:**

To help reduce preventable deaths from liver disease, NHS England has begun to assess the introduction of fibroscans through Community Diagnostic Centres (CDC), but this is currently at the scoping stage. £2.3 billion is being spent to increase the number of CDC diagnosing liver disease to at least 100 sites by March 2025.

Additionally, from April 2022 NHS England launched a commissioning for quality and innovation scheme to incentivise increased identification of cirrhosis and fibrosis in alcohol dependent patients, in acute and mental health services. As a result, patients at the highest risk of Alcohol Related Liver Disease (ARLD) will receive a test to establish the health of their liver and where appropriate be referred on to a specialist pathway of care.

## ■ Long Covid: Social Services

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:**

**[126898]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) level of prevalence of long covid in the adult social care workforce and (b) impact of long covid on the provision of adult social care.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No assessment has been made. The Department uses estimates provided by the Office for National Statistics on the prevalence of ongoing symptoms following COVID-19 infection in the United Kingdom. Estimates are based on the self-reporting of ongoing symptoms by study participants rather than a clinical diagnosis and data is available at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/prevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infectionintheuk/5january2023>

## ■ Mental Health Services

**Barbara Keeley:**

**[126572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the quality of independent reviews of seclusion and long-term segregation under the Mental Health Act Code of Practice.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The current Code of Practice requires that a series of reviews are undertaken when a patient is placed in seclusion or segregation, of which some must be independent. We are currently in the process of reforming the Mental Health Act and will revise its Code of Practice accordingly. As part of this, we will review this chapter of the code to

ensure that it reflects best practice, including for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

The draft Mental Health Bill was published in June 2022 and is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee. The Committee published its recommendations on 19 January 2023 and we will introduce the Bill when parliamentary time allows.

## ■ Midwives

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[125310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Paragraph 5.60 Maternity Services in the November 2022 Autumn Statement Green Book, what his timeline is to increase the size of the NHS midwifery workforce in England by 2,000; and against what baseline will this increase be assessed.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have a number of policies in place to increase the maternity workforce. In 2021, NHS England invested into the establishment 1,200 more midwifery posts and 100 more obstetric consultant posts. Health Education England (HEE) has been working with stakeholders towards a targeted increase of 3,650 midwifery student places by the end of 2022/23, with training leading to professional regulation. By 2021/22, we have seen a total increase of 3003 midwifery starters from the 2018/19 baseline figure.

NHS England are offering funding and support to trusts to recruit an additional 300 to 500 overseas midwives over 2022/23. NHS England have provided funding to maternity services to support the recruitment of Maternity Support Workers (MSW) and to offer enhanced education support to align them with the Health Education England MSW competency, education and career development framework.

## ■ Nab-paclitaxel

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[125358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the breast cancer drug Abraxane will be made available on the NHS.

**Helen Whately:**

Abraxane (nab-paclitaxel) is available to National Health Service patients for several indications including as a monotherapy or as part of combination chemotherapy for adjuvant, neoadjuvant and palliative indications in breast cancer in patients who are hypersensitive to paclitaxel or docetaxel or who are vulnerable to the side-effects of chemotherapy and require a reduction in the risks of treatment.

■ **NHS**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[126867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a long-term NHS funding settlement alongside his NHS workforce plan.

**Will Quince:**

The Government will continue to prioritise investment into the National Health Service. We worked closely with NHS leadership to agree £3.3 billion per year of new funding for the NHS in England at the Autumn Statement. This is on top of the historic funding settlement that the NHS received at the last spending review. The work of the Long Term Workforce Plan will be used to inform future Government work on how to best meet the needs of patients and the NHS workforce.

Funding plans will be subject to business and financial planning and investment decisions once the work has been completed. Funding plans beyond the current Spending Review period will be subject to the outcome of future Spending Reviews.

■ **NHS: Housing**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[120097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to prevent NHS staff from being evicted from staff accommodation due to redevelopment in the Diamond Estate at Springfield Hospital.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 16 January 2023]:* South West London and St George's NHS Mental Health Trust is building new hospital buildings to provide the best possible environments to help patients recover from serious mental illness in a safe, modern setting. The trust is also building more than 800 new homes for local families, of which 20% are affordable, with future phases of up to 50% affordable homes, supporting people to work and stay within their communities.

To do this, the trust needed to make changes to its estate which resulted in some staff in residential accommodation needing to vacate the accommodation by the end of January 2023. In response, the trust worked closely with tenants to ensure they had adequate time to prepare for these changes and find new homes. In the months leading up to when formal notice was given in March 2022, the trust regularly engaged with and met with tenants, and through working with Wandsworth Borough Council, supported tenants to find new, suitable accommodation, including linking tenants in with several housing organisations which provide key worker accommodation. The trust will continue to help members of staff access the right support for them by signposting members of staff to local agencies.

**■ NHS: Managers****John Redwood:**[\[123839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many managers have been appointed in the NHS since the end of 2019.

**Will Quince:**

The following table shows number and the change in full-time equivalent managers working in the National Health Service trusts and commissioning bodies from the end of 2019 to the most recent month that the data is available.

	DECEMBER 2019	OCTOBER 2022	CHANGE
Senior Managers	10,981	12,698	1,717 (15.6%)
Managers	22,137	23,966	1,829 (8.3%)
Total of managers	33,118	36,664	3,546 (10.7%)

Source: NHS Digital Workforce Statistics

**■ NHS: Ministers of Religion****Rachael Maskell:**[\[126723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of chaplain services in the NHS; and whether the provision of such services are considered to be an essential part of someone's care provided by the NHS.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Chaplaincy and faith services are funded and commissioned locally, in response to the needs of individual patient populations and workforce. When commissioning chaplaincy and faith services, the NHS Standard Contract requires providers to take account of the spiritual, religious, pastoral and cultural needs of service users.

NHS England recognises the important role of chaplaincy services in supporting pastoral, spiritual and religious needs and has produced NHS Chaplaincy Guidelines. These guidelines are currently being updated to support National Health Service organisations in delivering high quality and inclusive pastoral, spiritual and religious care services for all. The revised guidelines will be published in 2023.

**■ NHS: Staff****Caroline Lucas:**[\[120931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 108144 on NHS: Staff, with which (a) trades unions, (b) medical royal colleges, (c) NHS system leaders, (d) voluntary organisations his Department consulted on the NHS workforce plan.

**Will Quince:**

The following table shows the organisations that have been engaged. This list is not exhaustive because NHS England and Health Education England leaders and programme teams are also working with external stakeholders and their contribution is also informing the plan's development.

TRADE UNIONS, ROYAL COLLEGES AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES	REGULATORS	MEMBERS OF CANCER CHARITIES GROUP
Unison	Professional Standards Authority	Alike
Unite	General Medical Council	AMMF – the cholangiocarcinoma charity
GMB	Care Quality Commission	Anthony Nolan
Managers in Partnership	Healthcare and Professions Council	Blood Cancer UK
British Medical Association	Nursing and Midwifery Council	Bloodwise
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges	Think tanks	Bone Cancer Research Trust
Royal College of Nursing	Nuffield Trust	Bowel Cancer UK
Royal College of Midwives	The Health Foundation	Brain Trust – the brain cancer people
Royal College of Physicians	The King's Fund	The Brain Tumour Charity
Royal College of Surgeons	Regulators	Brain Tumour Research
Royal College of General Practitioners	Professional Standards Authority	British Liver Trust
Royal College of Psychiatrists	General Medical Council	Breast Cancer Now
Royal College of Anaesthetists	Care Quality Commission	Cancer 52
Royal College of Pathologists	Healthcare and Professions Council	Cancer Research UK
Royal College of Ophthalmologists	Nursing and Midwifery Council	CATTS (Cancer Awareness for Teens & Twenties)
Royal College of Occupational Therapists	Think tanks	Chai Cancer Care

TRADE UNIONS, ROYAL COLLEGES AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES	REGULATORS	MEMBERS OF CANCER CHARITIES GROUP
Royal Pharmaceutical Society	Nuffield Trust	Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists	The Health Foundation	CLIC Sargent
Royal College of Ophthalmologists	The King's Fund	CoppaFeel!
Royal College of Emergency Medicine		DKMS
Royal College of Podiatry		Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust
The Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine		Eve Appeal
The Society of Radiographers		Fight Bladder Cancer
Institute of Osteopathy		GO Girls Support
College of Operating Department Practitioners		Guts UK
British Association of Art Therapists		Haven House
British Association of Drama therapists		Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust
British Association for Music Therapy		Kidney Cancer UK
The Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists		Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce
British Dietetic Association		Leukaemia Care
British and Irish Orthoptic Society		Leukaemia UK
British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists		Lymphoma Action
College of Paramedics		Macmillan Cancer Support

TRADE UNIONS, ROYAL COLLEGES AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES	REGULATORS	MEMBERS OF CANCER CHARITIES GROUP
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy		Maggie's – everyone's home of cancer care
College of General Dentistry		Marie Curie
Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive healthcare		MDS UK Patient Support Group
Queen's Nursing Institute		Melanoma Focus
Institute of Health Visiting		Melanoma UK
British Society of Rheumatology		Mesothelioma
The Richmond Group of Charities (including Macmillan Cancer Support, Diabetes UK, Asthma UK, Age UK)		Mylenoma UK
Cancer Charities Group (*see separate list for members)		National Cancer Research Institute
Council of Deans of Health		Neuroendocrine Cancer UK
Medical Schools Council		OcuMel UK
Universities UK		Ovacome
University Alliance		Ovarian Cancer Action
Office for Students		Pancreatic Cancer Action
Skills for Care		Pancreatic Cancer UK
Local Government Association		Paul's Cancer Support
Association of Directors of Adult Social Services		Penny Brohn UK
Social Partnership Forum		Prostate Cancer Research
NHS providers		Prostate Cancer UK
NHS Employers		Race Against Blood Cancer
The Shelford Group		Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation



TRADE UNIONS, ROYAL COLLEGES AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES	REGULATORS	MEMBERS OF CANCER CHARITIES GROUP
ICS leaders		Salivary Gland Cancer UK
NHS Confederation		Sarcoma UK
Community Providers Network		Shine Cancer Support
		Solving Kids Cancer
		Target Ovarian Cancer
		Teenage Cancer Trust
		Trekstock
		The Joshua Tree
		WMUK – The charity for Waldenstrom's macroglobulinaemia
		World Cancer Research Fund

Further discussions will take place before the plan is finalised. This will include engagement with patient representative groups. NHS England can discuss with any organisations interested in the development of the Plan.

**John Redwood:**

[\[123838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional non-medical staff have been recruited to the NHS since the end of 2019.

**Will Quince:**

The following table shows the increase in number of full-time equivalent non-medical staff, by staff group, working in National Health Service trusts and commissioning bodies from the end of 2019 to the latest month that the data is available.

STAFF GROUP	DECEMBER 2019	OCTOBER 2022	CHANGE
Non-medical professionally qualified clinical staff	479,815	527,280	47,465 (9.9%)
Support to clinical staff	341,992	385,084	43,092 (12.6%)
NHS infrastructure support staff	180,540	205,321	24,781 (13.7%)

STAFF GROUP	DECEMBER 2019	OCTOBER 2022	CHANGE
Total non-medical staff	1,002,347	1,117,685	115,338 (11.5%)

Source: NHS Digital Workforce Statistics.

Note:

Non-medical professionally clinical qualified staff will include nurses, midwives, ambulance staff and scientific, therapeutic and technical staff.

## ■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[117487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter sent by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the Joint Council for Cosmetic Practitioners and the British Beauty Council concerning regulations on non-surgical aesthetic procedures on 26 October 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

A response to the letter was sent on the 17 January 2023.

## ■ Nurses: Labour Turnover

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[126528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of revalidation procedures upon retention of qualified nurses in the UK; and whether any comparative studies have been carried out in respect of nurses working in the USA.

**Will Quince:**

Revalidation supports public protection by requiring nurses, nursing associates and midwives to demonstrate their ability to practise safely and effectively throughout their career. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requires registrants to revalidate every three years by submitting a range of evidence demonstrating their skills and adherence to the NMC Code of professional standards and behaviours.

As the independent regulator of nurses and midwives in the United Kingdom and nursing associates in England, the NMC is responsible for nurse revalidation. The Department has not carried out any comparative studies in respect of nurses working in the United States of America.

## ■ Prostate Cancer: Screening

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[124096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to expand testing for prostate cancer.

**Helen Whately:**

The current recommendation is that a population screening programme for prostate cancer should be not introduced. This is because the screening test of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is not accurate enough to detect prostate cancer that needs treatment. However, there is a National Health Service prostate cancer risk management programme that provides general practitioners and primary care professionals with information to help asymptomatic men over the age of 50 years old who ask about PSA testing for prostate cancer. The UK National Screening Committee is due to review the evidence to screen for prostate cancer in 2023/24.

**■ Social Services: Finance****Daisy Cooper:**[\[124106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund has been received by (a) care home providers and (b) domiciliary care providers.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 19 January 2023]:* The Department does not distribute money directly to providers. The £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund will be distributed 40%, £200 million, to local authorities and 60%, £300 million, to integrated care boards (ICBs). Funding will then be pooled locally into the Better Care Fund. It is for local systems to plan jointly how to spend the funding, within the scope of conditions set out by the Department. The first tranche 40%, £200 million, was received by ICBs and local authorities by 9 December 2022. The second tranche 60%, £300 million, will be paid out in late January this year, subject to grant conditions being met.

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:**[\[126899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022, Official Report, column 850, on what evidential basis the Chancellor said that 200,000 additional care packages could be delivered due to funding made available for the health and social care sector in the next two years.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is making available up to £7.5 billion over two years to support adult social care and discharge. Dividing this amount of new funding by the average cost of a long-term care package, which is approximately £37,500, provides an illustration of how many long-term care packages this funding could equate to. Local areas will be responsible for deciding how this funding is best used.

**■ Social Services: Staff**

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[126897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Social Care of 6 December 2022, Official Report, col 188-190, what steps he plans to take to reform the social care workforce.

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[126900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the press release entitled £500 million to develop the adult social care workforce, published by his Department on 5 April 2022, and in the context of the repeal of the Health and Social Care Levy, what steps he is taking to provide funding for the improvement of (a) recruitment, (b) retention, (c) progression and (d) staff wellbeing in the adult social care sector; and when this funding will be made available.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is making available up to £7.5 billion over two years to support adult social care and discharge, with up to £2.8 billion available in 2023/24 and £4.7 billion in 2024/25.

In spring 2023, the Government will publish a plan for adult social care system reform. This will set out how we will build on the progress so far to implement the vision for adult social care set out in the People at the Heart of Care White Paper. This includes our plans to reform the social care workforce.

**■ Terminal Illnesses: Children**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[122061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department provided for services that support children with terminal life-shortening conditions in each of the last three years.

**Helen Whately:**

Funding for children's and young people's palliative and end of life care is made available locally through integrated care boards, who are responsible for commissioning services in response to the needs of their local population.

At a national level, NHS England supports palliative and end of life care for children and young people through the Children and Young People's hospice grant, providing approximately £15 million in 2020/21, £17 million in 2021/22, £21 million in 2022/23, rising to £25 million in 2023/24. Furthermore, as part of the NHS Long Term Plan, up to £2 million in 2020/21, up to £3 million in 2021/22 and up to £5 million in 2022/23 of match funding has been made available to commissioners who increase their overall level of investment in local children's palliative and end of life care services, rising to up to £7 million in 2023/24.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Asylum: Rwanda****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[123954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many commercial aviation companies her Department has had discussions with since 14 June 2022 on the potential provision of charter flights between the UK and Rwanda for the purposes of implementing policies set out in the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We do not routinely disclose commercial or operational information relating to individual charter flights.

■ **Asylum: Sefton****Peter Dowd:**[\[125389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has had recent discussions with Sefton Council on the potential placement of people claiming asylum within the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The record number of people that have crossed the Channel in small boats in recent years has placed the Home Office's asylum support infrastructure and accommodation services under immense pressure.

The Home Office are engaged with many councils such as Sefton in respect of finding appropriate accommodation for Asylum accommodation in line with our statutory obligations.

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

■ **Asylum: Torture****Jessica Morden:**[\[125291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers who have been victims of torture have been waiting for an asylum interview for two years or more; and what steps the Government is taking to expedite interviews in those cases.

**Robert Jenrick:**

This data is not held in a reportable format, not routinely published, and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision, by duration, for main claimant only. This data can be found in the Asy\_04 tab of the published Immigration Statistics: List of tables - GOV.UK ( [List of tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) )

We are taking immediate action to rapidly speed up processing times and eliminate the backlog of people waiting for initial asylum decisions by the end of 2023.

To accelerate decision making we are driving productivity improvements by simplifying and modernising our system. This includes: shorter, more focussed interviews; removing unnecessary interviews; making guidance simpler and more accessible; dealing with cases more swiftly where they can be certified as manifestly unfounded; recruiting extra decision makers; and allocating dedicated resources for different nationalities.

## ■ Cocaine

**Crispin Blunt:**

[R] [\[126509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the evidential basis is for cocaine being classed as a Schedule 2 controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

**Chris Philp:**

Cocaine is controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as a Class A drug and placed in Schedule 2 to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 ("the 2001 Regulations").

Drugs placed in Schedule 2 to the 2001 Regulations have some known therapeutic value in the UK and are subject to strict prescribing, record keeping and storage requirements. In addition to the 2001 Regulations, the prescribing of cocaine will also be subject to the requirement of the Misuse of Drugs (Supply to Addicts) Regulations 1997, if prescribed to someone with a drug dependence disorder.

Cocaine is a licensed medicine authorised for local anaesthesia and vasoconstriction of the mucous membranes, for use in procedures such as oral and ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgery.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide

**Steve Reed:**

[\[125376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an estimate of the number of domestic abuse victims killed by a partner previously convicted of such an offence in each of the last 30 years.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The Home Office does not routinely collect data on the number of domestic abuse victims killed by a partner previously convicted of such an offence. However, the Home Office has funded the Domestic Homicide and Suspected Victim Suicides Project since 2020. This is led by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing and hosted by the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme.

The second 12-month report was published on 05 December 2022 and includes the analysis that within intimate partner homicides, the proportion of suspects previously known to police for domestic abuse was 51% in Year 1 and 63% in Year 2.

Reducing domestic homicide is a priority for the Home Office and as part of this in the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan published in March 2022, we have committed to improving our knowledge about domestic abuse through better data. Any improvements in data on and knowledge of domestic abuse can be fed back into the system to tailor and refine the response to domestic abuse. The Home Office continue to fund the Domestic Homicide Project in order to further build the evidence base on what works to prevent domestic homicide.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[125429]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the press release by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities entitled New over £650 million support package for Ukrainians sees increased thank you payments for longer-term hosts, published on 14 December 2022, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing similar financial support to people hosting Ukrainian refugees under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme are given the same access to work, benefits and public services as those coming here under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, as laid down in Appendix Ukraine to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at: [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules-immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme-guidance).

The Ukraine Family Scheme does not require sponsors to provide accommodation. Therefore, the Government has not extended the 'thank you' payment offered to those providing a home to refugees arriving in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Sponsoring family members able to provide appropriate accommodation can choose to sponsor their family members under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in order to become eligible for the 'thank you' payment. They must undergo all the relevant local authority checks before their family member arrives in the UK.

The conditions attached to both Ukraine Scheme visas are identical in terms of length of permission to stay, entitlements to work and access to public funds. Local authorities also have flexibility as to how they use the £150 million funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme to support Ukrainians on the Ukraine Family Scheme.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[123953]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much the Government has incurred for legal challenges on its policy on the EU Settlement Scheme since that scheme was announced.

**Robert Jenrick:**

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

■ **Members: Correspondence****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[125431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many enquiries from hon. Members received by her Department prior to 1 July 2022 have not received a response.

**Robert Jenrick:**

A total of 830 enquiries received from Members of the House of Commons before 1 July 2022 have not received a response. We expect these enquiries to receive a response in the next two weeks.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[125432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many outstanding enquiries there are for her Department from hon. Members.

**Robert Jenrick:**

There are currently 10,510 outstanding enquiries. We expect these enquiries to receive a response in the next two weeks.

■ **Passports****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[123916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to provide guidance to airline carriers on processing travellers' passports consistently.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Under the Carriers Liability scheme, carriers have responsibilities to ensure their passengers are properly documented for travel to the UK and may be subject to charges if they allow passengers to travel without a correct document. Details of the scheme are published on gov.uk.

To assist carriers in their duties, the Home Office issues core guidance regarding the necessary checks carriers are expected to undertake, this is circulated directly to carriers. In addition, the Home Office regularly train carriers and their handling agents, both at arrival ports in the UK and locations overseas, in documentary requirements and detection techniques. This training is complemented by published alerts to highlight any new trends or arising issues, and by a 24-hour carrier call service to help advise carriers on specific documentation concerns.

■ **Passports: Applications****Sarah Olney:**[\[117778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 3 January 2023 to Question 104227, in addition to the percentage figures provided, if she



will she provide figures on the number of passports applications not fully processed within 10 weeks in each of the last three years.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Since April 2021, His Majesty's Passport Office has advised people to allow up to 10 weeks when applying for their passport using the standard service in the UK. Of the standard UK applications resulting in a printed passport in the week ending 15 January 2023, 99.2% had been processed within ten weeks

The application processing capacity was reduced in the initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Published processing times for overseas applications vary, starting from 11 weeks.

The number of UK and overseas applications that were processed in over ten weeks for each year from 2020, is shown in the table below:

YEAR	TOTAL PRINTED *	VOLUME OVER 10 WEEKS	PERCENTAGE OVER 10 WEEKS
2020	3,880,691	308,468	7.95%
2021	4,525,441	61,210	1.35%
2022	7,583,557	409,063	5.39%

\* Data for priority services is recorded as performance against the respective service level only (1 day for Premium, 7 days for Fast Track), with the end-to-end processing time not being held in a reportable format. Passports printed under a priority service are therefore excluded.

■ **Psilocybin: Misuse**

**Crispin Blunt:**

[R] [\[126511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7725 on Psilocybin: Health Hazards and to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 24081 on Drugs: Misuse, on what evidential basis penalties are imposed for the possession of psilocybin.

**Chris Philp:**

Psilocybin, as an "ester of psilocin", is controlled as a Class A drug under the 1971 Act and has been since the Act was introduced.

Psilocybin is also placed in Schedule 1 to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. Psilocin is subject to the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, to which the United Kingdom is signatory.

As the then Crime and Policing Minister set out in his response to Question 7725, a number of drugs which have been controlled under the 1971 Act for a considerable period of time have not been subject to analysis or recent analysis of harm. The

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs regularly provides advice on the harms of drugs, and these are published on the gov.uk website.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Angela Crawley:**

**[123993]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on establishing a reunification process for people brought to the UK under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

In line with our existing policy on resettlement, those resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) may be able to be accompanied by their immediate family members (their spouse or partner, and children under 18).

For those evacuated from Afghanistan under the ACRS without their immediate family members, further information will be made available in due course about options for reuniting with them.

Those referred by UNHCR under the ACRS will have refugee status and will therefore be able to access the refugee family reunion route. Those without refugee status wishing to bring family members would need to apply through the regular family visa route under Appendix FM of the Immigration rules.

The Government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable and at-risk people fleeing Afghanistan. However, the situation is very complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave the country. This includes eligible immediate family members of those being resettled under the ACRS.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[124071]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to take steps to implement a family reunification scheme under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

In line with our existing policy on resettlement, those resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) may be able to be accompanied by their immediate family members.

Those evacuated from Afghanistan under the ACRS without their immediate family members, further information will be made available in due course about options for reuniting with them.

Those referred under the ACRS by UNHCR will have refugee status and will therefore be able to access the refugee family reunion route. Those without refugee status wishing to bring family members would need to apply through the regular family visa route under Appendix FM of the Immigration rules.

The Government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable people fleeing Afghanistan. The situation is very complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave the country. This includes eligible immediate family members of those being resettled under the ACRS.

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [126513]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme: Pathway 2.

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [126514]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there is a quota for the number of people who can be resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme: Pathway 2.

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [126515]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there is a quota for the number of unaccompanied children who can be resettled under pathway 2 of the ACRS scheme.

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [126517]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department has shared with the UNHCR on the (a) procedure and (b) quotas for referral to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme: Pathway 2.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We anticipate receiving referrals from UNHCR for up to 2,000 refugees during the first year of pathway 2, although this number will be kept under review. We will continue to receive UNHCR referrals to the scheme in coming years.

We have brought around 6,000 Afghans to the UK under ARAP and ACRS Pathway 1 since Operation Pitting and the fall of Kabul.

Statistics are available at [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data)

The Government has committed to welcoming up to 20,000 people over the coming years. The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will provide up to 20,000 women, children, and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

UNHCR is responsible for making referrals onto the ACRS. UNHCR will refer individuals in accordance with their standard resettlement categories and policies, based on an assessment of protection needs and vulnerabilities, in line with their resettlement submission criteria. This includes women and girls at risk.

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [126516]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the (a) eligibility criteria, (b) prioritisation criteria and (c) guidance for caseworkers for pathway 2 of the ACRS scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Under Pathway 2 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refer refugees who have fled Afghanistan to the scheme, based on an assessment of their protection needs and vulnerabilities.

UNHCR is responsible for out-of-country casework activity before individuals are referred to the Home Office.

The seven resettlement submission categories used by UNHCR are:

- Legal and or Physical Protection Needs
- Survivors of Torture and/or Violence
- Medical Needs
- Women and Girls at Risk
- Family Reunification
- Children and Adolescents at Risk; and
- Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions

We are pleased to have welcomed the first arrivals to the UK under this pathway and we will continue to receive further referrals.

Further information on the referral process can be found on the UNHCR website:

<https://help.unhcr.org>

**■ Spiking**

**Peter Gibson:** [124099]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in reported incidents of spiking; and what steps she is taking to ensure that perpetrators are (a) caught, (b) prosecuted and (c) appropriately sentenced.

**Peter Gibson:** [124100]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of providing free spiking test kits in nightclubs and bars.

**Peter Gibson:** [124101]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing funding for anti-spiking policing where incidences of that offence are high.

**Peter Gibson:** [124102]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the prevalence of needle spiking.

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[124103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help improve training on tackling needle spiking for (a) nightclub and (b) bar staff.

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[124104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help improve training for police officers on tackling needle spiking.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The Home Office collect details of spiking incidents when they are recorded through the Home Office Data Hub and this information is provided by most forces in England and Wales.

Using these police recorded crime data the assessment is that during the third quarter of 2021/2022 there was a significant rise in people reporting to police that they suspected they had been the victims of spiking. During the first three quarters in 2022/2023 the levels of recorded crime that fall under the offences which cover spiking across England and Wales have reduced significantly, albeit they are demonstrably higher than they were in the period running up to Q3 2021/22.

I urge anyone who suspects that they have been spiked to contact the police.

The Home Office is leading the cross-government approach to understanding and tackling spiking. In 2021, the then Home Secretary asked the National Police Chief's Council to urgently review and coordinate the national policing response to spiking. Since then:

- Spiking has been incorporated into the Government's communications campaign to tackle violence against women and girls, known as 'ENOUGH'. This includes providing important information about the crime on the campaign website and signposting victims to support services.
- We have worked closely with the Festivals and Outdoor Events sector to ensure the safety of the public at summer events, ensuring that sufficient protocols, training, communications, and guidance was in place for event organisers, the police, security personnel and audiences.
- Government have supported Universities UK to provide guidance to universities on spiking published ahead of the Autumn 2022 term and the 'freshers' period. We provided further communications on spiking to local authorities and supported NPCC targeted communications.
- Police forces across the country increased their focus on spiking with high visibility police patrols across town centres and areas with a high density of pubs, bars and clubs.
- The Police have produced a forensic strategy and have worked with the forensic provider Eurofins to develop a rapid testing capability. This accredited capability enables the police to send up to 50 samples per week with a project turnaround of

2-3 weeks, with the options for samples to be upgraded to be used as evidence in criminal proceedings. This enables law enforcement to better support victims, and also build our understanding of what drugs are being used and how common or not they are.

- The Home Secretary will be publishing a report in April on the nature and prevalence of spiking, and action that government has taken, and will take, to tackle it.

In December 2021, the NPCC established a rapid urine testing capability, which to date, remains the only accredited urine testing service which can later be “upgraded” for use in criminal proceedings.

The government position remains clear: off the shelf testing kits should not be used in isolation due to their unknown accuracy and the lack of any standardisation across the industry. If such test kits are used, we still recommend that individuals contact the police to submit a sample for processing through the rapid testing capability as soon as possible in order to receive the most accurate results and to help bring spiking offenders to justice.

Frontline police officers are trained to support victims when they report crime. All police forces receive regular updates from the National Police Chiefs’ Council spiking gold group. This helps to standardise procedures across England and Wales but provides forces with flexibility to adapt training to their local situation.

Through Safety of Women at Night Fund and the current (fourth) round of the Safer Streets Fund we have awarded funding for a range of initiatives to tackle drink spiking, including training for night-time economy staff, CCTV and street lighting and drink protectors.

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) has ensured that the training which door supervisors and security guards must undergo in order to obtain an SIA licence includes specific content on preventing violence against women and girls, and it is running campaigns to remind the industry and operatives of their role and responsibility in keeping people safe, with a focus on women’s safety.

The government also welcomes initiatives such as Ask Angela and Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (LSAVI) and would encourage local areas or venues to consider how they can be used or replicated where necessary.

## ■ Visas: Afghanistan

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[126659]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 6 June to Question 9880 on Visas: Afghanistan, whether the policy applies to Afghani nationals seeking to enter the UK under family reunion applications; and if she will place in the library of the House a list of exceptional circumstances.

**Robert Jenrick:**

English language tests are not a requirement under the Refugee Family Reunion route. Applicants are also exempt from the 'Knowledge of language and life in the UK' requirement at the settlement stage.

**■ Visas: Africa****Chi Onwurah:****[126634]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for short term visit visas to the UK were made by people applying from African countries in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020, (d) 2021 and (e) 2022; and how many of those were refused in each of those years. .

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on Visitor visa applications and refusals for African nationals are published in tables Vis\_D01 and Vis\_D02, respectively, of the '[Entry clearance visa application and outcomes detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022.

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

**Chi Onwurah:****[126636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the report of the Africa APPG on Visas, what progress her Department has made on the availability of digital applications..

**Robert Jenrick:**

Through the Future Borders and Immigration System (FBIS) programme, we are delivering a streamlined, simplified and modern visa system that meets the needs of the Home Office and its customers.

Increasingly, we are replacing physical and paper-based products and services with online and digital services. This provides applicants with a simple online application process, which enables some applicants to provide biometrics and establish or verify their identity using suitable smartphones.

The transition towards eVisas is already underway with millions of customers already receiving digital evidence of their immigration permission and using this to enter and live in the UK. We aim to transition to a fully digital end to end system by 2025. We are also creating clearer, accessible guidance and content on gov.uk and have made it simpler and more intuitive for people to understand if they are eligible for a visa, what steps they need to take to apply and, if granted, the conditions of their stay in the UK.



**■ Visas: Doctors****Sarah Olney:****[126756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas were issued to doctors to work in the NHS in each of the last three years.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not routinely publish data on specific occupations or places of employment.

We do publish data on entry clearance visas in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on Skilled Worker - Health & Care visas issued are published in Vis\_D02 of the 'Entry clearance visa application and outcomes detailed datasets'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

**■ Visas: India****Chi Onwurah:****[126632]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Tech Nation Visas (Tier 1 Visa or Exceptional Visas) were given to Indian nationals in (a) 2022, (b) 2021, (c) 2020, (d) 2019 and (e) 2018.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on Global Talent and Tier 1 – Exceptional Talent visas issued, by nationality, are published in Vis\_D02 of the '[Entry clearance visa application and outcomes detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2022.

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

**■ Visas: Ukraine****Beth Winter:****[124132]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 December 2022 to Question 110906 on Visas: Ukraine, how many individuals, who are family members of Ukrainian nationals granted leave to remain in the UK, have been granted a visa within (a) one month, (b) two months, (c) three months and (d) more than three months of application.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The latest published figures are found here [Statistics on Ukrainians in the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).



Applications are being processed as quickly as possible. There are no published service standards for processing visa applications for Ukrainian refugees.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Arms Trade: Serbia

**Alicia Kearns:**

[124156]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the UK has sold weapons or defensive arms to Serbia in the last three years; and whether the UK plans to sell weapons or defensive arms to Serbia in the next two years.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>. These reports contain detailed information, including the overall value, the type (e.g. Military, Other), and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

All future export licence applications received will be assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria. These Criteria are one of the means by which we implement a range of international legal commitments including the Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant rules of international law.

### ■ Department for International Trade: Redundancy Pay

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[119115]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many Ministers in her Department received ministerial severance pay for leaving office in 2022.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Under the Ministerial and Other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991, eligible Ministers who leave office are entitled to a one-off payment equivalent to one quarter of their annual salary at the point at which they leave Government.

Details of such payments are published in the departmental annual reports and accounts, and ministerial salaries are published on GOV.UK at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-salary-data/salaries-of-members-of-his-majestys-government-april-2022-html>

## JUSTICE

### ■ Courts: Standards

**Steve Reed:**

[126670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of court cases that have had a waiting time of one year or more in each year since 2010.

**Mike Freer:**

The volume of defendants whose cases were disposed of with a waiting time of one year or more can be found in the attached table with annual data from 2014 to 2021. Data prior to 2014 is not available.

There are a number of reasons why a case may be delayed, including evidence delays and advocates' failing to attend.

We are committed to help improve waiting times for victims of crime and to reduce the outstanding caseload following the pandemic and recent Bar action. We have removed the limit on sitting days, extended 30 Nightingale courtrooms and are extending our plans for judicial recruitment to increase sitting capacity.

**Attachments:**

1. Table\_126670 [2023-01-23 126670 Table.xlsx]

**Afzal Khan:**[\[126795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the size of the backlog in (a) family courts case and (b) all courts cases.

**Mike Freer:**

The number of outstanding cases is published in the monthly HMCTS Management Information, accessible at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmcts-management-information>.

**Energy: Meters****Kenny MacAskil:**[\[124111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information he holds on the number of warrants issued in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) Scotland to allow energy companies to forcibly enter properties to install prepayment meters in each of the last three years; and if he will provide a breakdown by (i) energy company, (ii) local authority and (iii) parliamentary constituency.

**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[124112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to obtain information on the number of warrants issued by (a) magistrates in England, (b) magistrates in Wales, (c) magistrates in Northern Ireland and (d) by sheriffs in Scotland to allow energy companies to forcibly enter properties to install prepayment meters.

**Mike Freer:**

The judicial systems in both Scotland and Northern Ireland are devolved, and the Ministry of Justice holds no data in respect of applications made in those jurisdictions.

We do hold information on the number of warrants applied for and granted. I refer the honourable Member to the answer given on 18 January 2023 to Question [UIN 122504](#) where I published data on warrants from January 2020 to December 2022.

Data by energy supplier on the number of warrants granted and refused following an application by an energy supplier could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Data on a local authority and constituency level is not held.

The Government is committed to supporting all households with the Energy Price Guarantee - saving a typical household c.£900 this winter – plus the £400 discount on energy bills. The most vulnerable households will get £1,200, plus other cost of living support delivered via benefits and pensions.

## ■ Homicide and Rape: Sentencing

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[123942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of sentencing guidelines for (a) rape and (b) murder; and what steps he is taking to ensure that these crimes receive the most severe punishments.

**Edward Argar:**

The independent Sentencing Council is responsible for the production and revision of sentencing guidelines, which the courts must follow, unless it would be contrary to the interest of justice. The Council also undertakes evaluation of the guidelines to ensure they are operating as intended.

Rape carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, and the average custodial sentence length for adults (aged 21 and older) increased from 99.5 months in 2010, to 114.3 months in 2021. The sentencing guidelines are clear that offences which involve the greatest harm and culpability can expect to attract the toughest sentences, for example where there has been a significant degree of planning or an abuse of trust.

Murder convictions attract a mandatory life sentence. Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Code sets out statutory guidance to be applied by the independent courts when setting the minimum term of imprisonment, at which point they may be considered for release on licence by the Parole Board.

The Government regularly reviews Schedule 21 and has expanded the list of whole life order (WLO) starting points through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 to include the premeditated murder of a child and enabled judges to impose a WLO on those aged 18-20 in exceptional circumstances.

Furthermore, in 2021 the Government commissioned an independent expert, Clare Wade KC, to undertake a review of domestic homicide sentencing. The review was delivered to the department in June 2022 and prior to publication the Government is carefully considering its recommendations and next steps.

## ■ Prisoners: Gender Recognition

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[126825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2022 to Question 108375 on Prisoners: Gender Recognition, what his Department's definition is of (a) transmale, and (b) transfemale.

**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[126826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2022 to Question 108375 on Prisoners: Gender Recognition, on what date his Department started using the term (a) transmale, and (b) transfemale.

**Damian Hinds:**

The terms “transmale” and “transfemale” used in the table provided in the answer to question 108375 were used erroneously in seeking to use the same language as the categories used in Question 108375 (“transman” and “transwoman”) and do not represent a change in the department’s definition of transgender men and women.

■ **Prisons: Staff****Steve Reed:**[\[125378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prison staff who cited working conditions as their reason for leaving in each of the last five years.

**Damian Hinds:**

HMPPS does not hold data of Prison staff citing their reasons for leaving to be ‘working conditions’.

■ **Remand in Custody: Prisoners' Release****Steve Reed:**[\[126663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the total number of individuals in custodial remand who have subsequently been released without trial in each year since 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

The Ministry of Justice holds data on the number of remand decisions and a defendant’s subsequent outcome, covering the period requested and this can be viewed in the following data tools:

- Source 1: [Remands: Crown Court data tool](#)
- Source 2: [Remands: Magistrates' court data tool](#)

An individual would only be remanded in custody by the court and then released without trial in instances where the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has withdrawn the case because of a lack of evidence and so the case cannot progress to trial.

■ **Reoffenders: Convictions****Ellie Reeves:**[\[125451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many serious further offence notifications resulted in a conviction by each type of offence in each year since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

The table below sets out the total number of notifications – that is, where an offender subject to probation supervision has been charged with a qualifying serious further offence (SFO) – which resulted in a conviction for an SFO, by SFO offence, for notifications submitted to NOMS/HMPPS between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2014.

The latest figures for 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2021 were published in October 2022 and can be accessed by the following link: [Proven reoffending statistics: October to December 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-october-to-december-2020).

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Total SFO notifications</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>507</b>
<b>Total SFO convictions [1]</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>274</b>
Murder	50	67	51	59
Attempted murder/ Conspiracy to commit murder	12	13	16	15
Manslaughter	18	15	16	23
Attempted Rape/Rape /Assault by penetration including on a child under 13	101	77	93	80
Arson with intent to endanger life	8	8	7	10
Kidnapping /Abduction/False imprisonment	2	14	16	19
Death involving driving or vehicle taking	8	6	5	8
Other serious sexual/violent offences [2]	58	53	66	60

1. Time period for conviction data relates to the date of SFO notification to HMPPS not the date of conviction.
2. "Other serious sexual/violent offences" refer to other serious violent or sexual offences which carry a maximum custodial penalty of more than 10 years.
3. The data only includes convictions for serious further offences that have been notified to the national SFO Team, HMPPS.
4. The data provided are provisional subject to change when any outstanding cases are concluded at court.
5. Conviction data also includes cases where the offender committed suicide or died prior to the trial, where the judicial process concluded that they were responsible.
6. The data for April 2010 to March 2014 has been updated and may differ to the original publication due to data cleansing, re-categorising and re-grouping.
7. Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording systems, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Serious further offences are incredibly rare, with fewer than 0.5% of offenders supervised by the Probation Service going on to commit serious further offences but each one is investigated fully so we can take action where necessary. We have also injected extra funding of more than £155 million a year into the Probation Service to deliver tougher supervision, reduce caseloads and recruit thousands more staff to keep the public safer.

## ■ Youth Courts: Wales

**Jo Stevens:**

**[121049]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the size of the case backlog in the Youth Court system in Wales.

**Mike Freer:**

There were 270 youth outstanding cases in magistrates' courts in Wales as at the end of September 2022. This includes any case involving a defendant under the age of 18 heard in the magistrates' courts, not just those heard in the Youth Court. Cases involving young defendants are given priority, irrespective of the Court in which they appear, and youth cases are continually reviewed to ensure that they are progressed as quickly as possible.

At any one time, there will always be outstanding cases – those for which evidence is being prepared, for example. The table below shows the number of the outstanding youth cases for the period end of September 2016 to end of September 2022.

TIME PERIOD	OUTSTANDING YOUTH CASES AT MAGISTRATES COURTS, WALES
September 2016	376

TIME PERIOD	OUTSTANDING YOUTH CASES AT MAGISTRATES COURTS, WALES
September 2017	330
September 2018	332
September 2019	321
September 2020	364
September 2021	277
September 2022	270

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Housing: Construction

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[126654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on sustainable construction in the building of new homes.

**Lucy Frazer:**

It is vital that the buildings we construct now are sustainable and fit for the country's net zero future, and the department is working to reduce the carbon emissions from our new buildings. We introduced a significant uplift in energy efficiency standards in June 2022 and our flagship Future Homes and Buildings Standards will, from 2025, make sure that new buildings are ready to run with zero carbon emissions as the grid decarbonises. These operational carbon emissions are only part of the picture, though, and this year we will consult on our approach to measuring and reducing embodied carbon in new buildings.

### ■ Levelling Up Fund

**Alex Norris:**

[\[126771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what information his Department holds on the amount of money local authorities spent on consultancy fees to assist in the preparation of bids to the Levelling Up Fund.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**■ Levelling Up Fund: Birmingham City Council**

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:** [\[126901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that Birmingham City Council receives prompt notification of the outcome of their application for funding for Erdington High Street through the second round of the Levelling Up Fund.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The outcome of the second round of the Levelling Up Fund has been announced.

I am pleased to say that there will be another round of the Fund, and we will provide more details on this shortly.

**■ Local Government: Standards**

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[122445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Government response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life review of local government ethical standards, published on 18 March 2022, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing that response and implementing the recommendations of the review.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[122446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to enable local authorities to apply sanctions to councillors found to have broken the Local Government Association's model code of conduct.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[122447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking with local authorities and their representative organisations to help ensure that local government is supported in reinforcing its reputation for ethical local standards.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[122511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what mechanisms exist to ensure that in cases which are referred to local government monitoring officers, full and fair consideration is given to the legal merits of the case; and if he will make an assessment of the extent to which the difficulty and expense to a member of public of seeking a Judicial Review of the decision in such a case may be impeding access to justice.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[122512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many complaints were submitted to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about council officers in the last 12 months.



**Lee Rowley:**

In a democracy, it is crucial that elected members in local government inspire confidence and have the trust of the electorate. All local authorities must have a member code of conduct. Councils can decide what their local codes cover, although they must as a minimum conform to the seven 'Nolan' principles of standards in public life.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life review of Local Government Ethical Standards recommended strengthening the local government standards system with a range of legislative amendments. The Government response noted that some do not need legislation and can be better taken forward as best practice. We made commitments in response to the review, including on strengthening sanctions, and will engage with local authority representative organisations in due course.

Councils have a number of options if councillors breach the code of conduct, including formal rebuke, removal of portfolio responsibilities and representative roles, and requiring members to undertake training.

It is the role of the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the council complies with the law and their own stated policies and procedures at all times. The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist the Monitoring Officer in investigations into code of conduct breaches.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigates complaints from members of the public who have suffered personal injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities. Concerns about the conduct of local authority officers may be taken into account as part of an investigation into a complaint about the local authority. The Ombudsman does not, however, consider complaints solely about the behaviour of officers – such complaints are a matter for the local authority as the employer.

**■ Parish and Town Councils: Debts****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[126586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had discussions with (a) the leader or (b) the town clerk of Staveley Town Council.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[126587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps (a) employees, (b) creditors and (c) Government departments can take to recover monies owed to them by town or parish councils.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[126588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which (a) Government departments and (b) public bodies can intervene when town or parish councils do not set a balanced budget.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which (a) Government departments and (b) public bodies can intervene when town or parish councils are unable to pay their debts.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether (a) his Department or (b) any other public body is able to take steps to prevent parish or town councils from setting council tax precept increases that exceed inflation.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether any statutory provisions allow creditors to seek winding up orders against town or parish councils when they cannot pay their debts.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the Government is able to (a) intervene in matters relating to and (b) inspect the governance of parish or town councils.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether any statutory provisions allow the leader of parish or town councils (a) found to have mismanaged, (b) found to have committed misconduct and (c) who do not set a balanced budget to be (i) struck off or (ii) prevented from continuing to lead that council.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions (a) he, (b) Ministers and (c) officials in his Department have had with (i) Staveley Town and (ii) Chesterfield Borough Council on the finances of Staveley Town Council.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[126595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has the capacity and ability to launch an independent inquiry into finances of Staveley Town Council.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The Government is aware that Staveley Town Council is experiencing financial difficulties. The Government has engaged with Staveley Town Council and Chesterfield Borough Council to help facilitate a local resolution, and will continue to monitor the situation.

Parish councils are responsible for setting their level of Council Tax to meet the service needs of their area and for maintaining robust financial management. If local councils experience financial difficulties, the government expects that they should

take all necessary step to manage the pressures locally and engage with their Principal Authority.

Parish councils are not defined as best value authorities within the Local Government Act 1999 and so the government does not have the powers to intervene using the best value powers. The government is also not able to provide direct financial support to parish councils. Responsibility for reviewing and making decisions with respect to parish councils is devolved to local authorities and their communities.

### ■ **Property: Heating**

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[126504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the Town and Country Planning Act 2015 to remove the requirement that heat pumps be placed one metre away from the property boundary.

**Lucy Frazer:**

To support the generation of renewable energy there are a range of permitted development rights that allow for the installation of microgeneration equipment, including air and ground source heat pumps, without the need for a planning application. The rights are set out in Part 14 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended. The rights are subject to certain limitations and conditions to protect local amenity, including noise and visual appearance.

We keep all rights under review.

## RESTORATION AND RENEWAL CLIENT BOARD

### ■ **Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body**

**Valerie Vaz:**

[\[126625\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Restoration and Renewal Client Board, what the cost to the public purse was of transferring the functions of the external statutory Restoration and Renewal Sponsor Body to an in-house service, including replacing the Board.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body was abolished on 1 January 2023 and its staff transferred into a new joint department in Parliament, the Restoration and Renewal Client Team. Replacing the Sponsor Board will be two new Boards—the R&R Client Board, comprising the membership of the two House Commissions, and the R&R Programme Board, which is currently in the process of being established.

The costs of these changes thus far have been primarily absorbed within the existing budgets of the two Houses and the Sponsor Body.

The following items are costs that would not have been incurred had it not been for the transfer of functions:

- The House Commissions sought advice and assurance about the proposed changes from a high-level panel of independent experts with significant experience in major programmes, in both the public and private sector. The work of the independent advice and assurance panel cost £57,557.
- A recruitment company provided an executive search service to support the House of Commons with recruiting up to four external R&R Programme Board members. This included sourcing appropriate candidates, making initial contact with them, and supporting the House through the entire recruitment process. The cost was £67,000.
- A contractor was employed to assist with programme management for the transition at a cost of £97,853 (including VAT).

## SCOTLAND

### ■ European Union: Scotland

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[126735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January to Question 122480 on European Union: Scotland, whether his Department has commissioned (a) polling, (b) focus groups and (c) studies on attitudes towards the EU of people in Scotland.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Scotland Office does not conduct its own polling, focus groups, or attitudinal studies on this or any other issue.

### ■ Gender Recognition: Scotland

**David Linden:**

[\[126770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much from the public purse his Department spent on (a) polling and (b) focus groups on public attitudes towards the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Scotland Office does not conduct its own polling or focus groups on this or any other issue.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Aviation: Fuels

**Andrew Selous:**

[\[123880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to open the second sustainable aviation fuels mandate consultation.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is planning to publish a consultation on the detailed design of the sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) mandate shortly. The Government recognises the need to get legislation in place to launch the mandate in 2025, and the likely importance in helping to secure investment in SAF production in the UK.

### ■ Blue Badge Scheme

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[126816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has assessed the potential merits of simplifying the application process for renewing a Blue Badge.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Department conducts an ongoing programme to identify ways to improve the Blue Badge scheme application and re-application process for all users, including acting on feedback from local authority administrators and citizen users of the scheme.

### ■ Bus Services: Standards

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[122439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of bus services in England since 2019.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant reductions to bus service levels and passenger numbers. To mitigate the impacts of the pandemic the Government has provided nearly £2 billion in emergency and recovery funding to bus operators and local transport authorities to keep vital bus services running. As a result of this support, bus services in England in 2020/21 ran at over 80% of pre-COVID levels, even though patronage and commercial fare revenue dropped significantly.

The Government is taking proactive steps to help increase patronage by providing £60 million to help bus operators cap single fares at £2 on services in England outside London from 1 January to 31 March 2023. Over 130 operators covering more than 4,600 routes are participating in the scheme, which will help increase patronage on buses and help millions save on their regular travel costs.

## ■ Cycling: Safety

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[124014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has taken recent steps to help encourage cyclists to (a) wear helmets and (b) turn on bicycle lights when cycling in the dark.

**Jesse Norman:**

The THINK! road safety campaign promotes best practice in cycling, including wearing helmets and the correct use of bicycle lights.

The THINK! website also provides educational resources for children, such as Tales of the Road, which encourages helmet-wearing and reinforces the importance of using bicycle lights from a young age.

## ■ Driving Tests: Waiting Lists

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[125369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data his Department holds on the number of applicants waiting for a practical driving test as of 17 January 2023; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a waiting list for learner drivers wishing to fill any available test slots or cancellations.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Car practical driving test waiting times are currently at 15.1 weeks (December average). As at 16 January 2023, there are over 80,000 car practical driving test appointments available within the 24-week booking window.

Since April 2021, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has created an extra 695,000 car practical driving tests appointments to help reduce waiting times. Actions already being taken by the DVSA include asking all those qualified to conduct tests but who do not do so as part of their current day job to return to conducting tests, conducting out of hours testing, and asking recently retired driving examiners to return.

All available practical driving test appointments are shown on the live booking system and any additional tests are added as soon as they become available. The DVSA has a 24 week forward booking window and tests are not available to book beyond this. Candidates can check for new appointments at their local test centre on the book a driving test or the change your driving test services.

## ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[124015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to take further steps to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points.

**Jesse Norman:**

Publicly available chargepoints have more than tripled in less than four years, and the Government expects this growth to continue. The Government is projecting the installation of at least ten times more public chargepoints across the UK by the end of the decade, bringing the number to 300,000 by 2030, as set out in the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy.

**Great British Railways****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[126768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to help establish Great British Railways.

**Huw Merriman:**

Since taking office, Ministers and officials have been working closely with the Great British Railways Transition Team and engaging with a range of stakeholders. The Secretary of State will set out his vision for rail reform and next steps in early February.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[126769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the (a) location and (b) opening date of the Great British Railways Headquarters will be announced.

**Huw Merriman:**

We recognise the significant support for each of the six shortlisted bids for the Great British Railways headquarters and have been incredibly impressed by their quality. We will announce the chosen location for the GBR HQ soon.

**Motor Vehicles: Lighting****Stephen Farry:**[\[126877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January to Question 120201 on Motor Vehicles: Lighting, if he will make a comparative assessment of the impact of the brightness of LED headlights and conventional motor vehicle headlights on people with vision difficulties, including incipient cataracts.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The brightness of LED headlamps is subject to the same provisions as other vehicle lighting technologies which must strike a balance between illuminating the road ahead and preventing unnecessary glare. The 2018 research previously referenced in Question 120201 found no evidence of increased light sensitivity risk from LED lamps when compared with other light sources and, due to the absence of ultraviolet radiation, suggested that it might help reduce the risk of light sensitivity in some cases.

## ■ Railways: Finance

**Damien Moore:**

[\[125475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial support his Department offers local authorities which wish to develop business cases and proposals for submission through the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline process.

**Huw Merriman:**

For schemes to be able to enter the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) promoters will need to present a business case of the appropriate level (Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC), Outline Business Case (OBC) or Full Business Case (FBC)- with an SOBC as a minimum. Due to the challenging fiscal environment Government funding is not available to assist with funding these business cases.

## ■ Roads

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

[\[126738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the lost capacity in the road network from dual carriageways with two lanes that have been narrowed to a single lane by road markings or by any other means (a) since 1997 and (b) in any other period for which he holds data.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

In England traffic authorities have powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, to regulate, restrict or prohibit the use of the highway for a wide range of safety and environmental reasons.

It is for individual local authorities to decide on the nature and scope of their traffic management schemes, and to balance the needs of residents, emergency services, local businesses, and those who work in and visit those areas.

## ■ Southeastern: Timetables

**Clive Efford:**

[\[126518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he made an assessment of the potential impact of the guidance by the Equality and Human Rights Commission entitled Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty: England, updated in February 2021, on his decision to grant a derogation to Southeastern to cut trains on the (a) Bexleyheath and (b) Sidcup Line in the timetable implemented on 11 December 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Huw Merriman:**

Southeastern undertook an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) ahead of the changes it made to its timetable on 11 December 2022 including those affecting services on the Bexleyheath and Sidcup lines. The Department granted Southeastern a derogation against the requirement to consult on the timetable changes on 5 August 2022.



**TREASURY****■ Civil Service: Codes of Practice****Chris Stephens:****[R]** [\[126703\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps HMRC is taking to comply with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code; and whether the data gathered is shared with the trade unions.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management code. We conduct regular diversity data audits which are shared with our trade unions and published internally. Trade unions are also involved in the development of associated actions.

**■ Imports****Mary Glendon:**[\[126642\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what was the (a) value and (b) volume of (i) excise and (i) non-excise goods brought into the UK for personal use via the permitted personal allowances were in each year since 2012.

**James Cartlidge:**

Passengers arriving in Great Britain from outside the UK, and those arriving in Northern Ireland from outside the EU do not need to make a formal declaration for goods that fall within the allowances.

Consequently, we do not hold any information in relation to the value and volume of excise and non-excise goods brought into the UK that are within the permitted personal allowances.

**■ Orchestras and Theatre: Tax Allowances****Barbara Keeley:**[\[126571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the reduction from April 2023 of (a) Orchestra and (b) Theatre Tax Relief on the financial sustainability of the cultural sector.

**Barbara Keeley:**[\[126574\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of expanding the Orchestra Tax Relief scheme to include claims on costs incurred on goods and services for digital concerts.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government recognises the value of the UK's world leading creative industries and arts sectors.

Since theatre tax relief (TTR) was introduced in 2014, £392 million of relief has been paid out, supporting 17,820 productions as of the year 2021-22. £62 million of

orchestra tax relief (OTR) has been paid out since it was introduced in 2016, supporting 2,640 productions as of the year 2021-2022.

At Autumn Budget 2021, the Government temporarily increased the headline rates of TTR and OTR in recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on these sectors. The headline rate of relief for TTR was increased from 20 per cent (for non-touring productions) and 25 per cent (for touring productions) to 45 per cent and 50 per cent. From 1 April 2023, the rates will be reduced to 30 per cent and 35 per cent and will return to 20 per cent and 25 per cent on 1 April 2024. The headline rate of OTR was temporarily increased from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, reducing to 35 per cent from 1 April 2023 and returning to 25 per cent on 1 April 2024.

Whilst the Government keeps all tax reliefs under review, the Government is not planning to expand the qualifying costs for OTR or TTR.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Disclosure of Information

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[126704\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what human resources information HM Revenue and Customs shares with trade unions on a regular basis.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC shares the data legally required, and in accordance with the Civil Service Management Code.

Examples of data and information shared include: business performance, attendance management, recruitment and retention, redundancies and exits, Health and Safety, grievances and disciplinaries.

Our Employee Relations Agreement, that was co-created with our trade unions, specifies the following *“HMRC, ARC and PCS will always aim to share information at the earliest opportunity to support effective engagement. HMRC, ARC and PCS may also need to ask for additional information to support discussions”*.

## ■ Taxpayer Protection Taskforce

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[126755\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to replace the Taxpayer Protection Taskforce with an alternative scheme after September 2023.

**Victoria Atkins:**

At Budget 2021, the Government announced an investment of over £100 million in the Taxpayer Protection Taskforce, to be in place for two years to April 2023, to combat fraud in the COVID-19 financial support schemes administered by HMRC (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self Employed Income Support Scheme and Eat Out To Help Out).

As planned between April and September 2023, compliance staff currently deployed on the taskforce will move back to business-as-usual tax compliance activity. Ongoing investigations into overclaimed grants that haven't been concluded will be

worked to completion. HMRC will consider the risk of overclaims of COVID-19 grants alongside other tax compliance risks when prioritising cases for a compliance check. This is the most efficient way to ensure we protect and recover taxpayers' money, as it allows HMRC to deal with all aspects of a customer's potential non-compliance in a single check.

HMRC remains committed to tackling error and fraud in the COVID-19 support schemes where this is the most cost-effective use of resources, and we are not writing off any overpayments of grants. We will continue to take action against those who have deliberately sought to abuse the COVID-19 financial support schemes, while recognising there will be people who have made honest mistakes.

■ **Treasury: Holiday Leave**

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[126706\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has contacted its staff in the last four months to inform them that they can sell annual leave.

**James Cartlidge:**

HM Treasury has given staff the opportunity to sell a limited number of annual leave days in lieu. This was communicated at the appropriate points across the year.

■ **Treasury: Staff**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[126753\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Customer Compliance staff are assigned to each subset of work within his Department.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Within Customer Compliance Group staff are deployed across a wide range of compliance risks. Internally, these are usually grouped by customer segment, tax head or specific tax risk being worked.

HMRC publishes information on the amounts spent on compliance by customer segment in our annual report and accounts at [Tax by different customer groups – 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). HMRC does not release detailed breakdowns of this information for operational reasons.

■ **UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**

[\[126556\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2022 to Question 92121 on UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland, how much was paid in tariffs on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland destined for the Republic of Ireland between 1 January 2021 and 31 October 2022; and which Government received those tariffs.

**Victoria Atkins:**

As stated in the answer provided to UIN 92121 on 2 December 2022, the Government intends in the future to release further information in relation to tariff liabilities for goods and will do so in due course. Any customs duties collected on goods entering Northern Ireland are retained by the UK Government.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**[\[126557\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many pre-frontier notifications the Trader Support Service processed for the trade of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland between 1 January 2021 and 31 November 2022.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The total of pre-frontier notifications the Trader Support Service processed for the trade of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland between 1 January 2021 and 31 November 2022 was 2,304.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**[\[126558\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many supplementary declarations the Trader Support Service processed for the trade of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland between 1 January 2021 and 31 November 2022.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The total number of supplementary declarations processed by the Trader Support Service for the trade of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland between 1 January 2021 and 31 November 2022 was 2.2million.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Cost of Living Payments: Universal Credit****Neale Hanvey:**[\[125505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2022 to Question 98939 on Cost of Living Payments: Universal Credit, whether the circumstances of Universal Credit claimants who are paid four-weekly was taken into consideration by the Department in determining eligibility for the 2023-23 cost of living payments.

**Mims Davies:**

In determining eligibility for the 2022/23 Cost of Living Payments, the eligibility periods were chosen to reflect the nature of the qualifying benefits and have remained simple to ensure these payments can be made to those who qualify quickly and at scale to support millions of people on low incomes.

We recognise that some people will flow on and off benefits due to fluctuating earnings, including claimants who are paid four-weekly, and our policy reflects that. The 2022/23 Cost of Living Payment is being made in two payments to reduce the chance of someone missing out completely.

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[125506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2022 to Question 98939 on Cost of Living Payments: Universal Credit, when he plans to publish the eligibility criteria for the 2023-24 cost of living payments.

**Mims Davies:**

Primary legislation will be introduced early in 2023 as soon as Parliamentary time allows, and further details on eligibility criteria for Cost of Living payments will be detailed in that legislation.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Standards

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[\[122510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much funding was allocated to his Department's Excellence Plan to improve customer service performance in the (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23 financial year.

**Mims Davies:**

£NIL funding was allocated to the Excellence Plan in the years 2021-22 & 2022-23. The Excellence Plan was one year funded only for 2020-21, and the Plan closed in 2020-21. Because of COVID interruption to DWP business, some initiatives from the Plan were subsumed into DWP operational work in later years, however they became contained within normal operational budgets, so did not represent 'extra funds'.

## ■ Employment Schemes: Mental Illness

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[126627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's Press release entitled £122 million employment boost for people receiving mental health support, published on 10 October 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of £122 million funding on helping people (a) find and (b) into work.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The £122m funding will enable the expansion of Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies from the current 40% of England to the whole of England by Summer 2024. This joint programme by DWP, DHSC, and NHS England will see the recruitment of around an additional 700 employment advisers to support people with common mental health conditions to improve their mental health, whilst also helping them stay in, or find, work.

As the Employment Advisers programme is rolled out across England, we will be evaluating the impact on health and employment.

Evaluation of the trial of the service (across 40% of England) showed that Employment Advisers had a positive impact on mental health across all Talking Therapy client groups. Those who were out of work at entry to the service were 6 percentage points more likely to be in work at the end of treatment, compared to a matched comparison group which received IAPT support only.

## ■ Health and Safety: Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[126708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will hold discussions with the Health and Safety Executive on the potential merits of including in the reporting process the ability to log when (a) drugs or (b) alcohol were a contributing factor to an accident at work.

**Mims Davies:**

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) are made under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and apply to all sectors and workplaces in Great Britain.

RIDDOR requires responsible persons (usually employers in relation to employees) to report

work-related fatalities and certain injuries, dangerous occurrences, and cases of disease. Reporting requirements are based on the outcome of incidents.

RIDDOR does not require the reporting of immediate or underlying causes, such as whether the use of drugs or alcohol were a contributing factor in a particular incident. Causation of an incident will not necessarily be apparent during the statutory timeframe in which a dutyholder is required to report; that information generally only becomes evident during an investigation, either by the dutyholder or the regulator.

If such information were required as part of the reporting process, it would be difficult to reliably establish direct causation on a case-by-case basis. Having this information reported would be of limited value to the regulator and disproportionate for the responsible person to ascertain.

## ■ Household Support Fund

**Valerie Vaz:**

[\[126626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the number of people using the Household Support Fund to pay off debts to energy companies; and what assessment he has made of trends in the level of people using the Household Support Fund to pay off those debts.

**Mims Davies:**

The Household Support Fund is a discretionary scheme run by Upper Tier Local Authorities in England to provide support to the most vulnerable households. The Household Support Fund is primarily used to meet immediate need including energy and water bills, food, as well as wider related essentials. It is for Local Authorities to decide how they distribute their funding within the parameters of the scheme's guidance and grant determination.

The Government collects high level data on the broad categories of the support provided by the scheme in order to ensure that funded activities are within the scope of guidance. The Household Support Fund data does not provide sufficient

information to allow for an analysis of trends in the level of people using the Household Support Fund to pay off debt to energy companies.

**Catherine West:**

[\[126746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Household Support Fund for families unable to pay energy bills after March 2023.

**Mims Davies:**

At Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022, the Government announced an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett consequential, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year.

In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials including energy.

Details of the new HSF 23/24 scheme will be announced in due course.

We will also continue to provide support to all households through the Energy Price Guarantee, which will save the average GB household £500 in 2023/24.

#### ■ Restart Scheme: Standards

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[126628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to publish regular performance data on the Restart scheme.

**Guy Opperman:**

The department published statistics on the Restart Scheme on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

#### ■ Universal Credit

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[125366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of Universal Credit recipients who received incorrect payments as a result of errors in employers' Real Time Information submissions to HM Revenue and Customs in the last month for which this data is available.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[125367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will provide an estimate of the average amount lost by Universal Credit recipients whose payments are affected by errors in employers' Real Time Information submissions to HM Revenue and Customs in the last month for which this data is available.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 20 January 2023]:* If a claimant raises a dispute, and if the amount of earnings used in the calculation is found to have been incorrectly reported by the employer, then the UC award would be amended. At this point we would take into

account the correct amount of earnings and any underpayments would be issued, with no loss to the claimant.

The Real Time Information (RTI) system shows over 99% of individual employment records now being reported in real time. Where employer errors affect UC entitlement payments are subsequently corrected.

■ **Universal Credit: Young People**

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[126630]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Universal Credit claimants are aged under 25 and entitled to a (a) housing and (b) child element within their claim by constituency.

**Guy Opperman:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.



## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Situation

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[126560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of (a) food, (b) medicine and (c) energy supply in Nagorno Karabakh; and what discussions he has had with his international counterparts on recent developments and ensuring freedom and security of movement along the Lachin corridor.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 23 January 2023. The correct answer should have been:**

**Leo Docherty:**

The UK Government has made clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor risks severe humanitarian consequences, particularly during winter. I [Leo Docherty] spoke to Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan on 18 January where we agreed on the importance of the immediate re-opening of the Lachin Corridor and the need to ensure gas and electricity supplies into Nagorno-Karabakh are not switched off. **UK officials, including our Ambassador in Baku, have engaged extensively with Azerbaijani counterparts.** On 18 January officials spoke to the ICRC regarding the humanitarian situation, including the dwindling food and medical supplies, and will remain in contact in the coming weeks to share their assessment of the impact of the closure. ~~The UK Government will continue to engage with counterparts and with humanitarian agencies to support efforts aimed at resolving the current closure of the Lachin corridor.~~

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Mental Health Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy) (Maria Caulfield):** [\[HCWS512\]](#)

I am pleased to share an update on the Government's £150 million of capital investment in NHS mental health urgent and emergency care infrastructure, first announced as part of the 2021 Spending Review. This investment – being delivered through NHS England – will support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, mental health crisis to receive care and support in more appropriate settings outside of A&E and inpatient facilities, in turn improving experience and alleviating pressures on local urgent care pathways and in the wider system.

£7 million of the investment is specifically being used to centrally procure up to 100 specially designed mental health ambulances over the next two years. These vehicles will be staffed by both physical and mental health professionals, equipped to respond to and assess people on-scene or take people to the most appropriate place for care, reducing the amount of people who are taken to A&E by ambulance services. The vehicles, designed by patients and clinical experts, will provide a much calmer environment than the traditional fully kitted, bright yellow ambulances. They have been designed with simple NHS ambulance service logos and will have a less clinical interior with dimmable lighting, equipment to play music and space for parents, carers or companions to accompany during assessments and transfers.

The remaining £143 million of capital funding is being invested in providing and improving a range of spaces to more appropriately support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, mental health crisis. This includes the redesign and refurbishment of existing mental health suites and facilities including in emergency departments, the provision of spaces outside of A&E and the expansion of crisis lines. The programme also includes schemes designed to avoid people reaching crisis, such as improvement of sanctuary spaces and community mental health facilities.

This is alongside investment of almost £1 billion extra in community mental health care for adults with severe mental illness by 2023/24. This will give 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses, including eating disorders, greater choice and control over their care and support them to live well in their communities.

Today, I am also announcing the commencement of a rapid review into patient safety in mental health inpatient settings in England. This review is an essential first step in improving safety in mental health inpatient settings. It will focus on what data and evidence is currently available to healthcare services, including information provided by patients and families, and how we can use this data and evidence more effectively to identify patient safety risks and failures in care. I am immensely pleased to announce that the review will be chaired by Dr Geraldine Strathdee. Dr Strathdee brings a wealth of

experience from working for over 20 years in senior roles in mental health policy, regulation and clinical management, at national and regional levels.

Dr Strathdee will remain the Chair of the Essex Mental Health Independent Inquiry, which is looking at inpatient mental health deaths in Essex between 2000 and 2020 and which will continue its work during the period of the rapid review. The rapid review will be separate from, but complementary to, the Essex Inquiry, and we are excited that she brings her significant expertise from all her work on mental health so far. Dr Strathdee also has a longstanding passion for using data to improve services.

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. My officials will continue to work closely with their colleagues in NHS England to make sure the review is aligned with and complementary to the Quality Improvement programme.

## ■ **Mental Health: Expectation of Mental Health Spend**

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay):**

[\[HCWS511\]](#)

Last year, the Health and Care Act 2022 received Royal Assent, enacting the most significant health legislation for a decade into law. The Act introduced a statutory requirement for the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to set out expectations for the year ahead on NHS mental health services spending. This is to ensure better transparency as part of the Government's commitment to parity of esteem, ensuring that patients are able to access services which treat both mental and physical health conditions equally and to the same standard.

This requirement supports the Government's existing commitments to increase spending on mental health services in real terms by at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24, and to uphold the Mental Health Investment Standard which requires that Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) spending on mental health grows at least in line with growth in overall recurrent funding allocations.

Today I lay before Parliament the first annual statement in fulfilment of this commitment.

In this statement I will set out the Government's expectation for mental health spending by NHS England and ICBs in aggregate in the 2023/24 financial year. Specifically, I will set out whether the Government expects there to be an increase in expenditure by comparison with the previous financial year (2022/23) in relation to mental health, both in amount and proportion. It should be noted that, owing to the statutory requirement to lay this statement before Parliament ahead of the new financial year, the figures contained within this first annual statement will, in part, be based on projections.

In financial year 2023/24, the Government expects mental health spending to continue to increase as a proportion of the total recurrent expenditure incurred by NHS England and ICBs in aggregate. In financial year 2022/23, mental health spending made up 8.90% of all recurrent NHS spending. In the coming financial year, we expect this to grow by 0.02 percentage points and account for 8.92% of total recurrent spend as shown below.

	2022/23	2023/24
<b>Recurrent NHS baseline (£bn)</b>	142.4	153.0
<b>Total forecast Mental Health spend (£bn)</b>	12.7	13.6
<b>Mental Health share of recurrent baseline</b>	8.90%	8.92%

This includes, at aggregate ICB level, baseline spend within scope of the Mental Health Investment Standard which covers all spending on mental health from an ICB's core allocations, and at NHS England level, service development fund spending and specialised commissioning spending on mental health.

These encouraging projections demonstrate the Government's continuing commitment to expanding and transforming mental health services across England and to delivering sustained investment in this area across the country, and our ongoing commitment to parity of esteem for mental health.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Strengthening the Control of Explosives Precursors and Poisons

**The Minister of State for Security (Tom Tugendhat):**

[\[HCWS509\]](#)

Today I am laying before both Houses a statutory instrument to strengthen the controls of explosives precursors and poisons in Great Britain.

Following the tragic Manchester Arena attack in 2017, the Government committed to enhance its capabilities to detect and prevent terrorist activity including that which involves the use of explosive precursors.

The Control of Explosives Precursors and Poisons Regulations 2023 will build on existing safeguards in the Poisons Act 1972 to prevent terrorist access to substances of concern, while ensuring that legitimate users of these products can still access them to pursue lawful activity. This regulation follows a public consultation which ran between December 2021-March 2022.

Around Great Britain, businesses and individuals use various chemicals for a wide range of legitimate use. Whilst we do not want to hinder this, we must minimise the risk posed by the illicit use of explosives precursors and poisons. Shops and business are already required to report suspicious activity on the sale, attempted sale, loss or theft of the most dangerous explosive precursors and poisons. Through this legislation, we are adding to the lists of reportable and regulated explosives precursors and poisons, improving the requirements for reporting suspicious activity, as well as providing additional obligations on online marketplaces. Businesses will also be required to record certain information

when selling regulated explosives precursors to professional users. This will have minimal impact on businesses already required to report those chemicals and poisons liable to cause harm.

The measures will come into force on 1 October 2023. Guidance on these measures will be available on gov.uk in due course ahead of the regulations commencing on 1 October. A full Impact Assessment and Explanatory Memorandum will also be laid alongside the regulations in both Houses.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ **Draft Regulations: The Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) (Amendment) Regulations 2023**

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Richard Holden):**  
[\[HCWS510\]](#)

I have today published the draft statutory instrument “The Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) (Amendment) Regulations 2023” with an accompanying explanatory memorandum. A de minimis assessment has been drafted and will be available when a draft of the statutory instrument is laid.

The use of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs) can contribute to transport decarbonisation, as well as reduce emissions of air quality related pollutants. Currently, alternatively fuelled and zero emission heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) may have heavier powertrain technology than traditionally fuelled internal combustion engine (ICE) HGVs. There are particular components in AFVs or ZEVs which are likely to be heavier than their equivalents in an ICE vehicle, most notably batteries, which are significantly heavier than a petrol or diesel fuel tank providing an equivalent vehicle range. Fuel tanks for pressurised gaseous fuels such as biomethane or hydrogen are also likely to be heavier than ICE equivalents, due to the need to reinforce these to cope with high pressure.

All vehicles are subject to a gross vehicle weight limit, which varies depending on the axle configuration. Current weight allowances are set out within the Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/3111) and the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (S.I. 1986/1078). Due to current maximum weight limit restrictions, the heavier powertrain means AFVs and ZEVs can carry a decreased cargo weight than comparable ICE vehicles. This acts as a payload penalty, potentially decreasing their commercial appeal.

The statutory instrument provides for a weight limit increase of a flat two tonnes for certain ZEVs and up to one tonne for certain AFVs. The relevant ZEVs and AFVs are mainly types of HGV. No additional weight allowance for ZEVs or AFVs will apply over the existing maximum of 44 tonnes. The maximum weight limits for individual axles will remain unchanged. This slightly different approach for ZEVs compared to AFVs is to provide the maximum possible incentive for ZEVs to be adopted.

The statutory instrument is published in accordance with the procedure required by Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and agreed with Parliament. The statutory instrument is being published in draft at least 28 days before being laid in draft to be considered under affirmative procedures in parliament.

The Department consulted on these proposals between July and September 2021 as part of a wider consultation on phase out dates for new non zero emission HGVs “Heavy goods vehicles: ending the sale of new non-zero emission models.” A [response](#) which confirmed our intention to introduce these changes was published 12 May 2022.