



## Daily Report

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 January 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:37 P.M., 24 January 2023). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ **Advanced Research and Invention Agency and Rosalind Franklin Institute: Finance**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[123937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons (a) ARIA can and (b) Rosalind Franklin Institute cannot carry forward funding across financial years.

**George Freeman:**

*[Holding answer 19 January 2023]:* Funding arrangements for public bodies are set based on the operational strategy and objectives of each organisation.

The Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) has been established to exclusively focus on projects with potential to produce transformative technological change, or a paradigm-shift in an area of science. To achieve these objectives, ARIA has been designed to operate with unique financial flexibility and operational freedom.

#### ■ **Business: Energy**

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[123960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take steps to provide additional financial support to small and medium-sized businesses with increases in the cost of energy.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme provides a discount on the wholesale element of gas and electricity bills to ensure that all eligible businesses are protected from high energy costs over the winter period. The Energy Bill Discount Scheme, a new energy support scheme for businesses, will run from April until March 2024. businesses who have a contract with a licensed energy supplier, and are exposed to high prices, will see a discount applied to their gas and electricity bill. A substantially higher level of support will be provided to businesses in sectors identified as being the most energy and trade intensive.

#### ■ **Carbon Emissions and Energy: Manufacturing Industries**

**John Redwood:**

[\[123844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he make a comparative assessment of average (a) energy and (b) carbon costs in the (i) steel, (ii) ceramics and (iii) building materials industries in (A) the UK and (B) other comparable countries in the latest period for which data is available.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

This Government will always be on the side of business and is providing an unprecedented £18 billion of support through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. The newly announced Energy Bills Discount Scheme will continue support for a further year from April 2023 and includes additional support for eligible energy and trade intensive industries, including the Steel sector.

Furthermore, this Government is determined to secure a competitive future for our energy intensive industries for the long term. We have provided extensive support, including more than £2 billion to help with the costs of electricity and to protect jobs.

**Carbon Emissions: Industry****John Redwood:**[\[123845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will reduce the cost of carbon for large energy using industries to ease cost pressures for domestic production.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government recognises that UK industrial electricity prices are higher than those of other countries and will act to address this.

The Government has already extended the Energy Intensive Industry Compensation Scheme for a further 3 years through to 2025, and doubled the budget for the scheme in the process.

The Government is also actively considering other measures to support business, including increasing the renewable obligation exemption to 100%.

This builds upon extensive support that the Government has provided in recent years including more than £2 billion to help with the costs of electricity and to protect jobs.

**Charities: Loans****Rosie Duffield:**[\[125444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing liquidity loans to the charitable trust sector to help support employment and services in that sector.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

I agree with the Hon. Member's assessment of the importance of the charitable trust sector. Charities make an important social and economic contribution to the UK economy. Loans and other types of finance can be an important enabler of growth and investment in the services that charities provide, increasing their economic and social impact, providing increased employment, and delivering superb services to the communities they serve.



## ■ Copyright: Artificial Intelligence

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[121092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what provisions in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 protect performers from the unauthorised reproduction of their performance using artificial intelligence systems; and whether it his Department's policy that artificial intelligence-made performance synthetisation are deemed to reproduce the recording of a performance.

**George Freeman:**

Actors' and musicians' performances are protected under Part II of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Sections 182 and 182A of the Act give performers the right to control who is able to record and make reproductions of their performances. These provisions apply regardless of the technology used to make such reproductions, including AI technology. Whether an AI-made synthetisation has reproduced the recording of a performance will depend on the circumstances of each case.

## ■ Delivery Services: Regulation

**Beth Winter:**

[\[124122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reviewing the regulation of the parcel delivery sector in response to the recent performance of companies operating in that sector.

**Beth Winter:**

[\[124123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reviewing the regulation of the parcel delivery sector in order to increase public satisfaction with that sector.

**Beth Winter:**

[\[124124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increased regulation in the private parcel market to ensure user needs are being met by the market.

**Beth Winter:**

[\[124125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of establishing delivery service targets for parcel operators other than Royal Mail.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Postal Services Act 2011 designates Ofcom as the independent regulator for the postal sector with the powers to impose and enforce regulatory requirements on postal operators to fulfill its functions in relation to postal services.

In its review of postal regulation in 2022, Ofcom committed to ongoing monitoring of operators' performance and keep under review the need for additional regulation to protect consumers.

The Government has no plans to seek change to the statutory requirements in this sector.

### ■ Delivery Services: Standards

**Beth Winter:** [\[124126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of publishing service performance against expectations targets for (a) Royal Mail and (b) non-Universal Service Obligation parcel operators.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Postal Services Act 2011 designates Ofcom as the independent regulator for the postal sector with the powers to impose and enforce regulatory requirements on postal operators to fulfill its functions in relation to postal services. The Government has no plans to seek change to the statutory requirements in this sector.

Ofcom requires Royal Mail to publish quarterly reports and an annual summary of its performance against its delivery standards.

In its review of postal regulation in 2022, Ofcom committed to ongoing monitoring of operators' performance and keep under review the need for additional regulation to protect consumers.

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

**Chris Stephens:** [\[R\] \[127788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what human resources information their Department shares with trade unions on a regular basis.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

BEIS publishes a range of HR information which is available on GOV.UK and which is therefore publicly available. In addition, routine human resources information is shared with the recognised trade unions as part of normal engagement on a range of issues. BEIS also provides specific HR data/information to Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) on request in line with our obligations under section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

### ■ Electricity Generation: Infrastructure

**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[127911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2022 to Question 120157 on Electricity Generation: Infrastructure, how much energy is being transmitted from north to south through existing infrastructure.

**Graham Stuart:**

As set out in the National Grid ESO Future Energy Scenario publication, approximately 35TWh of electricity was expected to flow from Scotland to the rest of Great Britain in 2021, which compares to an expectation of 124TWh in 2030.

**■ Energy Bills Rebate****Stephen Farry:**[\[122509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to use the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding process used in Great Britain in Northern Ireland.

**Graham Stuart:**

All households in Northern Ireland will receive a £600 payment, which is a combination of the £400 EBSS payment and the £200 Alternative Fuel Payment. This combined payment reflects the different nature of the energy market in Northern Ireland and higher usage of alternative fuels, such as heating oil. As in Great Britain, households without a domestic electricity contract, such as residents of park homes, caravans on registered sites, and house boats, that do not receive this payment automatically, will receive equivalent payments through the EBSS Alternative Funding. Further details will be set out in the coming weeks.

**Beth Winter:**[\[124130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on household finances of any delay in implementing the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding programme.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department has made no such assessment. However, the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will provide support of £400 for energy bills for around 900,000 households without a relationship to a domestic electricity supplier. On 19 December the Government announced that the application portal is due to go live in January, with the one-off, non-repayable support being delivered by local authorities. The exact date that an eligible household will receive support will depend on when the application is made and when the payment can be processed by the relevant local authority.

**Beth Winter:**[\[124131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department will take to maximise uptake of payments under the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding scheme.

**Graham Stuart:**

On 19th December, the Government publicly announced that the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) will launch in January 2023 to eligible households in Great Britain. The Government will communicate when the new

scheme is live and work closely with stakeholder groups and representative bodies to ensure those eligible are made fully aware of the offer and encouraged to apply.

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[126598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his planned timetable is for payments to begin under the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding in England.

**Graham Stuart:**

Applications for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) are expected to open later in January and will remain open until the end of April. Those who are eligible for the EBSS AF will need to submit a short form via the government's GOV.UK pages, and their details will be shared with local authorities across England, Scotland, and Wales who will deliver the one-off, non-repayable support this winter. The exact date that an eligible household will receive support will depend on when the application is made and when the payment can be processed by the relevant local authority.

#### ■ **Energy Bills Rebate: Caravan Sites**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[123892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Energy Bill Support Scheme will be made available to people living in caravan parks.

**Graham Stuart:**

As an extension to the Energy Bills Support Scheme, alternative funding is being provided to around 900,000 households without a direct relationship with a domestic electricity supplier. This will be a payment of £400 per eligible household and is expected to include park home residents. On 19 December, the Government announced that the application portal for this extension to the Energy Bills Support Scheme will open later in January, with a dedicated customer helpline available to assist customers without online access. Further details will be published shortly.

#### ■ **Energy Bills Rebate: Northern Ireland**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[123940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of strikes in the healthcare sector on the timing of the £600 payment to households in Northern Ireland.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is monitoring the situation closely and does not anticipate the strikes will have an impact on the timing of the scheme. Payments started on 16 January and are made up of £400 under the Energy Bills Support Scheme Northern Ireland (EBSS NI) and £200 under the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) scheme. This will go to all households in Northern Ireland irrespective of how they heat their home.

## ■ Energy Bills Rebate: Park Homes

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[124170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to take steps to ensure that people for whom a park home is their sole or main residence will be eligible for support under the (a) Energy Bill Support Scheme and (b) other schemes providing support with the rising cost of energy bills.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding will be available to households without a direct relationship with a domestic electricity supplier. This will be a payment of £400 per eligible household and is expected to include park home residents. On 19 December, the Government announced that the application portal for this extension will open later in January. Further details will be published shortly.

The Government has launched Help for Households on GOV.UK, outlining the full range of support available to help with the cost of living, including detail on types of support to help with winter heating costs.

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[124171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the devolved Administrations on extending assistance through the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme or any other related forms of assistance with the rising cost of energy bills to people for whom a park home is their sole or main residence.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

## ■ Energy Bills Rebate: Standards

**Beth Winter:**

[\[124129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the maximum timescale is for households to receive a payment upon completion of an application in the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding application portal.

**Graham Stuart:**

Applications for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) are expected to open later in January and be available until the end of April. Those who are eligible for the EBSS AF will need to submit a short form via the Government's GOV.UK pages. These details will be shared with local authorities across England, Scotland, and Wales, which will deliver the one-off, non-repayable support this winter. The exact date that an eligible household will receive support will depend on when the application is made and when the payment can be processed by the relevant local authority.

## ■ Energy Company Obligation: Low Incomes

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[127683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to target all the funding from the ECO+ scheme at the low-income eligibility group in order to help meet the Government's fuel poverty targets.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

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

## ■ Energy: Disability

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[121001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will meet with (a) energy companies and (b) disability charities to discuss support for the costs faced by people using medical equipment at home.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

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

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Dan Carden:**

[\[124064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his Answer of 12 January 2023 to Question 114849, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of households with prepayment meters not redeeming their monthly energy support vouchers in December 2022 on the financial security of those households.

**Graham Stuart:**

Customers on traditional prepayment meters should redeem their Energy Bill Support Scheme vouchers promptly each month to help with their household finances. The Government is working with suppliers to seek ways to increase redemption rates significantly. Suppliers are required to ensure all their traditional prepayment meter customers are aware of the vouchers and how they can redeem them.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[124066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his Answer of 10 January 2023 to Question 114764, what recent discussions he has had with Ofgem on improving compliance with its rules on fitting prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ministers and officials regularly meet with Ofgem to discuss a range of energy retail issues, including prepayment meters. As part of their market-wide Compliance Reviews into Consumers in Payment Difficulty and Vulnerability, Ofgem engaged with suppliers and sought action to improve their processes on prepayment practices.

I will be meeting with OFGEM, and others, this week to raise this issue directly.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[124067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings his Department has had with (a) Ofgem and (b) UK energy suppliers in which rules on fitting prepayment meters were discussed during the last 12 months.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department meets regularly with Ofgem and energy suppliers to discuss energy retail market issues.

I will be meeting with OFGEM, and others, this week to raise this issue directly.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that energy companies adhere to Ofgem guidance that prepayment meters should not be forcibly installed in households which include a person with (a) a disability and (b) a long term health condition.

**Graham Stuart:**

BEIS Ministers and officials regularly hold discussions with Ofgem and energy suppliers on a range of issues relating to the energy markets.

Forcible installations of prepayment meters for vulnerable customers have been banned by Ofgem since 2017. In addition, Ofgem has recently undertaken a Market Compliance Review assessing how suppliers support customers in vulnerable situation. Ofgem has started compliance engagement with suppliers and asked them to take action to address the weaknesses that have been identified.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of households with a prepayment meter include a person who (a) is aged under 16 and (b) is aged over 60.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of households with a prepayment meter include a person with (a) a disability and (b) a long term health condition.



**Graham Stuart:**

Neither the Government nor Ofgem hold this data. Ofgem has strict rules in place that mean whenever suppliers install a prepayment meter, they must verify that it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so. This should include consideration of whether a customer's vulnerability would make a prepayment meter inappropriate, for example where medical equipment is required.

Ofgem conducted a review assessing how suppliers support customers in vulnerable situations, including assessing suppliers' processes for installing prepayment meters. To drive improvements, Ofgem has started compliance engagement with suppliers and required them to take action to address the weaknesses that have been identified. The Government expects suppliers to comply fully with their obligations.

**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[124162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to obtain information on the number of prepayment meters in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland.

**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[124163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in (a) the UK, (b) Great Britain, (c) England, (d) Scotland, (e) Wales and (f) Northern Ireland have a prepayment meter; and if he will provide a breakdown by (i) local authority and (ii) parliamentary constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem is the regulator for the GB energy market. According to Ofgem's figures for Q3 2022, there were 4,069,814 domestic prepayment meter customers in GB. Ofgem's figures provide a breakdown by nation with 3,322,511 prepayment meter customers in England, 497,943 in Scotland and 249,360 in Wales. Data is not available at the local authority or parliamentary constituency level.

**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[124164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent representations he has received on (a) the forced installation of prepayment meters and (b) the practice of self-disconnection by those households unable to afford to load credit onto prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department receives a number of representations about a range of issues relating to energy markets.

The energy regulator Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter (PPM) on customers who are in debt, except as a last resort. Forcible installations of PPMs for the most vulnerable customers have been banned by Ofgem since 2017.



Ofgem rules also require energy suppliers to take all reasonable steps to identify prepayment meter customers who are self-disconnecting and provide appropriate support.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will host a summit of (a) energy companies, (b) Ofgem and (c) other relevant stakeholders to discuss (i) the forced installation of prepayment meters and (ii) the practice of self-disconnection by those households unable to afford to load credit onto prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

I will be hosting a roundtable with suppliers, Ofgem, Energy UK and Citizens Advice to discuss the issue of prepayment meters and self-disconnection this week.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the number of households who were left without power in the last 12 months as a result of running out of credit on their prepayment meter in (a) Scotland, (b) England, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland; and if he will provide a breakdown by (i) local authority and (ii) parliamentary constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem only holds data for smart meters in prepayment mode that have disconnected, Ofgem does not hold data for traditional prepayment meter disconnections. One of the benefits of smart prepayment over traditional prepayment meters is the ability for energy suppliers to know when customers have gone off supply, and so offer timely support. Smart prepayment also enables consumers to track their balance easily, so they do not unknowingly run out of credit.

Ofgem holds data for Q1 – Q3 2022. The number of smart meters that disconnected at least once across this period are provided in the table below.

	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022
Scotland	49,874	68,646	66,305
England	399,975	511,692	518,881
Wales	60,725	79,797	74,947

Ofgem does not collect data at the local authority or parliamentary constituency level.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the financial costs to vulnerable families and households arising from (a) the forced installation of prepayment meters and (b) the practice of self-

disconnection by those households unable to afford to load credit onto prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

There are strict Ofgem rules in place to protect prepayment meter customers. Suppliers are required to identify PPM customers who are self-disconnecting and to offer short-term support through emergency and friendly-hours credit as well as to offer additional support credit to PPM customers in vulnerable situations who have self-disconnected or self-rationed. Suppliers must also support all customers who are facing financial difficulties through the inclusion of Ability to Pay principles in the supply licence.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with (a) energy companies and (b) Ofgem on (i) the forced installation of prepayment meters and (ii) the practice of self-disconnection by those households unable to afford to load credit onto prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department meets regularly with Ofgem and energy suppliers to discuss energy retail market issues. As my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State set out in the House, officials are working on measures to support PPM consumers and we will act as soon as possible to tackle this issue.

Ofgem has rules in place that restrict the force-fitting of a prepayment meter (PPM) on customers who are in debt, except as a last resort. Suppliers must assess whether installing a PPM, including the remote switching of a smart meter, is safe and reasonably practicable for the customer. This assessment should include identifying any vulnerability.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[124179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to prevent the forced installation of prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

**Dan Carden:**

[\[127884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will launch a formal inquiry into the practice of forced prepayment meter installations, including (a) evidence used by energy suppliers to assess vulnerability and (b) the role of magistrates.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government will continue to do all it can to ensure families and households stay warm this winter. The Government is taking urgent action to bring about greater transparency when it comes to concerning energy supplier practice. The Government has announced a five-point plan to tackle concerning behaviour by energy suppliers. This includes a call for suppliers voluntarily to stop the practice of forced prepayment meter switching and a request for the release of supplier data on the number of warrant applications they have made. Ofgem has also announced it will be conducting a further assessment of supplier prepayment meter practices.

**Energy: Prices****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[124181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with (a) Ofgem, (b) energy companies, (c) consumer organisations, (d) organisations advocating against fuel poverty, (e) organisations which advocate on behalf of older people and (f) other relevant stakeholders on setting a limit to the standing charges which can be charged by energy companies.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department meets regularly with a range of stakeholder to discuss energy retail market issues. Decisions about standing charges are a commercial matter for energy suppliers. The standing charge is a fixed charge that suppliers pass on to their customers to cover the cost of providing a live supply. One component of the standing charge cost relates to transmission and distribution charges, which have recently increased due to the Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) levy. The Government, together with Ofgem, is looking at reforms to ensure financial resilience in the energy retail market.

**EU Law****Dawn Butler:**[\[123881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a list of the legislation he intends to repeal under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

We have published a public dashboard cataloging retained EU law on the UK statute book. This dashboard will also document the Government's progress on reforming retained EU law and will be updated regularly to reflect plans and actions taken.

**Gas Appliances (Enforcement) & Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2018****Stella Creasy:**[\[127758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether they plan to (a) revoke (b) retain or (c) replace the Gas Appliances (Enforcement) & Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2018.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Gas Appliances (Enforcement) and Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations 2018 enable enforcement authorities in the United Kingdom to take action against “economic operators” (manufacturers, importers and distributors) if they do not comply with the obligations in Regulation 2016/426 on appliances burning gaseous fuels.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is reviewing all REUL in line with usual policy development to determine whether to repeal, replace or preserve it.

The Government will continue to ensure that only safe gas appliances are placed on the market in the United Kingdom and that market surveillance authorities have the necessary enforcement powers.

■ **Gold**

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[125453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason gold is not included on the UK Critical Minerals List 2021.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[125454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason silver is not included on the UK Critical Minerals List 2021.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

In 2022, BEIS commissioned the British Geological Survey to undertake the UK’s first criticality assessment. 18 minerals – assessed as having the highest supply risk and highest economic importance – were defined as “critical”. Many other minerals, such as gold and silver, have important uses but, by necessity of focus, only some are defined as “critical”. Supply chain risks can be caused by – for example – rapid demand growth, concentrated supply chains in particular countries or highly volatile prices. Criticality changes over time. The assessment will be reviewed regularly through the Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre. The next review is expected later this year.

■ **Heating: Fossil Fuels**

**Bill Esterson:** [\[126619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2022 to Question 110668 on Heating: Fossil Fuels, for what reason his Department has not yet responded to the consultations published on 19 October 2021.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government has received a significant number of responses to its consultation of 19 October 2021 and is considering them carefully. The Government will respond to the consultation in due course.

## ■ Heating: Technology

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[123877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2022 to Question 110605 on Heating: Technology, how much funding his Department has provided to research nanotechnology in heat pipes through the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund scheme in each year between 2009 and 2022.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[123878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2022 to Question 110605 on Heating: Technology, if his Department will take steps to provide grants to companies looking to establish facilities in the UK to manufacture heat pipes utilising nano-boron technology.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[123879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2022 to Question 110605 on Heating: Technology, whether his Department plans to take steps facilitate a UK-wide roll out of heat pipes utilising nano-boron technology.

**Graham Stuart:**

Heat pipes are heat-conduction devices that employ phase transition of materials to remove heat from hot bodies. The use of nano-boron technology in heat pipes is in early-stage research which has not been demonstrated on a large scale. Consequently, there are no plans for a UK-wide roll out of heat pipes utilising nano-boron technology.

BEIS has not funded any work through the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund specifically on heat pipes and expects that other projects funded will improve solutions such as heat pipes. One example is the £806,000 project by Oxford Nanosystems Ltd to develop nano technology coatings for heat exchangers, funded through the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund.

## ■ Horizon Europe

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[122142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the keynote speech made by the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation at Onward UK on 11 January 2023, when the Government plans to publish details of an alternative to Horizon UK.

**George Freeman:**

If the UK does not associate to Horizon Europe, the Government will be ready with a comprehensive alternative, including a suite of transitional measures and longer-term programmes, funded from the budget set aside for association to European programmes.

As stated in my speech at Onward UK on 11 Jan 2023, these programmes will enable the UK to meet its global Science Superpower and Innovation Nation ambitions. Details of the transitional measures have already been published, and the Department will publish more detailed proposals on the longer-term programmes in due course.

## ■ Innovation and Research

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[122138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the keynote speech made by the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation at Onward UK on 11 Jan 2023, what steps he plans to take to make clusters referenced test beds.

**George Freeman:**

The third round of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF) will invest £12m in projects which encourage experimentation and innovation in regulation. For example, Milton Keynes City Council is using RPF funding to prove, test, trial and demonstrate new drone-based services that operate alongside robotics delivery services and self-driving passenger shuttles. The project plans to establish a testbed to allow ongoing experimentation and create a blueprint for wider adoption and deployment. Officials are looking at a number of such areas where we may have potential to scale-up innovative regulatory testbeds. RPF-funded projects will help to keep the UK at the forefront of regulation through testbeds and other forms of regulatory innovation.

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[122140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the keynote speech made by the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation at Onward UK on 11 January 2023, when he plans to establish a unit in his Department to monitor the success of the UK's clusters of innovation; and what its (a) name, (b) budget and (c) remit will be.

**George Freeman:**

BEIS analysts are using their expertise to map the UK's innovation clusters and understand trends, barriers and opportunities within them. Monitoring and evaluation are at the heart of good policy making, so we are also ensuring this is in place for all initiatives that help to support the UK's clusters to realise their potential. For example, we are establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of Innovation Accelerators, which is a new pilot programme supporting Glasgow, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands to become major, globally competitive centres for research and innovation.

## ■ Innovation and Research: Brexit

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[122139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the keynote speech made by the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation at

Onward UK on 11 January 2023, which post-Brexit freedoms in procurement and regulation he plans to use to grow innovation clusters and support research and development.

**George Freeman:**

Leaving the EU gives us the opportunity to create our own regulations that can help to drive transparency, prosperity and growth. The Government's Procurement Bill takes up that opportunity to create the flexibility to facilitate public sector buyers procuring innovative new products and services. In addition to this the third round of the Regulators' Pioneer fund is funding projects that will help to keep the UK at the forefront of regulation and support R&D.

■ **Iron and Steel**

**John Redwood:**

[\[123843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his forecast is for UK steel output in 2023.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government does not publish or produce forecasts for UK steel output.

■ **Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[126621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2023 to Question 118973 on Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries, if he will make an estimate of the average amount of government funds to decarbonise a steel plant will receive.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

Each steel company and site are different and will have different choices about their decarbonisation and technology pathway. It is therefore not possible to estimate the average level of Government support that could possibly be required.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[126622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 12 January 2023 to Question 118973, how much funding has been allocated to steel plants for decarbonisation through the £1.5 billion bidding fund, as of 18 January 2023.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

Industrial businesses, including steel plants, can bid into Government competitive funds worth more than £1.5 billion to support them to go green, cut emissions and become more energy efficient. This funding includes:

- o The £1 billion Carbon Capture Utility and Storage Infrastructure Fund
- o The £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund
- o The £55 million Industrial Fuel switching Fund



- o The £20 million Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre
- o The £289 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund
- o Up to £66 million as part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

The £289m Fund Industrial Energy Transformation Fund allocated £3.1m of energy efficiency funding to steel plants in its first application window. Support for energy efficiency upgrades helps to reduce the sites energy demand and paves the way for future decarbonisation. This support was broken into (Name, Grant Allocated, Region and Constituency):

Celsa – Energy Efficiency Deployment Project, £3m. Wales, Cardiff South and Penarth.

Firststeel - Energy Efficiency Study, £80k. West Midlands, Walsall South Constituency.

William Cook – Energy Efficiency Study, £38k. Yorkshire and the Humber, Sheffield South East.

Since then, a further five application windows have continued the funding available to the steel industry, details of winners will be released in due course. The final window of the IETF closes in February 2023.

As many of these funds are still running their course, we are unable to provide further detail at present.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[126623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2023 to Question 118973 on Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries, if he will make an estimate of the potential impact of successful applications made by steel plants to the £1.5 billion fund on levels of carbon emissions from those plants.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

Together with all existing and new support outlined in the Net Zero Strategy we will continue to work together with industry to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable, and low carbon future. It's not possible to calculate the impact of these schemes on carbon emissions at this stage, as many of the projects are still in progress, but we hope to provide a figure in due course.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[126620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2023 to Question 118973 on Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries, which (a) steel plants, (b) constituencies and (c) regions have been allocated how much government funds to become more energy efficient.



**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

Information on the awards granted is not collated in the form requested. However, for details of all awards made under the programmes listed in Question 118973, I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him today to Question 126622.

**■ Liquefied Petroleum Gas: Contracts****Drew Hendry:****[127805]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing (a) liquefied petroleum gas metered estates ability to change suppliers and (b) the information provided to householders about their options to switch by their liquefied petroleum gas supplier when contract terms end.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Investigation Orders made by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) make it easier for customers to switch suppliers. There are separate Orders for individual householders and residents of metered estates. The operation of the orders is monitored by the CMA's Remedies Monitoring Team. Further information, including a guide for customers, with contact details for the CMA, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/liquefied-petroleum-gas-lpg-market-orders-and-calculator>.

The LPG suppliers' trade association, 'Liquid Gas UK' (LGUK), offers a customer charter, an Ombudsman scheme and a post code search facility on its website to find alternative suppliers.

**■ Organisations: Standards****Beth Winter:****[126853]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his oral contribution of 16 January 2023, Official Report column 55, whether he has had discussions with the International Labour Organisation on introducing minimum service levels in workplaces.

**Beth Winter:****[126854]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his oral contribution of 16 January 2023, Official Report, column 55, if he will publish details of all ministerial meetings held by his Department with representatives of the International Labour Organisation since 2010.

**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.

**Royal Mail: Ofcom****Catherine West:****[124030]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he made the adequacy of Ofcom's regulatory powers for scrutinising Royal Mail's performance.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Postal Services Act 2011 gives Ofcom robust powers to scrutinise performance of any regulatory requirements it has imposed on Royal Mail, and other operators, and to enforce those requirements, including imposing financial penalties or instituting court proceedings where appropriate. The Government has no plans to seek changes to the Act.

Ofcom considers Royal Mail's performance against its quality of service targets and will continue to closely monitor performance for 2022-23 which it has been clear should no longer be impacted by Covid-19.

**Science: Finance****Chi Onwurah:****[123936]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Scientific Institutes his Department funds; and if he will list them.

**George Freeman:**

*[Holding answer 19 January 2023]:* BEIS directly funds or has contracts with a number of Scientific Institutes such as: National Physical Laboratory, Laboratory of the Government Chemist, National Engineering Laboratory, Met Office, UK Atomic Energy Authority and the National Nuclear Laboratory.

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) also directly funds a number of research institutes, a list of which can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/eligible-research-institutes/>. Public funding for R&D via UKRI also supports higher education providers to establish their own research institutes which generally operate independently from government.

**Small Businesses: Environment Protection****Liz Saville Roberts:****[124023]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of the Federation of Small Businesses' proposal to introduce Help to green vouchers for small businesses.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government keeps energy efficiency support for businesses, including SMEs, under review. Existing initiatives include an exemption on business rates for green technology, providing small businesses grants under the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, and support under the £289million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund.

The Government is reviewing what additional levers can be introduced to help small businesses to be more energy efficient, including financial support such as those suggested by the Federation of Small Businesses. As part of this, in the Autumn Statement my Rt Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that Government will establish a new Energy Efficiency Taskforce to help achieve the Government's target to reduce energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030.

#### ■ **South Tyneside Council: Grants**

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[127774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much money have South Tyneside Council returned to his Department from grants allocated over the last two years as of 19 January 2023.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

This information is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

#### ■ **Strikes**

**Julian Knight:**

[\[123975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has conducted an economic impact assessment of the most recent industrial strike action.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Department is conducting an economic impact assessment of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill, which takes the most recent industrial action, as well as other instances of industrial action, into consideration. This will be published shortly.

#### ■ **Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[127885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill with paragraph 882 of the International Labour Organisation code on Freedom of Association.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government has considered the requirements set out in paragraph 822 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) code on Freedom of Association. The ILO recognises minimum service levels can be a sensible solution to protect the public from serious consequences of strikes. The Bill is clear that before making regulations setting a minimum service level (MSL) for a particular area, the lead Department must consult widely. This will give relevant trade unions the opportunity to feed in their views. Once an MSL is in place, the legislation also requires employers to

consult with a relevant trade union, and have regard to their views, before issuing a work notice.

■ **Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill: Impact Assessments**

**Beth Winter:**

[\[126856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has submitted an Impact Assessment for the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill to the Regulatory Policy Committee.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

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

■ **Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability**

**Catherine West:**

[\[124032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the eligibility criteria for the Warm Home Discount on households in receipt of disability benefits who were ineligible for the Warm Home Discount in winter 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government has expanded and reformed the Warm Home Discount scheme in England and Wales to target fuel poverty and provide most rebates automatically.

Households in receipt of means-tested benefits with high energy costs based on certain characteristics of their property are eligible for the rebate. Around 62% of Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance recipients receive a means-tested benefit; those with high energy costs are eligible. As a result of expanding and reforming the scheme, the Government estimates that 160,000 more households, where a person has a disability or long-term illness, will receive a rebate.

These changes do not apply in Scotland, where customers apply for a Broader Group rebate through their energy suppliers, who can set their own eligibility criteria.

**CABINET OFFICE**

■ **Civil Servants: Living Wage**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[124070\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an estimate of the number of civil servants who are paid less than the Living Wage Foundation's real living wage.

**Jeremy Quin:**

This government is committed to paying people a decent living wage, and always adheres to the statutory National Living Wage. This will rise from £9.50 to £10.42 an hour from 1 April 2023, an increase of 9.7%. There are an estimated 5,710 civil

servants who are paid less than the 2021/22 Living Wage Foundation's real living wage (£11.05 if based in London, or £9.90 if based outside of London).

Figures are based on the centrally held numbers and salaries of civil servants collected in the Annual Civil Service Employment Survey as at March 2022, and may differ from those provided by individual departments. Civil servants located outside the UK or with an unreported location (6,995) or without a reported hourly rate (an additional 150) have been excluded.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[120880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK has the ability to deploy what it defines as an Armoured Brigade.

**James Heappey:**

The UK is capable of deploying what it defines as an Armoured Brigade.

As part of Future Soldier, in order to re-model deployable forces to create more self-sufficient and tactical formations, Armoured Infantry Brigades transitioned and re-designated as Armoured Brigade Combat Teams. This capability remains at the heart of the UK's proposition as part of the NATO New Force Model and will be retained throughout the decade as the Army transitions to new capabilities.

### ■ Army: Deployment

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[127712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the current lead UK deployable armoured infantry Brigade Combat Team.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[127713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what constitutes the lead deployable armoured infantry Brigade Combat Team by (a) unit, (b) manpower and (c) platform.

**James Heappey:**

The lead Armoured Brigade Combat Team (BCT) is a scalable force trained for warfighting up to joint medium operations.

As the lead Armoured Brigade Combat Team, 12<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade Combat Team has a current, Regular strength of 4,473. It is equipped with Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles and Challenger 2 as well as Bulldog, AS90, Titan and Trojan.

As of January 2023, 12<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade Combat Team is structured as follows:

#### **12<sup>TH</sup> ARMoured BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM**

Headquarters 12<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade Combat Team

**12<sup>TH</sup> ARMoured BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM**

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The King's Royal Hussars

The Royal Tank Regiment

The Royal Wessex Yeomanry (Reserve)

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Royal Welsh

3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Welsh (Reserve)

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Mercian Regiment

4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Mercian Regiment (Reserve)

3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Rifles

4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, The Royal Logistics Corps

4 Battalion, The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

4 Armoured Medical Regiment, Royal Army Medical Corps

Where required, other units are drawn from across the Field Army. The BCT will be structured with a Brigade Headquarters, one Armoured Regiment, two Armoured Infantry Battalions, one Armoured Cavalry Regiment and other supporting units.

**■ British Indian Ocean Territory**

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[124176]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had recent discussions with his US counterpart on the joint military base in the British Indian Ocean Territory in the context of negotiations with Mauritius over the territory's sovereignty.

**James Heappey:**

The Secretary of State and his officials are in regular contact with the US on a range of issues including the British Indian Ocean Territory / Chagos Archipelago.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[124177]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the importance of the British Indian Ocean Territory as a military asset.

**James Heappey:**

The joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia plays a crucial role in combating some of the most challenging threats to regional and international security, including those from terrorism, organised crime, global instability, and piracy.

The UK and Mauritius have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. The UK and Mauritius have reiterated that any agreement between our two countries will ensure the continued effective operation of the joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia.

#### ■ HMS Collingwood: Repairs and Maintenance

**John Healey:**

[\[126537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2023 to Question 122040 on HMS Collingwood: Repairs and Maintenance, for what reasons work orders were submitted for the maintenance issues reported since February 2022 that have resulted in a lack of hot water for 24 hours and more.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Work Orders for the 126 maintenance issues that resulted in a lack of hot water for 24 hours and more, ranged from a lack of hot water to individual taps, to a total loss of hot water services to a building.

The breakdown of the 126 maintenance tasks categorised based on priority is shown below:

#### ENHANCED REACTIVE

#### MAINTENANCE

#### (EMERGENCY)

#### URGENT

#### ROUTINE

#### TOTAL

36

42

48

126

#### ■ Indo-Pacific Region

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department will seek closer cooperation with France on defence matters in the Indo-Pacific region.

**James Heappey:**

We work closely with France on defence matters around the world. We are considering our future plans together, including for the Indo-Pacific, as part of the preparations for the UK-France Summit on 10 March 2023.

#### ■ Military Aircraft: Crew

**John Healey:**

[\[126542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, the (a) establishment and (b) numbers of (i) pilots, (ii) weapon systems officers and (iii) weapon systems operators in squadron 27 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[126543\]](#)

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 28 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[126544\]](#)

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 33 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[126545\]](#)

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 17 was on 1 December 2022?

**John Healey:** [\[126546\]](#)

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 41 was on 1 December 2022.

**John Healey:** [\[126547\]](#)

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 206 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.

## ■ Military Bases: Heating

**John Healey:** [\[125249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2023 to Question 113208 on Military Bases: Heating, how many and what proportion of those incidents were resolved within 12 hours.

**Alex Chalk:**

This information is not held in the format requested.

The table below sets out the figures previously provided regarding the number of incidents relating to loss of heating and/or hot water for buildings on each of the sites requested. Heating figures cannot be separated out.

In line with the FDIS Built Estate contracts, contractors are obliged to respond to the loss of heating immediately to make buildings safe, and within 12 hours to restore functionality for certain asset types, including Single Living Accommodation.



ESTABLISHMENT	TOTAL NUMBER OF HEATING/HOT WATER INCIDENTS	FIXED WITHIN 12 HOURS	PROPORTION
HMS Raleigh	121	51	42%
Commando Training Centre Lympstone	86	25	29%
HMS Sultan	357	149	42%
HMS Collingwood	230	112	49%
CHOM, YHOM, DOM and No1 Mess RAFC Cranwell	8	4	50%
RAF Halton	244	70	29%
Catterick Garrison	102	54	53%
RAF Cosford	143	104	73%
Stonehouse Barracks	46	13	28%

For less operationally critical buildings, functionality should be restored within five working days.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Supply Chains

**John Healey:**

[\[126540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to review the way it sustains industrial supply chains for key capabilities.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes the health and resilience of its supply chains very seriously, and draws on knowledge from across the Department, wider Government, Industry and Trade Associations. The Department is focusing on understanding, mapping and monitoring our most critical supply chains, and have invested in a department-wide supply chain mapping programme, the MOD also shares its intelligence and best practice on common critical supply chains and materials across government and internationally.

The Defence and Security Industrial Strategy also ensures that the Department takes a more strategic approach to industrial capability that's critical to our strategic and operational needs. including a more consistent consideration of the longer-term implications of the Government's procurement decisions.

**■ Prime Minister: Staff****Patrick Grady:** [\[126698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2023 to Question 122466 on Prime Minister: Staff, if he will publish the (a) total number of post holders and (b) dates of service of Military Assistants to the Prime Minister since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As stated in my answer to Question 122466 on 18 January 2023, six individuals have held the post of Military Assistant to the Prime Minister since 2010. The dates of their postings are as follows:

November 2010 to October 2012

October 2012 to September 2014

September 2014 to September 2016

September 2016 to September 2018

August 2018 to December 2020

December 2020 to November 2023

**■ Type 32 Frigates****Chris Evans:** [\[126615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had discussions with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) other stakeholders about the potential impact of cancellation of the Type 32 frigate programme.

**Chris Evans:** [\[126616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact on shipbuilding in the UK of cancellation of the Type 32 frigate programme.

**Chris Evans:** [\[126617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of cancelling the Type 32 frigate programme on the Royal Navy's capability.

**Chris Evans:** [\[126618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact on shipbuilding in Scotland of cancellation of the Type 32 frigate programme.

**Alex Chalk:**

There are no current plans to withdraw the Type 32 Frigate Programme and it remains a key part of the future fleet. The Programme is currently in its concept phase and work continues to ensure the programme is affordable.

## ■ **Ukraine: Artillery**

**John Healey:**

[\[126534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 16 January 2023 on the Ukraine: Update, Official Report, column 36, what steps his Department is taking to increase the state of readiness for the two batteries of AS-90 guns, which are at varying states of readiness, prior to them being donated to Ukraine.

**John Healey:**

[\[126535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 16 January 2023 on Ukraine: Update, Official Report, column 36, when he expect the two batteries of AS-90 guns at varying states of readiness to be at a high level of readiness.

**John Healey:**

[\[126536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral statement of 16 January 2023, Official Report, column 36, on Ukraine: Update, when he plans to deliver the (a) battery of eight AS-90 guns at high readiness; and b) two batteries of AS-90 guns at varying states of readiness to Ukraine.

**James Heappey:**

The Army is working to maximise the readiness of platforms granted to Ukraine which will provide an important increase in Ukraine's capabilities and will help to accelerate Ukrainian success on the battlefield.

It would be inappropriate to comment further due to the potential impact on security and operational effectiveness.

## ■ **USA: Armed Forces**

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[126822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to Answer of 24 February 2022 to Question 126833, if he will provide the location of the 135 US military personnel stationed at undisclosed locations in the UK; and if he will provide (a) a breakdown and (b) additional information on the 48 other locations in London where US personnel are deployed.

**James Heappey:**

The personnel are based in multiple locations across the UK, but grouped together for administrative purposes. This group would include, but not be limited to, personnel on university courses, industry placements or personnel on exchange.

## ■ **Watchkeeper WK450**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[125262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120884 on Watchkeeper WK450, how many Watchkeeper platforms are operational.

**Alex Chalk:**

Details of the number of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in the UK Armed Forces are published on an annual basis on the government's website. The most recent publication can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2022>.

For reasons of operational sensitivity we do not release figures on the current availability of any platform.

**Mr Kevan Jones:****[125263]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120884 on Watchkeeper WK450, how many full-time personnel train on Watchkeeper each day.

**Alex Chalk:**

Based on the training involved both within the Watchkeeper Regiment and wider Artillery, it is estimated that on average, around 80 service personnel train with Watchkeeper each day.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Trade Unions****Chris Stephens:****[R] [127790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what human resources information their Department shares with trade unions on a regular basis.

**Julia Lopez:**

DCMS regularly shares HR information and data with our recognised trade unions to support negotiations for the Department's annual pay award, this includes data related to pay, headcount, turnover and diversity & inclusion. The Department also regularly provides data and information on our annual People Survey results.

In addition, DCMS shares other HR information on an ad-hoc basis, relating to various policies and processes, upon request by trade unions and where their engagement is required.

**■ Football: Regulation****Julie Elliott:****[125354]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she expects to publish the Football Regulator White Paper; and whether women's football will be included within the regulatory boundaries set out by that White Paper.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government published its response to the recommendations made by the independent Fan Led Review of Football Governance in April. We absolutely

recognise the need for football to be reformed to ensure the game's sustainability in the long term. We remain committed to publishing a White Paper setting out our proposals for the reform of football governance and will do so imminently.

On women's football we have considered the findings of the Fan Led Review and mapped where there may be crossovers with the Review of Women's Football via teams affiliated to men's teams in scope of the regulator, such as strengthened Owner's and Director's Tests. However, the Review of Women's Football is still gathering evidence and we do not want to preempt the findings of that Review, which will be published in due course.

## ■ Future of Women's Football Review

**Julie Elliott:** [\[125352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the Review into Women's Football led by Karen Carney MBE.

**Julie Elliott:** [\[125353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she expects to publish the findings of the review into Women's Football conducted by Karen Carney MBE.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Review is progressing well, with stakeholder evidence sessions taking place focused on the key themes of the Review.

An open call for evidence has also been completed on the Review, which received over 80 responses, from a range of stakeholders within the women's football community.

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

## ■ Media

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[127870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Media Bill (a) will be published in draft and (b) face pre-legislative scrutiny.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government will introduce the Media Bill when Parliamentary time allows.

Further details on the Media Bill will be set out in due course.

## ■ Social Media: Artificial Intelligence

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[125342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will take steps to help prevent the coding of social media algorithms which create and increase racially prejudiced stereotypes.

**Paul Scully:**

Under the Online Safety Bill, all platforms will need to undertake risk assessments for illegal content and content that is harmful to children. This will ensure they understand the risks associated with their services, including in relation to their algorithms. They will then need to put in place proportionate systems and processes to mitigate these risks.

Platforms will need to put in place systems and processes to prevent their users from encountering priority illegal content. This includes offences relating to racial hatred. Platforms that are likely to be accessed by children will also need to fulfil these duties in relation to harmful content and activity, including online abuse and harassment.

Where content does not meet the criminal threshold, Category 1 platforms will be required to provide all adult users with tools which provide them with greater control over the content that they see, if it is likely that users will encounter it on their service. These tools will specifically apply to content that is abusive, or incites hate, on the basis of race and religion. Should users decide to utilise these tools, they will either reduce the likelihood that they encounter such content, or will alert them to the nature of it.

**EDUCATION**■ **Children in Care: Education****Rachael Maskell:**[\[124003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children are supported by a Virtual school head (a) nationally and (b) in York; and what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of demand for Virtual school heads.

**Nick Gibb:**

In 2022, the number of children supported by a Virtual School Head in York and nationally were as follows:

	LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN	PREVIOUSLY LOOKED- AFTER CHILDREN	CHILDREN IN NEED
York	277	240	1,140
National	82,170	63,039	404,310

Virtual School Heads have a statutory duty to promote the educational attainment of all children in their Local Authority's care, wherever the child lives or is educated there. They act as the child's corporate parent, ensuring all children in care receive the support they need to succeed in education.

Since September 2018, Virtual School Heads also have responsibility to promote the educational achievement of pupils who are no longer looked after because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement order. For

these previously looked-after children, Virtual School Heads can provide advice and information to parents, educators, and others, upon request. In June 2021, the department extended the role of Virtual School Heads further to provide strategic leadership to champion the outcomes for children in need.

The Department works closely with the National Association of Virtual School Heads and with regional virtual school networks, to ensure there is a good understanding of the challenges that Virtual School Heads face. The Department has provided additional funding to ensure Virtual School Heads have the resources in place to meet their additional duties.

## ■ Children: Social Services

**Rachael Maskell:**

[127811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has taken steps to implement the recommendation on Regional Care Co-operatives from the independent review of children's social care by Josh MacAlister published in May 2022.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care's final report was published in May 2022. The department will publish an ambitious and detailed Implementation Strategy early in 2023, setting out our plans for reforms. Our Implementation Strategy will also respond to the Competition Markets Authority report into children's social care placements.

**Helen Hayes:**

[127853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children's social care vacancies there are by local authority.

**Claire Coutinho:**

Information on children and family social workers, including vacancies, is published by the department in the annual children's social work workforce statistics. This can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-s-social-work-workforce>.

The latest data on the number of full-time equivalent vacancies by local authority is included in the underlying data of this publication and can also be accessed at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/bf10ff96-58d8-41b3-7d66-08dafabf1de8>.

Information on children and family social workers for the year ending 30 September 2022 will be published on 23 February 2023.

## ■ Children's Social Care National Implementation Board

**Rachael Maskell:**

[127809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the terms of reference for the National Implementation Board for children's social care will be published.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The terms of reference for the National Implementation Board have been agreed with all Board members and will be published on the GOV.UK website in February 2023.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[127812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she expects the next meeting of the Children's Social Care National Implementation Board to take place; and whether she, or a Minister in her Department will plan to attend that meeting.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The next meeting of the National Implementation Board is due to take place on Monday 27 February 2023. I will attend and chair the meeting, in my capacity as the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[127813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Children's Social Care National Implementation Board has had discussions with co-operatives operating in the social care sector.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The National Implementation Board has provided advice and challenge on delivering reform to the children's social care system. The Board is comprised of individuals with skills in delivering transformational change, sector expertise, and direct experience of the children's social care system. Members of the Board engage with a wide range of stakeholders and delivery partners through their individual roles and draw upon their experiences and knowledge of the sector to inform discussions at the Board.

**■ Education: Industrial Disputes****Julian Sturdy:**[\[120922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of industrial action in the education sector on the academic performance of students in this academic year.

**Nick Gibb:**

Industrial action is not in the best interest of pupils, and the Department is concerned by action that disrupts teaching, particularly following disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The starting salary for a newly qualified teacher is at least £28,000 and this is set to rise to £30,000. In Inner London the starting salary is more; at least £34,500. Teachers receive annual pay rises through an independent pay review process, and many teachers also see greater uplifts by progressing up the pay scales.

Most teachers in the first few years of their career will receive pay rises from progression on top of the headline award, which could mean an increase of up to 15.9% this year, and around 40% of experienced teachers below the top of their pay range will also receive pay increases through progression or promotion, on top of the



5% pay award. In addition, teachers' pensions include a 23.6% employer pension contribution.

The Department is meeting unions regularly to listen to their concerns and work to avert strike action. If strikes do go ahead there will undoubtedly be impacts on the delivery of education and the Department has a duty to help parents and families understand how this will affect them. In the event of strike action at a school, the school leaders or local authority that manages the school will take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible. In some schools there may be little or no impact from strike action but in others it may mean that changes are made to the way they operate. Parents can find more information on strike actions in schools in the Department's Education Hub blog:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/01/16/everything-you-need-to-know-about-strike-action-in-schools-and-colleges/>.

The Department has updated the '[handling strike action in schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-strike-action-in-schools)' guidance, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-strike-action-in-schools>.

Schools should prioritise vulnerable children, children of critical workers and pupils due to take public examinations and other formal assessments, if there is a need to restrict attendance. The use of remote education where provision in school can't be delivered is also advised.

For further education (FE), colleges are responsible for setting the pay of their teaching and support staff. The Department is increasing the level of overall funding in colleges, so that they can recruit, retain and develop staff. An extra £1.6 billion is available for 16-19 education in the 2024/25 financial year compared with 2021/22. This is in addition to the £291 million for 16-19 education in 2021/22, and the £400 million that the Department provided in 2020/21. The Department is also funding a package of direct support for the further education workforce in 2022/23, to continue to support the colleges with the recruitment, retention and development of teachers.

Universities are autonomous and responsible for the pay and pension provision of their staff. While the Government plays no role in such disputes, the Department hopes all parties can reach an agreement that delivers good value for students, staff and the universities.

This Department believes that students should be at the heart of the higher education (HE) system. The Department set up the Office for Students (OfS) to regulate the HE sector in England, protect student rights and ensure the sector is delivering real value for money. The OfS expects institutions to do all they can to avoid disruption for students, and has also highlighted institutions' obligations under consumer protection law in relation to the effects of industrial action.

## ■ Health and Science: T-levels

**Jim Shannon:**

**[123944]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of proposals to remove funding for applied general qualifications that overlap with Health and Science T-Levels on the health and social care workforce.

**Robert Halfon:**

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

The department is reforming the Level 3 qualifications system to ensure all qualifications approved for funding alongside A levels and T Levels are high-quality, have a clear purpose and deliver great outcomes. T Levels have been developed with over 250 leading employers, have significantly longer teaching hours and include a meaningful nine-week industry placement that sets them apart from many current vocational qualifications.

The Health and Science T Levels provide young people with an in-depth overview of the occupational choices within the health and care sectors. They will provide a pipeline of young talent into occupations such as Trainee Nursing Associate (TNA) and Assistant Health Practitioner roles, later progressing to the registered occupations.

In addition to T Levels, the department will also fund small alternative academic qualifications, equivalent to one A level in priority areas such as health and social care, as well as funding large technical qualifications for adults who are not able to take T Levels. In January 2023 the department published its funding approval criteria for alternative academic and technical qualifications approved from 2025, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualifications-funding-approval-manual-2025-to-2026/common-funding-approval-criteria>.

In October 2022 the department published the final list of qualifications which overlap with waves 1 and 2 T Levels, which will have 16-to-19 funding offers removed in August 2024. This excluded qualifications that may overlap with the Health and Science T Levels, as these were under review by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. The department will publish the final list of qualifications which overlap with the Health and Science T Levels, and which will have funding removed in 2024 in due course. The department has published an impact assessment for qualifications that will have 16-to-19 study programme funding removed because they overlap with a waves 1 or 2 T Levels, excluding Health and Science, and this will be updated when the final list is published.

The earliest point we will remove funding approval for qualifications that overlap with T Levels will be August 2024, four years after T Levels were first taught. The department has responded to feedback from the sector by delaying the withdrawal of funding by a year, ensuring awarding organisations and providers have longer to

prepare. All providers will have the opportunity to deliver T Levels for a minimum of one year before overlapping qualifications are removed.

#### ■ **Private Education: Shropshire**

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[123896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will hold discussions with fee paying schools in (a) the Borough of Telford and Wrekin and (b) Shropshire on the potential impact of the introduction of VAT on (i) school fees and (ii) local state school (A) places and (B) class sizes.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department regulates and inspects independent schools to ensure that they provide a safe and suitable education for children. The Department does not monitor or regulate independent school fees, spending or financial arrangements.

The introduction of additional tax on school fees may make independent education less affordable and create place pressures on state funded schools with limited capacity. As a result, the Department has no plans to make changes to the VAT regime around independent schools.

#### ■ **Pupils: Mental Health Services and Neurodiversity**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[124005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that children who have (a) mental health challenges and (b) a neurodiversity diagnosis have the in-school support that they need.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is committed to improving support for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those who face mental health challenges and those who are neurodivergent.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, mainstream schools must use their best endeavours to make sure a child or young person who has SEND gets the special educational provision they need.

The SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, published on 29 March 2022, sets out proposals to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND and those who need alternative provision, within a fairer and financially sustainable system.

The Green Paper outlines proposals for an inclusive system, starting with improved mainstream provision that is built on early and accurate identification of needs, high-quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum, and prompt access to targeted support where it is needed, including from specialist services outside school.

Alongside this, it sets out a vision for a strong specialist sector that has a clear purpose to support those children and young people with more complex needs who require specialist or alternative provision.

The department is funding all schools and colleges in England to train senior mental health leads who can put in place whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing. This includes leading on how to make sure they are including processes for identifying students, or specific groups, who need additional mental health support. Two thirds of schools and colleges will have been able to access funding by April 2023, backed by £10 million in the 2022/23 financial year. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/senior-mental-health-lead-training>.

There are also currently 287 mental health support teams in place in around 4,700 schools and colleges across the country, offering support to children experiencing common mental health issues and facilitating smoother access to external specialist support such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. These mental health support teams now cover 26% of pupils, a year earlier than originally planned. This will increase to 399 teams, covering around 35% of pupils, by April 2023, with over 500 planned to be up and running by 2024. Further information is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/trailblazers/>.

## ■ Schools: Cybersecurity

**Matt Western:**

**[124051]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure schools are protected from cyber criminals seeking to access their data.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools rely heavily on IT and online services to function. These services hold large amounts of sensitive personal data on pupils, parents, and staff and further information which needs to be kept safe and secure. Schools are directly responsible for their own levels of security and data protection, and need to ensure they have the appropriate security protections in place in order to safeguard their systems, data, staff, and pupils.

To help with improving cyber security across the sector, in October 2022 the Department released Cyber Security Standards, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>. These standards provide a base level requirement for good cyber security practices in schools, helping to raise resilience across the sector and make schools a harder target for malicious attacks. Many of the areas suggested for improvement are low cost, or free to implement.

Cyber cover is now included in the Department's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) scheme and available to all member schools who have met the following four key pre-defined requirements for this cover:

- Have offline backups. National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) help and guidance on backing up is available and ideally follow the 3-2-1 rule explained in the NCSC blog Offline backups in an online world, which can be accessed here: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/offline-backups-in-an-online-world>.

- Have completed NCSC Training for all employees and governors who have access to the member's IT system by the 31 May 2022 or the start of the membership year, whichever is later.
- Register with Police CyberAlarm from 1 March 2022.
- Have a cyber response plan in place. A template has been available to download from the RPA members portal since 1 March 2022.

The Department continues to work closely with stakeholders, including the Joint Information Systems Committee and the NCSC to identify incidents and conduct threat trend analysis to monitor and identify emerging cyber threats posed to the sector at the hands of cyber criminals.

The main vulnerabilities that the Department recognises schools may face, are from phishing emails and compromised remote access credentials. Schools can increase their resilience in these areas with cyber security training for school staff from the NCSC which can be found here: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools>, and by introducing Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) to devices logging into the network remotely. The NCSC Active Cyber Defence tools are now available to all schools. These assist in protecting schools from a range of attacks. Further help for schools from the NCSC can be found on their website which can be accessed here: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/schools>.

In the event of a cyber attack, the Department has a sector facing cyber security team who can provide advice and guidance to assist with recovery. To report an incident and receive support schools can contact [sector.incidentreporting@education.gov.uk](mailto:sector.incidentreporting@education.gov.uk). Schools are also encouraged to report all cyber incidents to Action Fraud via their reporting site here: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>.

## ■ Schools: Discipline

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[124001]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of recent trends in the number of children (a) placed in isolation and (b) excluded (i) nationally and (ii) in York.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department publishes figures on the proportion of pupils permanently excluded or suspended from schools in England. The most recent full academic year figures, covering academic years up to 2020/21, can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england/2020-21>. The following link includes a table showing the rate of permanent exclusions and suspensions at state funded schools in England and in York between 2015/16 and 2020/21: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/42028c56-89de-42d4-02ad-08daf870ec67>. Note that this is the most recently published full academic year data.

The Department does not hold data on pupils placed in isolation by their school.

■ **Schools: Holocaust Memorial Day**

**Damien Moore:** [125482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day in schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools are free to decide which events to commemorate and what activities to put in place to support pupils' understanding of significant events and particular months or days dedicated to specific communities. Schools decide how they mark Holocaust Memorial Day, which commemorates the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazis, along with all other victims of Nazi persecution and victims of subsequent genocides.

Schools can call on the support of organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the Holocaust Educational Trust and University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education and others to help with their activities for the day.

■ **Schools: Southport**

**Damien Moore:** [125483]

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

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has allocated over £13 billion for improving the condition of school buildings since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed for the current financial year. The Department is also delivering the School Rebuilding Programme to rebuild or significantly refurbish buildings at 500 schools in the poorest condition.

There are now 400 projects in the rebuilding programme, with the most recent set of 239 schools announced in December 2022, including Greenbank High School in Southport. Confirmed projects can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>.

For the 2022/23 financial year, Sefton Local Authority, which covers Southport constituency, received an annual School Condition Allocation (SCA) of £2,426,424 to spend on improving the condition of its maintained schools. Large multi-academy trusts and voluntary-aided school bodies, such as dioceses, also receive SCA. As SCA is allocated to responsible bodies, not individual schools, it is not possible to provide a constituency level breakdown of this funding. Allocations are published here:

[https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachmen%2Fdata%2Ffile%2F1074690%2FSchool capital funding allocations for 2022 to 2023.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachmen%2Fdata%2Ffile%2F1074690%2FSchool%20capital%20funding%20allocations%20for%202022%20to%202023.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

Schools not part of bodies eligible for SCA are instead eligible to bid to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) each year. In the 2022/23 CIF round, there were five successful CIF applications across three schools in Southport. CIF funding is released in phased payments as work progresses.

The Department recently announced that eligible schools will also receive an allocation from an additional £447 million in capital funding in 2022/23 for capital improvements to buildings and facilities, prioritising works to improve energy efficiency. This includes £588,635 for schools in the Southport constituency.

## ■ Schools: Teaching Methods

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[123943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of promoting more project-based learning in schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

The Department has no plans to promote project based teaching in schools.

Every child should benefit from a broad, ambitious, knowledge-rich curriculum, taught by highly skilled teachers. The Department is committed to evidence based teaching and has recently re-endowed the Education Endowment Foundation with £137 million to research and fund innovative approaches to improve teaching in schools, nurseries, and colleges. Their approaches are aimed at improving educational outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children and young people.

This supports teachers to make evidence led decisions and choose interventions that they know are effective and appropriate for their pupils. Schools can also refer to the Oak National Academy and the network of subject hubs for support with teaching an evidenced based curriculum.

## ■ Secondary Education: Assessments

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[124008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of moving 16 year olds from exam-based assessments to a system which uses a wider range of assessment measures.

**Nick Gibb:**

Examinations are the best and fairest way of judging pupils' performance. They have a level of impartiality that other forms of assessment do not have, with everyone being assessed on the same material in the same amount of time. They are marked in the same way, and they are marked anonymously.

The independent qualifications regulator, Ofqual, was clear during the reform of GCSEs and A Levels that non-exam assessment (NEA) should only be used when it is the only valid way to assess essential elements of the subject. There are a number



of GCSE and A/AS Level qualifications where part of the qualification is assessed through NEA, such as in modern foreign languages, and art and design. There is also a larger number of Key Stage 4 vocational qualifications, including Technical Awards, where NEA is used to assess practical competencies.

## ■ Skilled Workers: Vacancies

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[114677]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impacts of skills shortages on businesses.

**Robert Halfon:**

The Employer Skills Survey (ESS) has run biennially since 2011, providing a vital source of intelligence on the skills issues that employers face. The survey captures the density and incidence of skills shortages, as well as the impact of these on businesses.

The last ESS ran in 2019. Fieldwork is currently underway for the 2022 ESS, and will continue until the end of March 2023. Full findings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employer-skills-survey-2019>.

The survey captures the number of vacancies and the proportion of these that were proving hard to fill because applicants don't have the relevant skills, experience or qualifications (skill-shortage vacancies). In 2019, 24% of all vacancies in England, Northern Ireland and Wales were skill-shortage vacancies, an increase from 22% in 2017. This measure is known as the skill-shortage density measure.

Of those employers in England, Northern Ireland and Wales that reported skill-shortage vacancies, 94% reported that it had an impact on business performance.

The most common impacts reported included:

- An increased workload for staff (84%)
- Difficulties meeting customer services objectives (49%)
- Increased operating costs (45%)
- Loss of business or orders to competitors (40%)
- Delays developing new products or services (39%)

The Skills for Jobs White Paper published in January 2021 set out the government's blueprint for reshaping the technical skills system, to better meet the needs of employers and the wider economy. As part of this new approach, the department introduced employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) which will set out a clear articulation of employers' skills needs, and the priority changes required in a local area to help ensure post-16 technical education and training provision is more responsive and flexible in meeting local labour market skills needs. The department has now designated employer representative bodies to lead on the development of LSIPs in all 38 areas of England, and expect local areas to have their plans ready for approval in May 2023.



## ■ Special Educational Needs: School Leaving

**Helen Hayes:**

**[127847]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data her Department holds on the number of secondary school pupils with an education, health and care plan who entered (a) further education, (b) apprenticeships and (c) employment after leaving secondary school in each of the last five years.

**Robert Halfon:**

Information about the number of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan that continued in education, apprenticeships, or employment after leaving key stage 4 from state-funded mainstream and special schools, in the last five years, is available in a table which can be accessed at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/cbd7302c-53d4-4482-7d59-08dafabf1de8>.

Destination data is also available for students that reached the end of 16 to 18 study, but it does not include a specific breakdown by EHC plan. In this data, information on special educational needs (SEN) eligibility status is based on data recorded by state-funded mainstream schools during 16 to 18 study only and does not cover the entire cohort of young people studying at post-16, which includes FE colleges. This data can be accessed at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/0971ad6a-eef8-4874-7d5b-08dafabf1de8>.

## ■ Teachers: Pay

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[123999]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of real terms regression on pay on teacher retention.

**Nick Gibb:**

Teacher retention is key to ensuring effective teacher supply and quality, and the Department is taking action to support teachers to stay in the profession.

The Department understands the pressures many teachers, like the rest of society, are currently facing due to the challenge of high inflation. Teachers do an essential job and do so brilliantly. The Department is clear that teacher pay should reflect these contributions. This is why the pay rise teachers are receiving this year is the highest in a generation.

The Department has accepted the recommendations of the Independent Pay Review Body for 2022/23 to provide the highest pay increases for 30 years, with every teacher eligible for a pay uplift of at least 5%.

The average salary for a classroom teacher is £39,500, with an employer pension contribution of 23.6% in addition, which equates to almost £10,000 per year.

The starting salary for a new teacher rose by up to 8.9% this year. The Department is committed to delivering £30,000 starting salaries, providing teaching with a more

competitive financial offer, enabling the Department to attract high quality graduates and helping to ensure teaching is viewed as a prestigious profession.

Most teachers early in their career, and around 40% of experienced teachers, not already at the top of their pay scale, will also receive pay increases through progression or promotion. In total, this could mean rises of up to 15.9% this year.

To improve retention of teachers in priority areas, the Department is also offering a Levelling Up Premium worth up to £3,000 tax-free for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers, who choose to work in disadvantaged schools. This will support recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in these subjects and in the schools and areas that need them most.

The Department has also taken action to improve teacher and head teacher workload, working with teachers and head teachers to understand and address longstanding issues around marking, planning and data management. For example, the Department has developed, alongside headteachers, the school workload reduction toolkit.

The Department published the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which the Department is encouraging schools and colleges to sign up to. The Charter is a set of commitments from the Government, Ofsted, and schools and colleges to protect and promote the wellbeing of staff. As of January 2023, over 2,350 schools and colleges have signed up to the Charter. The Charter can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>.

The Department is working with schools to expand and promote flexible working opportunities in schools. The Department knows that access to flexible working in schools can help to recruit, retain and motivate teachers and leaders, improve staff wellbeing and promote equality of opportunity in the workforce.

The Department has also created an entitlement to at least three years of structured training, support and professional development for all new teachers at the start of their training, and through their early career with refreshed core teacher training content and the Early Career Framework. Since 2021, eligible teachers and leaders have been able to access scholarships to undertake fully funded National Professional Qualifications, supporting all teachers and headteachers to continuously develop their expertise throughout their careers.

To improve recruitment, the Department announced a £181 million Initial Teacher Training financial incentives package for the new recruitment cycle, a £52 million increase on the last cycle, including bursaries worth £27,000 tax free and scholarships worth £29,000 tax free, to encourage trainees to key subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing.

## ■ Young People: Training

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[125355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing work-based vocational training for young people between the ages of 14 and 16.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

The Department's reforms to the curriculum and qualifications since 2010 have given all young people the opportunity to achieve their full potential and prepare for a huge range of careers.

Alongside GCSEs, schools may offer vocational qualifications, such as Technical Awards. Technical Awards offer an opportunity to gain knowledge not usually acquired through GCSEs. Some Technical Awards are designed to encourage an interest in technical subjects such as engineering and technology, and others to develop practical knowledge, all of which are valuable as part of a general education.

From this broad grounding, pupils are then able to specialise at age 16, choosing from a variety of high quality academic and technical qualifications including A levels, T Levels, and apprenticeships.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

## ■ Agriculture: Planning Permission

**Tim Farron:**

[\[126578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had discussions with Ministers in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on farmers' experiences of obtaining planning permission for agricultural planning applications, including slurry stores and livestock accommodation.

**Mark Spencer:**

Defra and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have had discussions at an official level about how to improve farmers' experience of the planning process for agricultural developments, focusing on improved slurry storage. A similar approach will be used for grants to improve livestock housing. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are responsible for making decisions about agricultural planning applications and have statutory duties to consider the environmental impacts of applications in their area based on the evidence provided. In November, Defra published information to empower LPAs to make decisions about slurry stores funded through the Slurry Infrastructure Grant, which DLUHC signposted to in its Chief Planners Newsletter to LPAs.

**■ Agriculture: Subsidies**

**Robert Courts:** [\[125434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding was released from the Basic Payment Scheme following the reduction of direct payments to farmers in England in the (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23 financial year.

**Mark Spencer:**

Applying reductions to Direct Payments frees up money to be spent on financial assistance under our other schemes for farmers and land managers. As set out in our Future Farming and Countryside Programme annual report, published in October 2022, we spent £1.654 billion on Direct Payments in financial year 2021 to 2022. That was part of a total spend of £2.294 billion on existing farming schemes and our new financial assistance schemes, as set out in that report.

Information about spend on Direct Payments and financial assistance under our other schemes for financial year 2022 to 2023 will be included in an annual report to be published later this year.

**Robert Courts:** [\[125435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding has been allocated to each of the schemes available to farmers in England under the Agricultural Transition Plan for Financial Years (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

**Mark Spencer:**

We will not have fixed allocations (or 'pillars', as they were known whilst we were in the EU) of money ring-fenced to different schemes. Instead, we will learn as we go and find the best ways to manage the overall budget to respond to demand in a way that helps us achieve our intended outcomes. This means we will keep the allocation of funding between different schemes under review over time.

**Robert Courts:** [\[125436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding his Department provided to farmers under each scheme within the Agricultural Transition Plan in England in the (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23 financial year.

**Mark Spencer:**

In 2021-22, we spent £2.294 billion on our schemes within the Agricultural Transition Plan. We've laid before Parliament the spend at scheme level for 21-22 and we will continue to provide annual financial reports. The annual report can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-farming-and-countryside-programme-annual-report-2021-to-2022/future-farming-and-countryside-programme-annual-report-2021-to-2022-html-version>.

## ■ Biodiversity: Regulation

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[127807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she will publish the Government response to the Consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We remain committed to the implementation of mandatory biodiversity net gain and will publish the response to the consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation as soon as possible.

## ■ Dangerous Dogs

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[126809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 for protecting people from dangerous dogs.

**Mark Spencer:**

The Government considers that the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 plays an important part in our overall approach to tackling dangerous dogs and protecting the public.

## ■ Dogs: Brucellosis

**Sir Geoffrey Cox:**

[\[120959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the (a) prevalence of *Brucella Canis* and (b) risk it presents to humans in the UK; and what steps including import controls she is taking to prevent the spread of that disease.

**Mark Spencer:**

*Brucella canis* is classed as a reportable disease under the Zoonoses Order and in 2022, the first full reporting year, 54 cases were reported.

The Human Animal Infections & Risk Surveillance group (HAIRS), chaired by Defra, published a risk statement in February 2021 which concluded that the evidence available at that time did not allow an in-depth assessment of the risk to the general public. This statement is now under review in light of new data available.

Working with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), we will continue to gather information on the disease risk posed by *B. Canis* and will consider any further actions including import controls as appropriate.

## ■ Flood Control

**Tim Farron:**

[\[123904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the number of properties at risk of flooding in winter 2022-23.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Around 5.5 million homes and businesses in England are at risk from flooding and coastal erosion. That risk can be from one or multiple sources of flooding including rivers, the sea, surface water, rising groundwater or overwhelmed drains and sewers.

The Environment Agency (EA) estimates there are: 2.8m properties at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea, 3.2m properties at risk of surface water flooding, and 660,000 properties at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water.

In addition, between 122,000 and 290,000 properties are estimated to be in areas at risk of groundwater flooding - this may include properties also in areas at risk of surface water flooding.

The EA continue to build and repair flood defences to make the nation more resilient to flooding, delivering on the government's record £5.2 billion investment in flood and coastal risk management. This has already resulted in more than 35,000 properties being better protected from flooding and coastal erosion since April 2021.

**Tim Farron:**

[\[123907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which (a) flood protection schemes and (b) engineering works are (i) under construction and (ii) at the (A) planning and (B) other stage of development as of 16 January 2023; what the expected completion date is for each; how many properties will be protected by each; and what the (1) initial forecast was and (2) final estimated cost is of each.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) programme aims to reduce the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, groundwater and surface water. It also aims to reduce the risks from coastal erosion. Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Environment Agency worked with other Risk Management Authorities to complete over 120 FCERM projects. This better protected over 33,000 properties. A further 200 projects are under construction with more in the development phase.

The Environment Agency expects to have better protected at least 60,000 properties by the end of March 2023.

The programme is subject to change during the year as projects may be subject to delay (for example through extreme weather events) or brought forward (for example in response to additional funding). New projects not originally included in the programme may also start during the year, for example where emergency works are required.

Information on flood risk management assets, maintained assets, capital programme projects and completed schemes can be viewed at [data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk).

## ■ Food Poverty: Northern Ireland

**Jim Shannon:**

[126649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ensure food security for families in Northern Ireland in absolute poverty.

**Mark Spencer:**

Food security is a devolved matter and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has responsibility in Northern Ireland.

In the absence of locally accountable leadership in Northern Ireland, the UK Government has stepped in to set a Budget for 2022/23 which has an overarching objective of protecting the most vulnerable during a time of particular economic hardship.

The Budget Bill introduced in Parliament on 12 January 2023 is a critical step to ensure Northern Ireland departments can access their full funding for the year. But the absence of devolved functioning institutions is an unsustainable situation that the UK Government wants to see resolved by the restoration of local leadership as soon as possible.

## ■ Hedgehogs

**Ruth Jones:**

[126811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of hedgehogs in England.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The latest 'Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals', published in 2018 by Natural England, estimates that the hedgehog population in England is 320,000.

**Ruth Jones:**

[126813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has discussed the health and numbers of hedgehogs with the devolved administrations.

**Trudy Harrison:**

There have been no recent discussions regarding the health and numbers of hedgehogs with the devolved administrations.

## ■ Packaging: Waste Disposal

**Darren Jones:**

[122220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential financial cost to producers in supply chains of the Packaging Waste (Data Reporting) (England) Regulations 2022.



**Rebecca Pow:**

The impacts of these specific Regulations - and the regulations that are being introduced in parallel in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - on producers are limited to the additional data collection and reporting requirements, and familiarisation with the new Regulations.

These additional data reporting costs are estimated to cost producers across the UK £106 million over the appraisal period of the impact assessment (2023-2033). This includes both increased data reporting costs for the approximately 7000 producers who are already obligated under the current producer responsibility system, and new costs for the approximately 3000 producers who will be newly obligated under these Regulations. These newly obligated producers will also face one-off costs associated with familiarisation at a total estimated cost of £2.5 million in 2023 only.

A full impact assessment on reforms to the UK packaging producer responsibility system has been prepared and published alongside the Packaging Waste (Data Reporting) (England) Regulations.

**■ Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009****Stella Creasy:**[\[122130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, what plans she has to (a) revoke, (b) replace or (c) retain the Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009.

**Mark Spencer:**

Defra is in the process of analysing and assessing its retained EU law 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 in relation to the Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009.

**■ Seals: Protection****Tracey Crouch:**[\[123910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to protect seals from disturbances since the Seals (Protection) Bill was introduced to the House.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Marine mammals, including seals, are protected in the UK under legislation that makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild marine mammal. The level of protection is therefore already very high and enforced by law. However, work to explore the possibility of further strengthening legislation in respect to seals is underway.

In the meantime, we are taking forward various initiatives to increase public awareness about the impact of disturbance on marine mammals. Defra is drafting a Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code to help minimise disturbance and the risk of harm



to marine wildlife, including seals, from encounters with the public. We are aiming to publish this later in 2023.

'Operation Seabird' aims to tackle increases in disturbance to marine wildlife, including seals, by providing education and guidance to prevent wildlife disturbances from occurring and, to prosecute with the support of local police forces where necessary. Targeted 'Days of Action' involving Police, the MMO and RSPCA, in partnership with other organisations, take place across UK coastlines across to focus on specific concerns regarding marine life for that area.

Together with the Seal Research Trust, Defra launched a Government-backed campaign in 2021, 'Give Seals Space', to help raise awareness of the impact that human disturbance can have on seals and to help reduce it. As part of this campaign, Defra is providing funding for signs to be put up on the banks of the Thames to help raise awareness of the impact of disturbance on seals and the importance of keeping dogs under close control.

#### ■ **Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008**

**James Wild:**

[\[120121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to (a) carry out a review of and (b) publish a report setting out the conclusions of the review of Part 3 of the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008 under Regulation 17P, as inserted by the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We recognise that the post implementation review (PIR) of The Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008, as amended, is outstanding. We intend to complete our Post Implementation Review by the end of 2024.

#### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ **Aly Domínguez and Jairo Bonilla**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[127704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Honduran counterpart on the murders of two environmental defenders, Aly Dominguez and Jairo Bonilla, who were shot dead in Honduras on 11 January 2023.

**David Rutley:**

Support for human rights in Honduras is a continuing priority for the British Embassy to Tegucigalpa, and officials regularly call on the Honduran Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss human rights challenges in Honduras.

We urge the Honduran authorities to carry out a full investigation into the murders of Honduran environmental defenders Aly Dominguez and Jairo Bonilla. Officials met Aly Dominguez's brother when he visited London last year to discuss the criminalisation of and the need to protect Human Rights defenders in Honduras.

## ■ Argentina: Droughts

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[127707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the potential economic impact of drought in Argentina; and whether the Government is providing support to the government of that country to help respond to the drought.

**David Rutley:**

The UK Government maintains ongoing dialogue with the Argentine Agriculture Ministry and agricultural sector at senior official level and has facilitated cooperation between the UK's Agri-EPI Centre and Argentina's science authorities on drought-resistant crops. We have noted various estimates of the impact of the drought on the upcoming harvest in March/April and maintain discussions with Argentina over the potential impact on exports and GDP growth, and Argentina's ability to continue meeting the terms of its deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

## ■ British Overseas Territories: Environment Protection

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[117495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of Official Development Assistance has been spent on (a) environmental conservation and (b) environmental conservation in British Overseas Territories in each of the last three years.

**David Rutley:**

Figures for bilateral UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the area of environmental protection, including in the UK Overseas Territories, for the years 2019-2021 are provided below.

YEAR	TOTAL BILATERAL ODA (£M)	ENVIRONMENT SPEND (£M)	ENVIRONMENT SPEND PROPORTION OF TOTAL	UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES	
				UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES ENVIRONMENT SPEND (£M)	ENVIRONMENT SPEND PROPORTION OF TOTAL
2019	10575.4	237.9	2.25%	5.2	0.05%
2020	9657.3	203.8	2.11%	3.1	0.03%
2021	7257.2	93.7	1.29%	4.4	0.06%

Figures capture spend using the OECD Rio Markers for biodiversity and desertification. They include spend in Saint Helena and Montserrat, the only ODA-eligible UK Overseas Territories for which disaggregated data are available.

The Government is delivering on its commitment to invest at least £3 billion of International Climate Finance in development solutions that protect and restore nature between 2021-26. In addition to bilateral ODA, the UK is supporting environmental protection and wider climate and environment objectives through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF).

YEAR	GEF CONTRIBUTION (£M)	GCF CONTRIBUTION (£M)
2019	49.8	0.0
2020	62.5	450.0
2021	62.5	280.9

#### ■ Chile: Abduction

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[126554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is providing support to the Chilean Government to tackle the increase in kidnappings in that country.

**David Rutley:**

The UK works closely with Chile to tackle threats it, like the UK, faces from criminal activity. We work with the Chilean authorities to inform the appropriateness of offers we make of capacity building and training. The Chilean authorities are not currently seeking our support in tackling the specific threat of kidnapping, but we would carefully consider any request for assistance. Our network of consular officials is prepared to support any British national in the event of an incident.

#### ■ Colombia: Guatemala

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[126552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his Colombian counterpart on the Colombian Government's decision to recall its ambassador to Guatemala.

**David Rutley:**

UK ministers and senior officials regularly discuss specific issues with Colombian counterparts, but the decision to recall its ambassador from another country is a matter for the Colombian government. As we have consistently set out in our public statements on the rule of law in Guatemala, the arrest of former International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) personnel will further undermine domestic and international confidence in the rule of law in Guatemala. The United

Kingdom will continue to work closely with international partners to encourage the Government of Guatemala to support and respect judicial independence.

■ **Democratic Republic of the Congo: Armed Conflict**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[125303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with international partners to cut off international funding for non-state armed groups active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK believes that the UN arms embargo is an important tool to help prevent and disrupt the supply, sale and transfer of arms and related materiel to non-governmental entities, including armed groups and individuals, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is not perfect but without it, armed groups in DRC would be able to access weapons more easily, thus further undermining DRC and the region's stability.

The UK also supports the Nairobi Process, which aims to reduce armed group activity in the eastern DRC. We have recently announced funding to the Nairobi Process. As a party to negotiations, combatants are eventually expected to join the Government of DRC's Disarmament, Demobilisation, Community Rehabilitation and Stabilisation Programme (the PDDRCS), which takes a holistic approach to the reintegration of ex-combatants into local communities.

■ **East Africa: Food Supply**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[125300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the impact of hunger on women and girls in East Africa.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Across East Africa, over 48 million people face severe levels of food insecurity. This is having devastating consequences for women and children, heightening the risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, and hampering children's access to education. According to the UN, in Somalia a 60 per cent increase in incidents of intimate partner violence were reported in drought impacted communities between January - May 2022. 1.3 million people were displaced last year in Somalia due to drought, a disproportionate number of which are women and girls. In Ethiopia, according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), between 2021 and 2022, child marriage has increased by an average of 119 per cent across regions worst hit by drought. This Financial Year, the UK will provide £156 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in East Africa. Our support will reach women and girls who are at increased risk of gender-based violence.

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[119031\]](#)

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, for what services DMA Invest Ltd was paid £2,000 on 5 October 2021; and for what purpose.

**David Rutley:**

The payment was a part contribution to the costs of an event to enable UK companies to promote their expertise in the renewable energy sector to Nepali companies and the Nepali Government. The event was attended by the Nepali private sector, development partners and representatives of Nepali government agencies including the Nepali Finance Minister. Expenditure was subject to normal controls.

## ■ Iran: Demonstrations

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[123850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart on the imposition of the death penalty on those detained in connection with nationwide protests.

**David Rutley:**

The UK opposes the death penalty in all circumstances. The On 9 January, the Foreign Secretary summoned Iran's most senior diplomat in the UK to protest Iran's continued use of the death penalty. This same message has been delivered repeatedly through our Ambassador in Tehran, and in London, including when Lord Ahmad spoke to the Chargé d'Affaires on 20 December. On 9 December, the UK sanctioned 10 officials connected to Iran's judicial and prison systems, including six linked to the Revolutionary Courts. On 14 January, we also sanctioned Iran's Prosecutor General, Mohammad Jafar Montazer. The regime can be in no doubt about the UK's abhorrence at the use of the death penalty against protestors.

## ■ Israel and Occupied Territories: Human Rights

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[119952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 23 December 2022 to Questions 111540 on Salah Hamouri, 20 December 2022 to Question 111609 on Israel: Palestinians and 22 June 2022 to Question 21080 on Salah Hammouri, what response he has had to (a) calls upon the Government of Israel to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations, and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories and (b) representations about the Government of Israel's decision to revoke the permanent residency in Jerusalem of Salah Hammouri for breach of allegiance to the State of Israel; and if he will make a statement.

**David Rutley:**

Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law. We continue to call upon the Government of Israel to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations, and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Minister for the Middle East, Lord Ahmad, made clear the UK's support for a two-state solution, the urgent need to reduce tensions and to avoid any unilateral actions that make peace more difficult during his visit to Israel and the OPTs on 10-13 January.

**■ Israel: Human Rights****Geraint Davies:**[\[123848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the new Israeli government's commitment to peace and the protection of human rights.

**David Rutley:**

Human Rights is a crucial element underpinning the UK's foreign policy. The UK continues to engage with the Israeli Government on human rights issues where they exist. We call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The UK remains committed to a two-state solution, as the Minister for the Middle East, Lord Ahmad, made clear during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January. The UK's Permanent Representative to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, urged the parties to demonstrate, through their policies, a genuine commitment to peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians at a UNSC open debate on 17 January.

**■ Mexico: Drug Seizures****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[127706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications of reports that drug cartels in Mexico have suffered losses of 96 billion Mexican pesos in the last four years as a result of drugs seizures by Mexican authorities.

**David Rutley:**

Reports of large drug seizures in Mexico over recent years are good news for Mexico and for global counter-narcotics. Nevertheless, the ongoing drug trade and the violence and insecurity stemming from this and other criminal activity remain a huge problem in Mexico. Officials in the British Embassy in Mexico City as well as Ministers in London regularly engage on this issue with the Mexican authorities and with civil society, including monitoring violence trends in the country and offering assistance in the field of rule of law. Most recently, in December I [Minister Rutley] discussed this with Undersecretary Toscano of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## ■ Mexico: Politics and Government

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[126553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for (a) his Department's policies and (b) anti-crime and security in the region of the appointment of (i) General Luis Rodríguez Bucio and (ii) General David Córdova Campos to senior positions in the Mexican government on 16 January 2023.

**David Rutley:**

We are clear that reducing crime and improving security in Mexico is important. The British Embassy in Mexico City regularly engages with Mexican authorities and civil society on this, including monitoring violence trends in the country and offering assistance in the field of rule of law. We will continue to engage with the Mexican Government, including any newly appointed ministers, to address security concerns and combat crime in Mexico.

## ■ Myanmar: Oppression

**Catherine West:**

[\[124029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his regional counterparts on taking steps to help tackle internal repression in Myanmar.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK regularly raises the situation in Myanmar with regional counterparts, including at Ministerial and Secretary of State level. We continue to support the regional leadership of ASEAN on the crisis in Myanmar, and welcome the announcement of a new ASEAN Special Envoy to Myanmar. We will work closely with the Envoy, and Indonesia as ASEAN Chair, to support the delivery of the ASEAN Five Point Consensus.

The UK also uses our role as UN Security Council pen-holder to raise awareness on the international stage, and on December 2022, the UN Security Council passed the first ever resolution on the situation in Myanmar, led by the UK, which demands an end to violence and urges immediate action by the military regime to fully implement the ASEAN Five Point Consensus.

## ■ Nigeria: Politics and Government

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[125494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the political situation in Nigeria ahead of its presidential and legislative elections.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The 2023 presidential and legislative elections will be a significant test of Nigeria's democracy. We are supporting Nigeria to deliver free, fair and credible elections



through our diplomatic engagement, technical advice, programmes and election observation. I [Minister Mitchell] have emphasised the importance of free, fair and safe elections in my recent engagements with Nigerian presidential candidates and the chairperson of the Nigerian electoral commission. The UK Government will continue to raise the importance of all political parties working together to ensure the success of these elections.

#### ■ **Norfolk Island and Pitcairn Islands: Festivals and Special Occasions**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[118851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made representations to the governments of (a) the Pitcairn Islands and (b) Norfolk Island on the celebration of Bounty Day on 23 January 2023.

**David Rutley:**

The Overseas Territory of the Pitcairn Islands is a valued member of the British family. Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, as Minister of State for Overseas Territories, sent a message of congratulations to the Pitcairn Islands on 23 January, as will Her Excellency The Governor. The Administrator will join the community in their celebrations in the Territory. The Pitcairn Island flag flew from the London headquarters of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office on 23 January. Norfolk Island has been a Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia since 1914 and its governance is a matter for Australia.

#### ■ **Northern Ireland Protocol Bill**

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[127846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether there have been changes to the Government's legal position on the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, published on the 13 June 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

It is a longstanding convention for governments of all parties not to comment on the facts or contents of government legal advice. Proceeding with this Bill is consistent with our obligations in international law - and in support of our prior obligations to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. This legislation is lawful under international law. Our position is set out in the statement of the Government's legal position we have published.

#### ■ **Russia: Sanctions**

**Dean Russell:**

[\[124139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of sanctions on (a) Russia and (b) individuals connected to that country on its (i) economy and (ii) war in Ukraine.



**Leo Docherty:**

Sanctions by the UK and its international partners have starved Russia of key Western goods and technology, hindered its military-industrial complex and future economic development. Russia's military is facing significant logistical and replenishment challenges in the face of sanctions. Over 1,200 individuals have been sanctioned by the UK, including over 120 oligarchs and family members with a global net worth of over £140bn. The International Monetary Fund forecasts that Russia's GDP will be 11% smaller in 2026 compared to pre-invasion forecasts and won't return to its pre-invasion level until 2027 at the earliest.

**Somalia: Debts****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[125299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2022 to Question 108132, on Somalia: Politics and Government, what taken recent steps his Department has taken to help (a) reduce Somalia's debt burden and b) unlock finance for service delivery in that country; and what progress his Department has made in achieving those outcomes.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

In 2020, the UK was instrumental in Somalia reaching Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Decision Point, enabling it to clear arrears with the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund. This allowed Somalia to receive significant investment in state building, education and health as well as emergency response support. As Somalia's debt relief champion the UK played an important role, using our political capital at the Board of international finance institutions, our influence at capitals of key WB shareholders and creditors, as well as through a bridge loan to the African Development Bank to clear Somalia's arrears. HIPC Decision Point reduced Somalia's debt burden from 95 to 42 per cent of GDP; this is expected to drop to 6 per cent by HIPC completion point.

During my [Minister Mitchell] recent visit to Somalia I [Minister Mitchell] met with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed, the Somali Finance Minister, and WB and UN representatives to discuss economic reform as well as opportunities for future investment in Somalia.

**Sri Lanka: Debts****Bob Blackman:**[\[126601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the statement of 8 January from economists and academics calling on creditors to share the burden of debt restructuring for Sri Lanka.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK is fully supportive of the proposed Coordination Platform between Sri Lanka's Paris Club and non-Paris Club creditors, which we believe represents the most efficient way to restore debt sustainability in Sri Lanka.

Constructive engagement across creditors is vital to secure a prompt and comprehensive International Monetary Fund programme for Sri Lanka and ensure a sustainable economic recovery. As a member of the Paris Club, the UK stands ready to consider the necessary Financing Assurances to secure an Extended Financing Facility with the IMF in a timely manner.

**■ Taiwan: Armed Conflict****Catherine West:****[127860]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has held discussions with the (a) Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential impact on the British economy of third-country military action against Taiwan.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Our approach towards China and the Indo-Pacific is coordinated across Government at the highest level. Work is underway to update the Integrated Review to ensure we continue to invest in the alliances and capabilities we need, while strengthening our supply chain security and economic resilience. The UK's longstanding position on Taiwan has not changed. The UK has a clear interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. We consider the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

**■ Transcaucasus: Roads****Tim Loughton:****[R] [123846]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will agree to meet a delegation of the all-party Parliamentary group on Armenia to discuss the continued blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Leo Docherty:**

I (Minister Docherty) can confirm I will meet with representatives from the APPG to discuss the ongoing closure of the Lachin Corridor and humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Gareth Davies:**[\[903228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on creating new community diagnostic centres.

**Will Quince:**

At present, there are 89 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) operational across the country, and these have delivered over 2.8 million additional tests since programme started reporting in July 2021. In December 2022, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, approved a further 20 locations for new CDCs across the country, which will help more people to easily access life-saving checks, tests and scans. The NHS has also delivered the first of its waiting time ambitions, with waits of two years or more for elective surgery virtually eliminated in July 2022.

**Richard Burgon:**[\[903230\]](#)

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

**Steve Barclay:**

The Government has and will continue to prioritise investment into the NHS. 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. All in all, The NHS resource budget in England will increase to £165.9 billion in 2024-25, up from £123.8 billion in 2019-20.

**Chris Stephens:**[\[903235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent representations he has received on the adequacy of the levels of drug and medical supplies in the UK.

**Will Quince:**

The Department receives a number of representations from a wide range of individuals and organisations regarding the supply of medicines and other medical supplies that UK patients rely on. The Department has well-established processes to prevent, manage and mitigate shortages of medicines and other medical products, and actively monitors and mitigates supply threats and disruptions to help ensure continuity of supply to UK patients.

**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[903236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish a sexual and reproductive health action plan.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We published an HIV Action Plan in 2021 setting out our actions during 2022-2025 to move towards ending HIV transmissions and HIV and AIDS related deaths by 2030.

In August 2022 we published the Women's Health Strategy for England setting out our 10-year ambitions and actions to improve health for women and girls.

We remain committed to improving sexual and reproductive health in England and are considering the need for a further Government plan.

#### ■ Accident and Emergency Departments: North West

**Damien Moore:**

[\[125479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce A&E waiting times in (a) Lancashire and (b) Merseyside.

**Will Quince:**

A range of measures are in place to reduce accident and emergency waiting times, including in Lancashire and Merseyside. The National Health Service winter resilience plan will increase NHS bed capacity by the equivalent of at least 7,000 general and acute beds, helping reduce crowding and long waits for admission from accident and emergency. Our plan for patients announced a £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund, helping people get out of hospitals quickly, freeing up beds and reducing long accident and emergency waits. We are now investing a further £200 million to speed up patient discharge, through direct support to local areas buying thousands of extra beds in care homes and other settings.

The Autumn Statement provides an additional £3.3 billion of NHS funding in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 to enable rapid action to improve urgent and emergency, elective, and primary care performance towards pre-pandemic levels. In the coming weeks the NHS will set out detailed recovery plans to deliver year-on-year improvements in accident and emergency waiting times.

#### ■ Aripiprazole

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[122200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of Aripiprazole.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 17 January 2023]:* Medicine supply problems can occur for a number of reasons and occasionally the National Health Service experiences temporary shortages of specific medicines. However, we are not aware of supply issues with aripiprazole.

#### ■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[125320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS 2023/24 priorities and operational planning guidance, published on 23 December 2022, for what reasons the NHS was set a target to increase cancer treatment capacity growth

by 13 per cent; and whether he intends to allocate additional funding to increase radiotherapy capacity.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 20 January 2023]:* NHS England has set a target for systems to increase cancer treatment capacity by 13% in order to account for the natural cancer incidence group and any remaining patients who may have not presented during the pandemic, with the aim of further reducing cancer waiting lists.

From April 2022, the responsibility for investing in new radiotherapy machines sits with local systems. This is supported by the 2021 Spending Review, which set aside £12 billion in operational capital for the National Health Service and the recent Capital Planning Guidance, which states that integrated care systems (ICSs) will need to develop replacement plans as part of their multi-year capital plans, in partnership with specialised commissioners, Cancer Alliances and Radiotherapy Operational Delivery Networks, based on an assessment of equipment age, capacity and demand, opportunities to improve access and service risk.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[125321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has allocated to reducing waiting times for (a) radiotherapy, (b) surgery and (c) chemotherapy for cancer patients in the latest period for which data is available.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 20 January 2023]:* This information is not collected in the format requested. NHS England has allocated specific funding to support treatment and pandemic recovery, including £2.3 billion to improve diagnostic care, and £1.5 billion through the Targeted Investment Fund to support the wider elective recovery plan.

## ■ Children in Care: Location

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[126749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been placed in inappropriate out-of-area placements by financial year since 2010/11.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 23 January 2023]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[127905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to introduce covid-19 testing (a) for people admitted to hospital who are immunocompromised and (b) in other high-risk settings.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As set out in the Living with COVID-19 strategy published last February, we are continuing to offer some COVID-19 testing for those in high-risk settings. Currently,

symptomatic or immunocompromised patients who are admitted to hospital for maternity or emergency care receive a Polymerase Chain Reaction test. Residents, patients, or staff in high-risk settings who are symptomatic are also tested and testing can be used to manage an outbreak in these settings.

## ■ Dental Services

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[126566]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral answer from the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Lancaster and Fleetwood of 11 January 2023, Official Report column 552, how many NHS dentists there were on (a) 1 November 2022 and (b) 11 January 2023; and what funding there was for HNS dentists on each of those dates.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Dental Statistics, published annually by NHS Digital, brings together information on National Health Service dental activity in England. Information on funding and the number of dentists on 1 November 2022 and 11 January 2023 respectively are not yet available. The number of NHS dentists at the end of 2021/22 was 24,272.

Dental Statistics are available from the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2021-22-annual-report>

**Helen Hayes:**

**[127856]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department routinely makes an assessment of the availability of NHS dentistry services for (a) adults and (b) children in (i) London and (ii) England.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Department routinely monitors Dental Statistics, published by NHS Digital, which brings together information on National Health Service dental activity in England, including at NHS Commissioning Regions and local authority levels. Dental Statistics is available from the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2021-22-annual-report>

NHS England is responsible for commissioning primary care dental services, including domiciliary care. Many of the dentistry commissioning functions undertaken by NHS England will transfer to integrated care boards (ICBs) from April 2023. ICBs will be responsible for meeting the needs of its local population, including on access for adults and children, by working with patient groups. NHS England has made available to commissioners an Assurance Framework to provide assurance that commissioning functions are carried out safely and effectively by ICBs.

## ■ Dental Services: Children

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[125349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of gaps in the availability of NHS dental care on children's dental health in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency and (b) England.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We are monitoring Dental Statistics for England, published annually by NHS Digital, which includes information on the number of children seen by a dentist for courses of treatment. In Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, 29,211 children were seen by a National Health Service dentist in the 12 months to June 2022, which is 49.6% of the child population, using The Office for National Statistics mid 2021 population estimates. This is higher than the national figure, where 43.9% of children in England were seen by an NHS dentist in the 12 months to June 2022. In circumstances where parents are unable to access an urgent dental appointment for their child directly through a NHS dental practice, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients' which sets out how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to NHS dental care for all age groups, including in Newcastle Upon Tyne, whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices. These changes have been implemented, including through regulations that came into effect on 25 November 2022.

NHS England is holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and other stakeholders for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System planned to take place in 2023.

## ■ Dental Services: North East

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[125351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent estimate of average waiting times for appointments at NHS dental practices in (a) Newcastle Upon Tyne Central constituency and (b) the North East; and what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The information requested is not held centrally. National Health Service dentists are required to update their NHS.UK profiles regularly to ensure patients have access to up-to-date information on where they can access care. In circumstances where patients are unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients' which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices. NHS England is holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and other stakeholders for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System planned to take place in 2023.



**■ Dental Services: Private Sector****Chi Onwurah:**[\[125350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the financial impact on families who register with private dentists due to the unavailability of NHS dentists in their areas.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No assessment has been made. National Health Service dentists are required to update their NHS.UK profiles regularly to ensure patients have access to up-to-date information on where they can access care. In circumstances where a person is unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice, or where parents are unable to access an urgent dental appointment for their child, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

**■ Dental Services: Southport****Damien Moore:**[\[125477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of spaces to register as an NHS dental patient in Southport.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No assessment has been made. Patients are only registered with a dental practice for the course of their treatment. National Health Service dentists are required to update their NHS.UK profiles regularly to ensure patients have access to up-to-date information on where they can access care. In circumstances where a person is unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice, or where parents are unable to access an urgent dental appointment for their child, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Paper****Emily Thornberry:**[\[125290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January to Question 119018 on Department of Health and Social Care: Paper, whether his Department maintains records for the number of reams of A4 paper purchased in each financial year, consistent with the requirements of HM Treasury's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, 2022-23, published on 15 December 2022.

**Will Quince:**

The Department records its number of reams of A4 purchased each financial year, in line with HM Treasury Guidelines. The Department reports this paper purchased data under the Greening Government Commitments scheme. This information is published in the Greening Government Commitments Annual Report.

## ■ Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[126751]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the adequacy of availability of eating disorder services for children.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 23 January 2023]:* For children and young people, we have set up the first standard to improve access to eating disorder services for children and young people. This states that 95% of children with an eating disorder will receive treatment within one week for urgent cases, and four weeks for routine cases. Prior to the pandemic, significant progress had been made towards achieving the 95% access target.

Since the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in demand and more children and young people with an eating disorder are accessing support than ever before. Almost 10,000 started treatment between April and December 2021, an increase of a quarter compared to the same period the previous year and up by almost two thirds since before the pandemic.

This increase in demand has affected performance against the waiting time standard, and the latest figures show that this is not currently being met. Information about delivery against these waiting time standards is available through the quarterly updated NHS Mental Health Dashboard, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-mental-health-dashboard>.

We remain committed to delivering this waiting time standard. NHS England continues to work with system leaders and regions and to ask that areas prioritise service delivery and investment to meet the needs of these vulnerable young people.

## ■ England Infected Blood Support Scheme

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

**[125443]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence the England Infected Blood Support Scheme accept to establish when an infection occurred, where records have been destroyed in line with NHS code of practice, where an infection may have occurred over 50 years ago.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) will consider all available evidence against the balance of probabilities to decide whether someone is eligible for payments under the scheme. EIBSS provides details of the types of information that can be provided in support of an application, which is not exhaustive, available at the following link:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/who-can-join-scheme-and-how-apply/people-infected-hepatitis-c-stage-1-payment>

**■ Evusheld**

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:** [126525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department uses to assess the cost-effectiveness of the use of Evusheld against the cost of admission to a hospital for an immune-compromised person with complex health conditions.

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:** [126526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Evusheld will be available on the NHS.

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:** [126527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department is using to assess the (a) clinical and (b) cost effectiveness of offering Evusheld on the NHS.

**Will Quince:**

The Department has asked the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) as the independent expert body to develop guidance for the National Health Service on the clinical and cost effectiveness of Evusheld in its licensed indications for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19. NICE will develop guidance in line with its established methods and processes for health technology evaluation which are published and available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg36/chapter/introduction-to-health-technology-evaluation>.

NICE is appraising Evusheld for the treatment of COVID-19 alongside other licensed therapeutics and currently expects to publish final guidance in March 2023. NICE's final guidance on Evusheld for the prevention of COVID-19 is currently expected in April 2023. The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended by NICE, usually within three months of final guidance.

**■ General Practitioners: Newcastle upon Tyne Central**

**Chi Onwurah:** [125344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of GP surgeries were rated as good by the Care Quality Commission in Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency as of 11 January 2023.

**Neil O'Brien:**

As of 11 January 2023, 10 (91%) of general practitioners (GP) practices were rated by Care Quality Commission as good in Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency. In Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency, GP practices 1 (9%) is rated as outstanding. There are none rated a requires improvement or inadequate.

## ■ Gynaecology: Somerset

**David Warburton:**

[\[127862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for women in Somerset who have been referred for a gynaecology appointment.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As of November 2022, the average waiting time for gynaecology treatment across England was 15.4 weeks, a decrease of nearly 14% from the peak average waiting time in July 2020. Per working day activity levels for gynaecology treatment continue to recover and as of November 2022 were 108% of pre-covid levels. While we do not have specific data for Somerset, a huge amount of work is underway nationally to tackle gynaecology wait lists.

The National Health Service has published the 'Delivery Plan for Tackling the COVID-19 Backlog of Elective Care' which outlines how the NHS will bring down waiting times across all elective services including gynaecology and menstrual health. The plan commits to investing in the physical separation of routine care to protect planned services from emergency care pressures where possible. We are increasing capacity for gynaecological surgery to tackle waiting lists through our surgical hub and High Volume Low Complexity programme.

Some gynaecological services, such as menstrual health services, are predominantly provided by general practitioners (GPs) which remained open throughout the pandemic. The Government invested £520 million to improve access and expand GP capacity during the pandemic. This is on top of the £1.5 billion already announced in 2020 to create an additional 50 million GP appointments by 2024 by growing and diversifying the workforce which will help tackle the backlog for gynaecological services.

## ■ Health Services: Proof of Identity

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[125294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) publish on his Department's website and (b) place in the House of Commons Library, copies of the Ipsos Public Affairs report, commissioned by his Department, entitled Evaluation of Department of Health Cost Recovery ID Checking Pilot: Final Report, dated December 2017.

**Will Quince:**

A copy of the Ipsos Public Affairs report, 'Evaluation of Department of Health Cost Recovery ID Checking Pilot: Final Report', published in December 2017 is attached. It will not be published on the Department of Health and Social Care section of GOV.UK, but copies can be provided, upon request, from the Department.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment [Annex A Ipsos\_Mori\_Final\_Report (1).pdf]

## ■ Health Services: Standards

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[126605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what actions his Department is taking to reduce variations in patient care quality.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. Its remit is to monitor, inspect, assess and regulate services to ensure all patients receive the best quality of care. The CQC assess service providers against their fundamental standards of care. Where it finds the quality of care does not meet those standards, it will use its enforcement powers to hold provider to account and drive improvement. CQC also work with stakeholders across the health and care landscape to ensure adequate support is available to help providers improve.

## ■ Health: Energy

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[124110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the health risks to vulnerable families and households arising from (a) the forced installation of prepayment meters and (b) the practice of self-disconnection by those households unable to afford to load credit onto prepayment meters.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, the Government recognises that rising energy prices can make it more difficult for people to heat their homes and that cold homes can have an adverse impact on the health of vulnerable population groups.

We are providing a £37 billion package of cost-of-living support to help households and businesses this winter, including the Energy Price Guarantee. Prepayment meter customers will automatically receive the same discount per unit of energy as other customers through the Energy Price Guarantee. Prepayment meter customers are also receiving the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme discount which is being provided in instalments from October to March.

The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets requires energy suppliers to offer solutions for customers in, or at risk of, debt or disconnection. This includes emergency credit to all pre-payment meter customers and additional support credit to customers in vulnerable circumstances.

## ■ Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

**Luke Hall:**

[\[114699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the funding to deliver the NHS Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme has been distributed to NHS trusts in each of the last 10 years.

**Luke Hall:**

[\[114700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information the Government requires NHS Trusts to publish under the NHS Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme.

**Luke Hall:**

[\[114701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what monitoring his Department carries out of who is in receipt of funds allocated through the NHS Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme, and what oversight he has of how this money is spent.

**Will Quince:**

The information on funding distributed to National Health Service trusts to deliver the NHS Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS) is not held centrally as funding is included within NHS Trusts' baselines. No central monitoring is undertaken on who is in receipt of funds allocated through HTCS, or on how the money is spent. The scheme is administered by the NHS locally.

As part of its review into non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS), including HTCS, NHS England has developed a National Minimum Data Set to monitor provision of NEPTS, including elements of HTCS, at integrated care system (ICS) level.

## ■ Healthy Start Scheme

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[125343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2022 to Question 98767 on Healthy Start Scheme, when data on uptake of the Healthy Start scheme since 1 April 2022 will be published; for what reason data for uptake after 31 March 2022 has not been published; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We continue to work with the NHS Business Services Authority and the Department for Work and Pensions to obtain data on the uptake of the Healthy Start scheme. This will then be published as quickly as possible.

## ■ Hormone Replacement Therapy

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[126870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the current level of supply of HRT products in all UK regions.

**Will Quince:**

There are over 70 hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products available in the United Kingdom and while most remain in good supply, a range of factors including an increase in demand has led to supply issues with a limited number of products.

We are working with suppliers and other stakeholders such as the National Health Service and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to

maintain overall HRT supply to patients across the UK, including working to expedite resupply dates of the disrupted HRT products to resolve issues as soon as possible and to help fill supply gaps and prevent future shortages.

Access to in-demand products has improved since we issued Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) on HRT products to limit dispensing to three months' supply to even out distribution and allow alternative products to be dispensed, as necessary. 17 SSP's for HRT products have been issued since April 2022, and a much smaller number of SSP's remain in place as the supply position of several products affected by short term supply issues have been resolved.

### ■ **Hyperactivity: Drugs**

**David Linden:**

[\[127880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2023 to Question 122493 on Hyperactivity: Drugs, whether he has had recent discussions with pharmaceutical suppliers of methylphenidate prolonged-release tablets on supply issues; and estimate he has made of when supply will improve.

**Will Quince:**

We are aware of supply issues affecting two brands of methylphenidate prolonged-release tablets. We continue to work with the respective manufactures to ensure these issues are resolved quickly. We expect the affected products to be available in early February and April 2022. Other methylphenidate prolonged-release tablet brands and preparations remain available as well as alternative attention deficit hyperactivity disorder medication.

Communications were issued to the National Health Service including all general practitioners and community pharmacists in May 2022, advising on available alternative brands and how to manage affected patients during this time.

### ■ **Infectious Diseases: Disease Control**

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[125507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he last met with the UK Health Security Agency to discuss (a) emerging infectious disease threats and (b) maintaining pandemic response preparedness.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly meets with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) officials.

The Department, alongside UKHSA and NHS England, continues to plan and prepare for a range of pandemic and emerging infectious disease scenarios, including those caused by respiratory, contact and vector-borne pathogens. Senior officials regularly meet to ensure that the United Kingdom is protected from future health threats, building on the enhanced capabilities deployed to tackle COVID-19 and other infectious disease outbreaks. This includes cooperating globally to detect and counter future pandemics and emerging infectious disease outbreaks.



## ■ Integrated Care Systems and Public Health: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[125404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of integrated care system and public health grant funding in the context of strengthening population health; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of combining those funding streams.

**Neil O'Brien:**

At the Spending Review 2021, we considered the need for local authority public funding and confirmed that the public health grant will increase over the settlement period. In 2022/23, the grant increased by 2.81% to £3.417 billion. This is in addition to targeted investment through local Government to improve the start for life offer and drug and alcohol treatment services.

The spending review provided a record settlement for the National Health Service to £165.9 billion in 2024/25, up from £123.7 billion in 2019/20 and the Government is investing additional £3.3 billion in each 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support our health and care system to manage the effects of Coronavirus.

Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 allows for pooling funds between NHS and local authorities. We are undertaking a review of section 75 which will include consideration of public health functions.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[125433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many CAMHS beds there were in the NHS in each financial year since 2010-11.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 23 January 2023]:* While information on the number of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service beds is collected by NHS England, this is not centrally validated.

## ■ Midwives and Nurses: Training

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[126878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many students applied for (a) nursing and (b) midwifery undergraduate courses in the latest period for which data is available.

**Will Quince:**

46,565 students applied for nursing courses and 10,340 students applied for midwifery courses at the end of the 2022 application cycle, according to data published by The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

## ■ Midwives: Stockport

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[124144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) full-time and (b) full-time equivalent midwives were employed by the NHS in Stockport in (i) 2010, (ii) 2015, (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2023.

**Will Quince:**

Data on staff working across hospital and community health services is collected and reported based on the hospital trust that employs staff. The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) midwives working at Stockport NHS Foundation Trust. The Department does not hold information on the number of these staff who were employed on full time contracts. Data for 2023 is not yet available.

STOCKPORT NHS

FOUNDATION

TRUST	SEPTEMBER 2010	SEPTEMBER 2015	SEPTEMBER 2020	SEPTEMBER 2022
Number of FTE Midwives	121	116	138	139

Source: NHS Digital Workforce Statistics

## ■ Mortality Rates

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[125408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution of 10 January 2023 on Industrial Action, Official Report, column 439, for what reason he indicated that the Royal College of Emergency Medicine's data on excess deaths is inaccurate.

**Neil O'Brien:**

This is not an official National Health Service estimate but we share the Royal College of Emergency Medicine's concern about waiting times in the NHS. Excess deaths are the difference between the actual registered number of deaths and the expected deaths based on data for previous years. There are a range of different organisations producing different estimates based on different methodologies.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities estimates of excess mortality published on 12 January 2023 use the trend in mortality rates from 2015 to 2019 to estimate expected deaths. They adjust for population growth and ageing. This provides further insight on the causes of death driving the excess mortality over 2022.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) weekly death reports compare the number of registered deaths each week with the average number of registrations in the equivalent week in the previous five years. ONS do not include 2020 in the data for the previous five years.

## ■ NHS: Agency Workers

**Matt Western:**

[\[126762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS spent on agency staff in (a) 2012 and (B) 2022.

**Will Quince:**

Agency spend in 2011/12 was £1.69 billion and in 2012/13 was £2.09 billion. The information requested on expenditure on agency for the period 2021/2022 has not yet been validated.

## ■ NHS: Innovation and Telemedicine

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[125405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) assess the potential merits of introducing (i) new health technologies and (ii) virtual wards and (b) challenge outdated practices in the NHS.

**Will Quince:**

A plan for digital health and social care, published June 2022, sets out how we plan to help systems to digitise, connect and transform, outlining how the delivery of health and social care will change, taking forward what we have learned from tech providers from across the world. This includes supporting the uptake of digital health technologies, adoption of which varies across the National Health Service. NHS England is working with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, to speed up access for patients to those technologies that are proven to be safe and effective. We also set out our plans for virtual wards, which are helping patients be treated and monitored at home, thereby improving the experience of care and freeing up beds in hospitals for those people that need them most. As of November 2022 there are 115 tech enabled virtual wards live covering 35 of 42 integrated care systems.

## ■ NHS: Resignations

**John Redwood:**

[\[123841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the main reasons given by nurses and doctors are for leaving NHS employment.

**Will Quince:**

Data is collected from staff leaving service in National Health Service trusts and commissioning bodies through the Electronic Staff Record on reasons for leaving but has a high percentage of instances where reasons are unknown, 39% for doctors and 41% for nurses and health visitors. Where reasons are provided, the highest number of NHS trust and commissioning body doctors left those bodies due the end of fixed term contracts. This is high as it covers junior doctors moving out of those settings to others, such as general practice, on rotation. This was followed by voluntary resignation reasons and retirement. For nurses and health visitors, the highest

proportion of staff recording a reason, left due to voluntary resignation and reaching retirement age. A table of the reason of leaving and the number of staff is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment [FORMATTED PQ123841 Leavers by reason for leaving and specified staff group, Jun21 to Jun22 (1).xlsx]

■ **NHS: Staff**

**Chris Grayling:** [\[125261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a workforce strategy for the NHS.

**Will Quince:**

The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan this year, which will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals required in future years, taking account of improvements in retention and productivity. This plan will help ensure that we have the right numbers of staff, with the right skills to transform and deliver high quality services fit for the future.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[127907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which health care professions NHS England will include in the Long Term NHS Workforce Plan.

**Will Quince:**

The Government will publish an NHS Long Term Workforce Plan that will set out the actions that are required to put the National Health Service workforce on a sustainable footing for the long term. The plan will set out independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals required in future years.

■ **North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Vehicles**

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[125509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ambulance vehicles North West Ambulance Service has had in each of the last ten years.

**Will Quince:**

The information requested is not collected centrally.

■ **Ophthalmic Services: Children**

**Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[117419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much NHS funding was provided to outpatient paediatric ophthalmology services in 2021-22.

**Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[117422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much NHS funding was spent on general ophthalmic services in 2021-22; and what proportion of that funding was

on (a) NHS sight tests and (b) NHS optical vouchers, including for repairs and replacements.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The following table shows the cost to the National Health Service in England in 2021/22 of providing General Ophthalmic Services.

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES	COST	PROPORTION
NHS Sight Tests	£307 million	56.6%
NHS Optical Vouchers incl. Repairs & Replacements	£222 million	41%
Other GOS contract costs	£13 million	2.4%

Note:

Draft accounts for this period, the numbers are not finalised until published on the NHS England website.

The following table shows the cost for secondary care organisations submitted via the National Cost Collection for outpatients within Treatment Function Code 'Paediatric Ophthalmology', for the financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21, the latest available data.

YEAR	COST
2019/20	£43.7 million
2020/21	£50.5 million

The published data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/costing-in-the-nhs/national-cost-collection/>

■ **Patients: Safety**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[126603]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Department has made of the number of patients who are avoidably harmed during routine medical procedures and surgeries.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS) provides a national database of reported patient safety incidents for the National Health Service in England. This data is published as official statistics alongside commentary. Within NRLS data, it is not possible to determine easily if the reported incidents took place during medical

procedures and surgery that can be considered 'routine'. The most recent publication for 2021/22 was published in October 2022 and available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/national-patient-safety-incident-reports/national-patient-safety-incident-reports-13-october-2022/>

The total number of patient safety incidents reported was 2,345,815. Most incidents are reported as causing no harm, 70.6% or low harm, 26.0%. Fewer than 4% of incidents reported caused higher degrees of harm, of which 0.5% were categorised as severe harm or death. NHS England reviews information in these two categories to characterise new, emerging and under-recognised risks and determine how they might be addressed.

The Learn from Patient Safety Events service will this year fully replace the NRLS. It will change the way information is collected to make it easier for providers to record and learn from patient safety incidents.

The Government continues to pursue higher patient safety standards and a transparent, learning culture in order to support the NHS to achieve continuous improvement in safety and to reduce harmful events happening in the first place.

## ■ Primary Health Care

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[125409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to promote the use of primary care services for non-emergency health issues.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 five year deal sets out the vision for how community pharmacy will support the NHS Long Term Plan by being better integrated into the National Health Service, delivering more clinical services, and becoming the first port of call for minor illness. Through the deal we have set up referral systems for minor illness from NHS 111, 111 Online and general practitioner (GP) practices to community pharmacy who are well equipped to deal with minor health conditions, providing advice and support for self-care. Referrals from Urgent and Emergency care settings will be introduced in March 2023.

In addition, in general practice we have expanded the range of professions employed so that patients with more minor or less urgent conditions can access the right advice and care whilst ensuring that GPs' time is spent with patients that they are uniquely qualified to treat.

## ■ Prozac

**Rosie Duffield:**

**[127871]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of Fluoxetine.

**Will Quince:**

Fluoxetine 10 milligram tablets have been out of stock for some time, however, fluoxetine 10 milligram capsules remain available and a Serious Shortage Protocol has been issued to allow community pharmacists to supply the capsules where the tablets have been prescribed.

We are aware of a recent shortage of fluoxetine 20 milligram orodispersible tablets and fluoxetine 20 milligram, 5 millilitre, oral solution. Comprehensive advice is being drafted and will be issued to the National Health Service.

**■ Restraint Techniques: Children****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[126748]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the use of restraint on children.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 23 January 2023]:* No specific assessment has been made.

However, the Government states that restrictive practices should only ever be used as a last resort, using the least restrictive option, when all attempts to de-escalate a situation have been employed.

The Department for Education has commenced a programme of work to minimise instances of the use of reasonable force and restraint in all schools, starting with extensive evidence gathering in early 2023, including a public call for evidence. The work programme will include updating the 'Use of reasonable force in schools' guidance to provide school staff with advice on how to minimise the use of restraint, and, in instances where it is absolutely necessary and lawful, to use reasonable force and/or restrictive practices as safely as possible. The Department for Education will ensure that the updated guidance considers the age and needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

For those patients detained under the Mental Health Act, the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 requires all mental health units to appoint a responsible person who ensures compliance with the Act, including staff training. Units are also required to develop a policy on use of force, including restraint and segregation. This explicitly needs to consider details of the types of force and specific techniques that the organisation or trust may use, which may be different in services for children and young people, and how children's rights will be protected when they are separated from others within the unit or ward. This should cover, for example, the physical environment, personal possessions, stimulating activities, support and meaningful contact with staff, as well as notifying parents or others with parental responsibility.



**■ Smoking: Health Education****Bob Blackman:**[\[125324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on campaigns to promote the cessation of smoking in 2021-22; and how much is budgeted to be spent for that purpose in 2022-23.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Expenditure by the Department on smoking cessation promotion for the period 1 October until the end of the financial year 2021/22 was £660,000.

Budgets for the current financial year are subject to ongoing review to enable the Department to respond to external changes and challenges. The figures reference expenditure for advertising on television, radio, national press, regional press, out of home, social and digital advertising. However, recruitment advertising, paid search and media partnerships are not included. The spend figure for the 2022/23 will be available once costs have been consolidated after the financial year has ended.

**■ Social Services: Finance****Daisy Cooper:**[\[127902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the £500 million Discharge Fund has been received by (a) care home providers and (b) domiciliary care providers, as of 19 January 2023.

**Helen Whately:**

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, £200 million was received by ICBs and local authorities by 9 December 2022. The second tranche, £300 million will be paid out in late January, subject to grant conditions being met.

**■ Telemedicine****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[126602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of treating more patients in (a) virtual wards and (b) hospitals at home.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Health Service is increasingly introducing virtual wards. There are 115 tech enabled virtual wards live covering 35 of 42 ICS, at Nov 2022. Support can include remote monitoring using apps, technology platforms, wearables and medical devices such as pulse oximeters.

Virtual wards help patients receive treatment and have their conditions monitored at home, improving their experience of care and freeing up vital beds in hospitals.

■ **Terminal Illnesses: Suicide**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[126721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who took their own life after receiving a terminal illness diagnosis in the last five years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are no current plans to make an assessment.

■ **UK Health Security Agency**

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[125499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) remit, (b) budget for 2021-22 and 2022-23 and (c) projected budget for 2023-4 of the UK Health Security Agency.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department has published the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) annual Remit Letter for 2021/22 and 2022/23 on GOV.UK. These publications are available at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukhsa-priorities-in-2021-to-2022/letter-from-lord-bethell-to-dr-jenny-harries-ukhsa-chief-executive>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukhsa-priorities-in-2022-to-2023/letter-from-maggie-throup-to-professor-dame-jenny-harries-ukhsa-chief-executive>

The Department has also published UKHSA's budget for 2021/22 and 2022-23 as part of the Parliamentary Estimates Process along with the Department's group position. These are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-main-estimates>

The projected budget allocations for 2023/24 are currently being reviewed through the Departmental business planning process, once agreed these will be published as part of the annual Parliamentary Estimates Process.

■ **Wheelchairs: Procurement**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[126817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80788, on what date NHS England plans to publish the framework for integrated care systems to commission effective, efficient and personalised wheelchair services, including for those under five years old.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[126818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80788, if he will list the stakeholder organisations who NHS England are consulting as part of the development of a framework for integrated care systems to commission effective efficient and personalised wheelchair services, including for those under five years old.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[126819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80788 on Wheelchairs: Children, whether work to produce a framework for integrated care systems to commission effective, efficient and personalised wheelchair services will include a review of the eligibility and issuing criteria of children aged five and under.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[126820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether an Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment has been conducted on the current specification for wheelchair and posture eligibility and issuing criteria for children aged five and under.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England does not have a specific date agreed for publishing the all age Wheelchair Commissioning Framework for commissioning wheelchair services, including for those under five years old.

As part of development of the Wheelchair Commissioning Framework, NHS England has consulted with the following stakeholders in the National Wheelchair Advisory Group:

- National Wheelchair Managers Forum;
- Whizz Kids;
- The National Wheelchair Alliance;
- Wheelchair Service Managers;
- Newlife Foundation Charity;
- Bangor University;
- Commissioners from integrated care boards (ICBs);
- Provider organisations;
- People with Lived Experience;
- Posture Mobility Group; and
- ResMag Rehabilitation Engineering Profession.

The Wheelchair Commissioning Framework does not include a review of National Health Service wheelchair services eligibility criteria. ICBs are responsible for the provision and commissioning of local wheelchairs services and for the development

of the local wheelchair service eligibility criteria based on the needs of their local population.

This includes responsibility for conducting an Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment for their current specifications for wheelchair and posture eligibility and issuing criteria for children aged five and under. NHS England has not issued any guidance or model service specifications related to wheelchair and posture eligibility specifically focussed on children aged five and under. The current model service specification and future commissioning framework are tools to support ICBs to commission wheelchair services for all ages.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

**Stuart C McDonald:**

**[123966]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Seasonal Worker visa scheme rules require workers either (a) to be always be paid £10.10 per hour for each hour they work or (b) paid by piece rate; and whether her Department plans to provide guidance on the payment by piece rate.

**Robert Jenrick:**

All workers on the Seasonal Worker immigration route must receive at least £10.10 per hour for each hour worked, regardless of the type of contract they hold, including where they are paid by piece rate. This is set out in the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-sponsor-a-seasonal-worker>

The piece rate payment method is already governed by relevant UK wage legislation, which is set by the relevant devolved region in which a worker is employed.

### ■ Animal Experiments

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[125338]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps is she taking to ensure the adequate enforcement of the requirement in the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to use scientifically satisfactory non-animal methods wherever possible.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The UK regulatory framework has a rigorous approach to the application of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) in all applications for programmes of work involving animals. Establishments conducting research must have robust internal governance systems and processes that ensure the regulated activities carried out at the establishment are undertaken in accordance with the principles of the 3Rs.

In October 2021 the Home Office commenced full system audits of licensed establishments to ensure compliance. Further information can be found on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-research-technical-advice>

The Government continues to actively support and fund the development and dissemination of the 3Rs. This is achieved through UK Research and Innovation who fund the National Centre for the 3Rs and research into the development of alternatives through Innovate UK, the Medical Research Council, and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

## ■ Asylum: Syria

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[125424]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to accelerate the decision-making process for asylum applications from people from Syria.

**Robert Jenrick:**

All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy. Claims by Syrian nationals will be considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality.

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.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Injuries

**Kate Osamor:**

**[124016]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will introduce guaranteed compensation for industrial injuries suffered by firefighters.

**Chris Philp:**

The health and safety of firefighters is of great importance. It is for individual fire and rescue authorities, as employers with responsibility for health and wellbeing, to ensure that firefighters receive the appropriate equipment and training they need to safely respond to the wide range of incidents which they attend.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework also directs that all Fire and Rescue Authorities should have a people strategy which covers health, safety and wellbeing. In addition, the Home Office supports the National Fire Chiefs' Council's health and wellbeing board to drive positive change and support.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Vacancies

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[126561]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many vacancies there are in the Fire and Rescue Service.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not collect information on the number of vacancies in the Fire and Rescue Services in England.

The Home Office collects data annually on the size and diversity of the Fire and Rescue Service workforce in England. These statistics are published here: [Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics-data-tables).

It is the responsibility of each Fire and Rescue Authority to determine what resources they need to meet their anticipated risk.

## ■ Foreign Relations: Jamaica

**Ruth Jones:**

[124087]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Government of Jamaica.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department has had no recent discussions with the Government of Jamaica.

## ■ Grenfell Tower: Fires

**Kate Osamor:**

[124017]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to establish a compensation fund for firefighters who attended the Grenfell fire and have been subsequently diagnosed with cancer.

**Kate Osamor:**

[124018]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her department has undertaken research on the health impacts of the Grenfell tower fire on the firefighters who attended that fire.

**Kate Osamor:**

[124019]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to support firefighters who have incurred (a) cancer and (b) other health problems following their attendance at the Grenfell tower fire.

**Chris Philp:**

The health and safety of firefighters is of great importance.

It is for individual fire and rescue authorities, as employers with responsibility for health and wellbeing, to ensure that firefighters receive the appropriate equipment

and training they need to safely respond to the wide range of incidents which they attend.

■ **Home Office: Trade Unions**

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[127791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what human resources information their Department shares with trade unions on a regular basis.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office recognises the following four trade unions for collective bargaining purposes in respect of specific grades of staff:

- FDA (formerly the First Division Association)
- ISU (formerly the Immigration Service Union)
- Prospect
- Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union

As part of the regular engagement process the Home Office provides these unions with human resources information regarding staffing, pay, sickness absence and diversity and inclusion.

In addition to the provision of this regular data the Department provides the unions, on an ad hoc basis, with HR data in respect of specific issues such as on matters that are subject to negotiation or consultation at a particular point in time.

■ **Nitrous Oxide: Misuse**

**Bob Stewart:**

[\[123909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made on the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' review into potential harms caused by nitrous oxide launched in September 2021.

**Chris Philp:**

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) is an advisory non-departmental public body. The ACMD is independent of Government and therefore the timescales for, and progress of, their reviews are a matter for them.

Home Office officials work closely with the ACMD and the Government will consider their recommendations on nitrous oxide once they are published.

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[124097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to take steps to (a) regulate the use and (b) prevent substance abuse of nitrous oxide.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government is concerned about the harms of nitrous oxide to those, often young people, who misuse this drug.



It is already an offence under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 to import, export, produce, supply, offer to supply, or possess with intent to supply, nitrous oxide. For the offence to be made out, the defendant must intend to consume the substance, or know or be reckless as to whether it will be consumed by another person, for its psychoactive effect.

These offences carry a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment, or a fine, or both. It is also an offence to possess nitrous oxide in a custodial institution, for which the maximum sentence is two years' imprisonment, or a fine, or both. Medicinal products are exempted from these controls.

In September 2021 the former Home Secretary requested the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) conduct an updated harms assessment of Nitrous Oxide and consider whether it should be considered for control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Once the ACMD publish their advice, we will consider their recommendations closely and respond in due course.

## ■ **Police: Finance**

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[124098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to alter the police funding formula; and if she will take steps to increase police funding in areas with more properties in lower council tax bands.

**Chris Philp:**

The government recognises that the current police funding formula is out of date and no longer accurately reflects demand on policing. A review of the funding formula was launched in Autumn 2021, and the Home Office is preparing to publish a first public consultation early this year. This will set out the broad principles of the Review and consult on the purpose, structure and components of a new formula.

In developing a new formula, we are considering the demands facing each police force and the relative impact of local factors on the resource required to meet demand.

## ■ **Psilocybin**

**Crispin Blunt:**

**[R]** [\[127684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will hold discussions with the Chief Medical Officer on the potential merits of psilocybin's (a) medicinal and (b) therapeutic use.

**Chris Philp:**

There are no current plans for a meeting between Home Office Ministers and the Chief Medical Officer for England on the topic of psilocybin.

There is an established process for the development of medicines, overseen by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which enables medicines (including those containing Schedule 1 controlled drugs such as

psilocybin) to be developed, evaluated in clinical trials and licensed based on an assessment of their safety, quality and efficacy before being made available to patients in the UK. Should an application be submitted for a marketing authorisation (product licence), it will ultimately be a decision for the MHRA whether to license psilocybin as a therapy.

In the context of these arrangements, officials from Department of Health and Social Care and the Home Office liaise regularly on matters connected to controlled drugs in healthcare to inform advice to Ministers. The views of experts including the Chief Medical Officer can be taken into account as part of this process.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[126658]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish a timeline for the opening of Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Government received over 11,400 expressions of interest (EOI) under Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), which we have been assessing against the eligibility criteria. We have informed just under 200 individuals that they are eligible in principle for resettlement, subject to passing security checks. Including their dependents, this accounts for over 750 of the 1500 available places on Pathway 3 in year one. We will not be commenting on individual cohort numbers or timeframes while EOIs are still being processed and security checks are outstanding. As initial security checks are completed, we are providing further information on next steps to eligible individuals. We will update Parliament further once we have completed the allocation process, have notified all those who submitted EOIs of the outcome and have assured data to share.

## ■ Road Traffic Offences: Greater Manchester

**Navendu Mishra:**

**[124145]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure (a) Greater Manchester Police and (b) Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council have an adequate level of resources to reduce incidents of car drivers over the speed limits.

**Chris Philp:**

Excess speed is still a major cause of death and serious injury on our roads. Anyone who breaks the speed limit should expect to face proper sanction.

The enforcement of speeding offences, including in Greater Manchester, is an operational matter for the discretion of Chief Officers and Police and Crime Commissioners. The force's Chief Officer will decide how to deploy available resources, taking into account any specific local pressures and demands.

The Government is proposing a total police funding settlement of up to £17.2 billion in 2023/24, an increase of up to £287 million when compared to 2022/23. Greater

Manchester Police's funding will be up to £738.6 million in 2023/24, an increase of up to £23.5 million when compared to 2022/23.

The Government is delivering on the people's priorities by recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers. As of 30 September 2022, 15,343 additional uplift officers have been recruited in England and Wales through the Police Uplift Programme, 77% of the target of 20,000 additional officers by March 2023. As of 30 September 2022, Greater Manchester Police has recruited 804 additional uplift officers against a total three year allocation of 1,155 officers. Forces are operationally independent and the deployment of officers remains an operational decision for Chief Constables.

Local authorities, including Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, are best-placed to make decisions about the services that best meet the needs of their local populations. It is the responsibility of local authorities to commission different kinds of public services which fit local circumstances and priorities.

## ■ Windrush Compensation Scheme

**Ruth Jones:** [124081]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been helped through the Windrush Compensation Scheme since its establishment.

**Ruth Jones:** [124082]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Information relating to the number of people that have been helped through the Windrush Compensation Scheme since its establishment is included in Windrush Compensation Scheme Transparency Data which is published regularly, together with the Windrush Compensation Scheme Fact Sheet which can be found here: [Windrush Schemes factsheet – November 2022](#).

The effectiveness of the Windrush Compensation Scheme is kept under constant review. The Home Office works hard to streamline processes and make policy improvements where necessary. The Windrush Compensation Scheme Fact Sheet provides further information.

## ■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review

**Ruth Jones:** [124086]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has discussed the recommendations in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review with (a) the Welsh Government, (b) the Scottish Government and (c) political representatives in Northern Ireland.

**Robert Jenrick:**

A range of options have been considered for delivering the Windrush recommendations, including discussions with external stakeholders.

Wendy William's most recent publication, the 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review – Progress Update' was published in March 2022. This report outlines the work undertaken by the Home Office in response to her original review.

We will also keep the Home Affairs Select Committee updated on the progress of all the Wendy Williams recommendations.

**Ruth Jones:** [\[124088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she has discussed the Windrush Lessons Learned Review with her Caricom counterparts.

**Robert Jenrick:**

A substantial amount of work has been done on considering options for delivering these recommendations, including discussions with external stakeholders.

We keep CARICOM members informed of any major Windrush related updates as part of our updates to key external stakeholders.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### ■ Parliamentary Estate: Capital Investment

**Valerie Vaz:** [\[126624\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will provide details of (a) ongoing capital infrastructure projects and (b) the costs of projects on the parliamentary estate as of 18 January 2023.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The ongoing live capital infrastructure projects as of 18 January 2023 are summarised in the table below. There are 61 projects in progress on the Parliamentary Estate. Around £452 million has been spent to date on these projects and they are forecast to cost £1,370 million at completion.

**Attachments:**

1. Costs on infrastructure projects at 18 Jan 2023 [Costs on infrastructure projects on the parliamentary estate.pdf]

## JUSTICE

### ■ CAFCASS

**Sir Gary Streeter:** [\[125228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what safeguarding guidance the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service follows when it assists victims of domestic abuse.

**Mike Freer:**

Cafcass' domestic abuse practice guidance consists of a practice pathway and a guidance document that provides social work practitioners with a structured approach

to risk assessment of domestic abuse in the family court. This was updated in May 2021 alongside a programme of training in its use for all practice staff. The materials can be accessed here: [Resources for assessing domestic abuse - Cafcass - Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service](#).

The practice pathway guidance provides practitioners with a range of assessment tools to use when domestic abuse is part of a family's circumstances. The aim of this guidance is to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the child at the centre of proceedings; to promote the best interests of the child and offer a safe recommendation to the court; to work in a trauma focused, respectful and responsive manner; to assess the impact on the child of their lived experience of domestic abuse and to look for strengths in the family and community to promote safety.

## ■ Community Orders

**Steve Reed:**

**[125370]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many hours of community service given as part of community sentences offenders completed in each (a) local justice area and (b) region in England and Wales since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

For the period April 2014 to December 2022, 41,788,024 hours of Community Service have been delivered.

Please find data in response to part b, below.

REGION	TOTAL HOURS01 APRIL 2014 – 31 DECEMBER 2022
East Midlands Region	2,566,660
East of England	4,853,173
Greater Manchester	2,363,110
Kent Surrey Sussex Region	2,674,946
London	6,102,215
Northeast Region	1,545,053
Northwest Region	3,331,240
South Central	2,314,117
Southwest	2,722,047
Wales	3,068,954
West Midlands Region	3,850,322

REGION	TOTAL HOURS01 APRIL 2014 – 31 DECEMBER 2022
Yorkshire and The Humber	4,024,468
Unknown Region**	2,371,718
National Total	41,788,024

These have been segmented by Probation Region. Where prior to unification (July 2021), locations have been mapped to current region. Where mapping has not been possible, due to ambiguous locations, these have been grouped as 'Unknown Region'.

It has not been possible to provide data prior to April 2014. This date marked the completion of Transforming Rehabilitation's migration of data to the National Delius system. Prior to this, the use of multiple differing local recording systems has resulted in less robust data which cannot be used with confidence, in response to this PQ.

The volumes of Unpaid Work hours per head of the population per region will also vary due to several factors, including crime and detection rates, localised police activity populations changes and local differences between judicial preferences for different types of sentences which need to be considered with population and volume of Unpaid Work data.

#### ■ Courts: Remand in Custody

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[127741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the impact on courts of remanding defendants when Operation Safeguard is active.

**Damian Hinds:**

The activation of Operation Safeguard was announced on 30 November 2022, via an oral statement. Operation Safeguard is a contingency that provides additional headroom for use as needed. We are not currently housing prisoners in police cells as a result of Operation Safeguard.

The courts will continue to make decisions about remanding defendants on bail or in custody in accordance with the law, and their ability to do so will not be impacted by Operation Safeguard. We are monitoring the remand population closely.

Following the conclusion of barristers' strike action, we remain committed to driving down the outstanding caseload to improve waiting times for all users of the criminal justice system.

## ■ Judiciary: Racial Discrimination

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[126581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to recommendations of the report by the University of Manchester entitled Racial Bias and the Bench, published in November 2022, if he will make it his policy to publish (a) the Judicial Executive Board report into judicial bullying and racism and (b) all reports and research commissioned by his Department into the judiciary.

**Mike Freer:**

Under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the Lord Chief Justice (LCJ), as Head of the Judiciary of England and Wales has responsibility for the maintenance of appropriate arrangements for the welfare, training and guidance of the judiciary of England and Wales. The LCJ carries out these responsibilities through the Judicial Executive Board (JEB) and the Judges' Council. To protect the independence of the judiciary, it is a matter for the judiciary to determine which judiciary commissioned reports are published.

## ■ Magistrates' Courts: Westminster

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[124056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse was of running (a) the specialist domestic abuse court and (b) all other hearings at Westminster Magistrates Court in the latest period for which data is available.

**Mike Freer:**

(a) HMCTS is unable to isolate costs associated with individual case types held by a particular court therefore costs directly attributable to the Specialist Domestic Abuse Court at Westminster Magistrates Court are not available.

(b) Total direct costs of holding hearings at Westminster Magistrates Court for financial year 2021-22 are:

	2021-22
Staff costs	2,521
Other costs <sup>1</sup>	185
Estates costs	3,468
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,174</b>

**Figures in £'000**

To note, these are direct costs only and do not include any national overheads arising from the court's use of shared Headquarters functions, e.g. Human Resources, Estates or Digital & Technology Services which are accounted for centrally.



<sup>1</sup> Other Costs includes judicial costs, print and postage, IT & telecoms costs, and other miscellaneous expenditure.

## ■ Prisoners: Dyslexia

**Matt Hancock:** [\[123920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison libraries have been operating across the prison estate in each year since 2005; and what percentage of the prison population has had access to a prison library service in each year since 2005.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[123921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what education provision has been in place in each prison to support the literacy of prisoners in each year since 2005; how many hours on average each prisoner has been allowed to spend in a prison library in each year since 2005; and how many and what proportion of prisoners have been engaged in literacy programmes in each year since 2005.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[123922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisons have provided specialist support for prisoners with dyslexia in each year since 2005; and how many and what proportion of prisoners have had a literacy assessment in each year since 2005.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[123923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prisoners have been recorded as having dyslexia in each year since 2005; what steps his Department is taking to help identify prisoners with dyslexia; and what steps he is taking to support prisoners with dyslexia.

### **Damian Hinds:**

All prisons are required to have a library and prisoners are routinely offered a minimum of 30 minutes library access a week. We do not currently collect data on prisoner attendance and engagement with the library.

All prisons also offer literacy education as part of their core curriculum. Most education services are outsourced to education specialists (for example Further Education Colleges) and supplemented by bespoke partnership arrangements with third sector organisations who support the teaching of reading. HMPPS are also working to embed literacy skills in workshops and vocational training.

Reliable data from 2005-19 is not available due to changes in the way education provision has been contracted and provided although, since 2019, all prisoners have been screened for literacy, numeracy and Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) on entry. Prisons provide a range of support according to the needs of the individual and our main education providers are required to put in place provision for prisoners with additional learning needs such as dyslexia.

This table sets out the number of prisoners participating in English functional skills, taking English assessments and prisoners identified as likely to have LDD since 2019

under the current MoJ commissioned contracts. 2020-22 participation figures have been impacted by the reduction in classroom learning during the pandemic, but we are now building back to pre-pandemic levels of learning. Statistics for 2022-23 will be published later this year. Due to the dynamic nature of the prison population, it is also not possible to provide a percentage proportion of prisoners participating.

YEAR	NUMBER OF PRISONERS PARTICIPATING IN FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ENGLISH COURSES	NUMBER OF PRISONERS WHO HAVE HAD AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH	PRISONERS PARTICIPATING IN ENGLISH AND MATHS INITIAL ASSESSMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS LIKELY TO HAVE LDD
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	17,680	53,247	16,115
1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021*[1]	3,697	28,969	8,103
1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022*	8,367	53,787	14,833

[1] Levels of learning during April 2020-March 2022 were greatly impacted by the reduction in classroom learning necessary for mitigating the health impacts of the Covid pandemic

## ■ Probate

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[124107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what was the total declared value of deceased people's estates notified to Probate registries in England for financial years (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

**Mike Freer:**

The attached table shows the total declared value of deceased people's estates notified to Probate Registries in England and Wales for financial years (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

### Attachments:

1. Table\_124107 [2023-01-24 124107 Table.xlsx]

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Buildings: Insulation****Fleur Anderson:**[\[127916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he is taking steps to protect leaseholders from remediation costs related to structural building defects that are not considered a "relevant defect" under the Building Safety Act, but which are discovered during cladding remediation works.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Building Safety Act 2022 sets out the broad range of defects to which the leaseholder protections apply. The core principle is that the historical defect puts people's safety at risk from the spread of fire, or structural collapse.

The Building Safety Act 2022 also provides a toolkit of measures to enable those responsible for defective work to be pursued. These include retrospectively extending the limitation period under section 1 of the Defective Premises Act 1972 from six to 30 years where claims can be made for defective work relating to the construction of dwellings where the work rendered the dwelling unfit for habitation at the time of completion

Additionally, civil claims can now be brought against manufacturers of, or those who have supplied, defective or mis-sold construction products, or those who have supplied or marketed in breach of regulations, where these products have been incorporated in a dwelling and that has caused or contributed to a dwelling being unfit for habitation.

**■ Buildings: Safety****Luke Pollard:**[\[124074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Building Safety Act 2022 defining leaseholders as either qualifying or non-qualifying for legal protections from historical building safety costs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the new guidance does not prevent remediation works to be carried out in a timely manner.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[124075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Building Safety Act 2022 defining leaseholders as either qualifying or non-qualifying for legal protections from historical building safety costs, what assessment he has made of the ability of non-qualifying leaseholders to afford building remediation works.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[124076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps the Government is taking to make funding available to leaseholders where neither the

developer nor the building owner is able to fund the essential remediation of non-cladding related fire safety issues.

**Lee Rowley:**

Building owners must ensure that buildings are safe. All qualifying leaseholders are protected from historical safety remediation costs for cladding-related work. This protection includes all works, and non-qualifying leaseholders, if their building owner or landlord is or is associated with the developer responsible for that defect. If a leaseholder owns a total of more than three properties, their principal home always qualifies for the protections if it is in a relevant building. Where this is not the case, non-qualifying leaseholders are liable for historical safety remediation costs as per the terms of their lease, in the same way they were before the Act came into force. This amount cannot be increased to replace money that qualifying leaseholders are protected from paying.

The Act provides a toolkit of measures to allow landlords and others to pursue those responsible. The Government has made it very clear that any necessary remediation work should not be delayed. The Act provides for interested parties - including local authorities and leaseholders - to apply to the First-tier Tribunal for a remediation order where historical safety remediation work does not commence in a timely manner. These orders are enforceable as if they were orders of the county court, ensuring that landlords comply with their new liabilities under the Act.

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Trade Unions**

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[127789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what human resources information their Department shares with trade unions on a regular basis.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The department maintains a positive relationship with our trades unions and shares a broad range of appropriate material with them, depending upon the subject under discussion.

■ **Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[123893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to make an announcement about the future of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme beyond April 2023.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Government has announced a new package of further support under the Homes for Ukraine scheme details of which can be accessed [here](#).

## ■ Housing: Construction

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[123864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a requirement for large-scale housing developments to have sufficient childcare facilities available in the local area before planning permission is granted.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Local authorities have a duty to secure early years childcare provision free of charge under the Childcare Acts of 2006 and 2016. All new primary schools are now expected to include a nursery, and many schools and other providers offer childcare for school-age children outside of school hours.

Local planning authorities can secure contributions from developers through Section 106 agreements or use the Community Infrastructure Levy to contribute towards providing new or expanded childcare facilities when needed. Under the new Infrastructure Levy, which is being introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, local authorities will be able to continue to use developer contributions for this purpose.

**Matt Western:**

[\[124041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure effective public transport links for new, large housing developments.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government is taking steps to ensure large housing developments have access to effective public transport links through the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, which can include public transport links.

In addition, contributions from developers play an important role in delivering the infrastructure that new homes require. The Government is reforming the existing system of developer contributions by introducing a new Infrastructure Levy through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The new Levy aims to be more effective in ensuring that important infrastructure such as effective public transport links accompany new development.

## ■ Housing: Sales

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[126647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the reductions in the number of housing sales on the housing market.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Office for Budget Responsibility produces forecasts on the housing market, which can be found [here](#).

## ■ Levelling Up Fund

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it a requirement for provision of levelling up funding that local authorities have an up to date local plan and local transport plan.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that areas of greatest deprivation can benefit most from the Levelling Up Fund.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[126729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is taking steps to develop criteria to assess the economic merits for the (a) local area and (b) HM Treasury of each bid to the Levelling Up Fund.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[127714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate his Department has made of the average cost to a local councils of putting forward a bid to the Levelling Up Fund.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[127715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to allocate round three of Levelling Up funding.

**Ben Lake:** [\[127879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the cost to local authorities for (a) staff time and (b) resources to submit bids to the first and second round of the Levelling Up Fund.

**Alex Norris:** [\[127882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will publish the scores received during the assessment process by the 512 Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bids.

**Helen Morgan:** [\[127926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to provide a breakdown of unsuccessful bids to the Levelling Up Fund including (a) applicant name, (b) bid name, (c) bid value, (d) a summary of the bid, (e) which phases were applied for and (e) a summary of the reasons for rejection.

**Kate Kniveton:** [\[128719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to announce further details on the Levelling Up Fund Round 3.

**Andrew Western:**

[128741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the total cost to local authorities of (a) officer time, (b) external consultancy fees and (c) other costs of making bids to the second round of the Levelling Up Fund.

**Dehenna Davison:**

Details of the assessment and decision-making process for round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund are available in the published [explanatory note](#). A detailed breakdown of funding requested and awarded in round 2 can be found in the published [geographic and thematic analysis](#). The department does not request nor record the costs incurred by applicants to the Fund. As set out in the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) of 19 January, I am pleased to say there will be a third round of the Fund and we will outline more information on this in due course.

Unsuccessful applicants to this second round will be provided written feedback to support future applications into levelling up funds.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Stockport**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[124159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average increase in rent for private properties in Stockport constituency in the last 12 months; what assessment he had made of the affordability of rent increases for people on average earnings in Stockport constituency; and if he will make a statement.

**Navendu Mishra:**

[124160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the affordability of rents in the private rental sector in (a) Stockport constituency and (b) Stockport borough.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Office for National Statistics publishes data on average rents online as part of its [Index of Private Housing Rental Prices](#). Private rented sector affordability also forms part of the [English Housing Survey](#).

Regional affordability analysis will be published in the supplementary Private Rented Sector Report later this year.

■ **South Tyneside Council: Finance**

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[127773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much money have South Tyneside Council returned to his Department from grants allocated over the last two years as of 19 January 2023.



**Lee Rowley:**

South Tyneside Council have returned a total £6,750,445 of grant funding to the department between 01.04.2020 and 31.03.2022, the last two years for which audited information is available.

**PRIME MINISTER**■ **Strikes****Dan Carden:**[\[127883\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his Answer to the Rt. hon Member for Holborn and St Pancras at Prime Minister's Questions on 11 January 2023, Official Report, column 554, on what evidential basis he said that the International Labour Organisation supported minimum service levels.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

I have been asked to reply. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recognises minimum service levels can be a sensible solution to protect the public from serious consequences of strikes. Many countries in Europe and around the world who are also signatories to the ILO have minimum service levels in place covering a range of key services.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Gender Recognition: Scotland****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[125468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will publish the legal advice the Government received on devolution and the Gender Recognition Reform Bill (Scotland).

**Mr Alister Jack:**

After careful consideration of policy and legal advice, I decided to make an order under section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998, preventing the Scottish Parliament's Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill from proceeding to Royal Assent. The order, and a full Statement of Reasons published alongside it, set out in full the adverse effects the Government is concerned about. It is long-standing government practice, accepted by successive administrations, not to publish legal advice provided to the Government.

**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[126790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will make an estimate of the number of hours that (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have spent in discussions with representatives of the Scottish government on the potential cross-border issues relating to the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill in the last 12 months.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Minister for Women and Equalities wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, Shona Robison MSP, while the Bill was still in the Scottish Parliament, outlining her concerns with the Gender Recognition Reform Bill as it stood. They also met to discuss the UK Government's concerns. UK Government officials have had regular meetings with Scottish Government counterparts since the Gender Recognition Reform Bill's introduction in the Scottish Parliament.

Ministers and officials in my Department conduct regular engagement with the Scottish Government on a range of matters, including legislation, Scotland Act Orders, and other policy matters.

**TRANSPORT****■ Bus Services: Disability****Mick Whitley:****[R] [125496]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data his Department holds on the number of new buses registered since 2017 that did not have (a) next stop, (b) final destination and (c) audio-visual announcements installed.

**Mick Whitley:****[R] [125497]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding his Department allocated to installing audio-visual equipment on buses in (a) Scotland, (b) England, (c) Wales, (d) Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Since 2018, the Department has allocated £3.55m to the Real Time Information Group to support smaller operators with the provision of audible and visible information on local bus and coach services across England, Scotland and Wales. Accessibility policy is devolved in Northern Ireland.

**■ Civil Aviation (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) Regulations 2012****Stella Creasy:****[127757]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether they plan to (a) revoke (b) retain or (c) replace the Civil Aviation (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) Regulations 2012.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department is currently reviewing all transport-related Retained EU Law. It will set out its approach to individual pieces of Retained EU Law, including the Civil Aviation (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) Regulations 2012, in due course.

## ■ **Cycling and Walking: Planning**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[125281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities on the role of local planning authorities in England in enabling walking, wheeling and cycling.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department for Transport and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have confirmed that Active Travel England will become a statutory consultee in the planning system from June this year. Active Travel England also provided design reviews for relevant submissions to the Levelling Up Fund. The Department for Transport will continue to support DLUHC on its consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework and would encourage all interested in these matters to respond to that consultation.

## ■ **Driving Tests: Languages**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[123983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to review the languages used for the driving theory test.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

There are no plans to review this.

## ■ **Levenshulme Station: Access**

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[127896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to announce the successful applications for Access for All bids made for Levenshulme station by Transport for Greater Manchester.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department is assessing over 300 nominations for Access for All funding beyond 2024, including the nomination for Levenshulme station. We hope to announce successful projects later this year.

## ■ **Public Transport: Dogs**

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[126570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with transport providers on trends in the number of dogs, other than assistance dogs, permitted on public transport; and if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of dogs on public transport on (a) public safety and (b) carriage capacity.

**Huw Merriman:**

The rules on the carriage of dogs on trains is set out in condition 24 of the National Rail Conditions of Travel. This states that up to 2 dogs can accompany the

passenger free of charge. Train operating companies can allow passengers to take additional dogs onto the train but there may be a cost to the passenger for this.

This condition also stipulates that staff can ask that dogs be removed if they cause a nuisance or inconvenience to other passengers. On bus and coach, regulations state that animals are accepted onto bus services at the discretion of the driver. Bus and coach operators set their own conditions of carriage policies which may prohibit the carriage of dogs with the exception of trained assistance dogs.

### ■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[128676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many stations do not have wheelchair access to each platform; and what steps he is taking to reduce this number.

**Huw Merriman:**

Around one fifth of stations in Great Britain currently have step free access, but we are improving our understanding of accessibility at stations through a full GB wide audit that is expected to complete by Spring. We continue to improve accessibility through the Access for All programme, which has provided step free accessible routes at over 200 stations so far.

### ■ **Railway Stations: Neurodiversity**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[128678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that stations are (a) accessible and (b) safe for people with neurodiversity.

**Huw Merriman:**

As part of the Accessible Travel Policy, operators must ensure that any staff who may, at any time, deal directly with passengers receive appropriate training to help them communicate with people with different disabilities.

We are also finalising plans to consult on the Design Standards for Accessible Stations, which sets out legal requirements of the rail industry for carrying out infrastructure works at stations, to ensure it continues to protect the interests of all passengers, including those with neurodiversity .

### ■ **Railways: Concessions**

**Chris Law:**

[\[126690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people with Multiple Sclerosis have obtained a Disabled Person's Railcard.

**Chris Law:**

[\[126691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to promote the availability of the Disabled Persons Railcard to all people in the UK living with Multiple Sclerosis.

**Chris Law:**

[126693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people living with Multiple Sclerosis have obtained a Disabled Person's Railcard in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland.

**Chris Law:**

[126694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of applicants for a Disabled Person's Railcard had Multiple Sclerosis in each year since 2018.

**Chris Law:**

[126695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people applied for a Disabled Person's Railcard in each year since 2018.

**Huw Merriman:**

Railcards are administered by the Rail Delivery Group. Details of an individual's qualifying disability or progressive medical condition are not recorded centrally for Disabled Persons Railcard holders or applicants. Therefore, information on how many people with Multiple Sclerosis applied for, or obtained, a Disabled Person's Railcard, or any information as to the proportion of applicants who have Multiple Sclerosis, is not available.

With regards to promoting the availability of the Disabled Persons Railcard, as per our Inclusive transport strategy commitment, the Department alongside the Rail Delivery Group and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee is currently undertaking a review of the Disabled Persons Railcard. The review is considering the eligibility criteria and also the options to verify entitlement. We expect to complete this review in the first part of 2023.

**Chris Law:**

[126692]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have obtained a Disabled Person's Railcard in each of the last five years.

**Huw Merriman:**

The table below presents the number of one and three year disabled persons railcards issued annually from April 2017 to March 2022. Periodic data is also available from the Office of Rail and Road's website which is available here:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/passenger-experience/disabled-persons-railcards/>

**TABLE: NUMBER OF EXISTING AND NEWLY ISSUED, AND ONE YEAR AND THREE YEAR DISABLED PERSONS RAILCARDS (DPRC) ISSUED, GREAT BRITAIN**

Financial Year	Number of existing and newly issued DPRC in circulation as at 31 March	Number of one year DPRC issued	Number of three year DPRC issued
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**TABLE: NUMBER OF EXISTING AND NEWLY ISSUED, AND ONE YEAR AND THREE YEAR DISABLED PERSONS RAILCARDS (DPRC) ISSUED, GREAT BRITAIN**

April 2017 to March 2018	222,616	108,402	39,656
April 2018 to March 2019	239,037	115,494	44,697
April 2019 to March 2020	246,336	115,518	46,465
April 2020 to March 2021	148,608	39,462	17,984
April 2021 to March 2022	218,448	106,219	47,780

**Source:** Office of Rail and Road, Disabled Persons Railcards (DPRC) in circulation and issued, (Table 4310) **Notes:** The number of issued DPRCs was severely impacted in the year April 2020 to March 2021 due to the COVID19 pandemic.

#### ■ Railways: Infrastructure

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

[\[127839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what requirement there is on railway companies to provide alternative transport in the event of infrastructure failure; and if he will require South Western Railway to provide a timetable of rail replacement buses for passengers seeking to get to school, college and work until the landslide near Hook on the South Western mainline is fully repaired.

**Huw Merriman:**

In the event of an emergency event of infrastructure failure, such as the landslide near Hook, the Department expects train operators to provide rail replacement services as soon as practically possible. The Department's understanding is that there are significant issues in sourcing bus replacement services at short notice which is an issue across the industry.

#### ■ Railways: Landslips

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

[\[127840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he is taking steps to introduce enhanced technology-based track inspections to detect rail embankment subsidence before landslides occur.

**Huw Merriman:**

Network Rail, as the infrastructure manager of Britain's railways, continue to review and update the monitoring techniques they use to detect precursors for earthwork failures on railway embankments they manage. These enhancements are informed by geotechnical experts and include increasing the use of remote sensing, photogrammetry, CCTV, distributed acoustic sensing and inclinometers. These are among other tools to enable Network Rail engineers to target measures to reinforce slopes, add protection and improve resilience in the long term.

**Roads: Safety****Gill Furniss:**[\[127869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he intends to publish the Government's response to the public consultation on reviewing personal safety measures on streets in England.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government will publish the formal consultation response and announce next steps as soon as possible. The formal consultation response will be available to view on the Gov.uk website at [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reviewing-personal-safety-measures-on-streets-in-england-call-for-evidence](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reviewing-personal-safety-measures-on-streets-in-england-call-for-evidence).

The results from this call for evidence are shaping the work to update Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2, which is currently underway. The Government intends to publish the consultation response at the same time as the revised Manual for Streets.

**Seaborne Freight****Alan Brown:**[\[127806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the final costs associated with the awarding of a contract to Seabourne Freight was broken down by (a) monies paid to Seaborne, (b) compensation to other cross-channel operators and (c) all legal costs associated with negotiations and court cases.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

No monies were paid to Seaborne Freight. No compensation was paid to other cross-Channel operators.

The Department incurred internal legal costs and fees to its commercial legal adviser for advice on negotiating and subsequently terminating the 2018-19 ferry contracts entered into on a precautionary basis for critical goods, in relation to then-impending exit from the European Union.



**■ South West Main Line: Landslips****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:** [\[127838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will (a) investigate the causes of the landslide near Hook on the South Western mainline as a matter of urgency and (b) ensure works are undertaken to prevent similar events from occurring in future nearby.

**Huw Merriman:**

Network Rail will be undertaking a thorough review of the circumstances surrounding the landslide at Hook. My officials have asked for the output of that review and a clear plan to implement any recommendations to ensure that these extremely disruptive weather-related incidents are kept to an absolute minimum.

**■ Train Operating Companies: Industrial Relations****Grahame Morris:** [\[125317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether (a) his Department and (b) Network Rail are required to compensate (i) directly and (ii) via waived track access charges of (a) Transport for Wales Rail Services, (b) ScotRail Trains and (c) Caledonian Sleeper arising from industrial action.

**Grahame Morris:** [\[125318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether (a) Network Rail and (b) his Department are required to provide compensation (i) directly and (ii) via waived track access charges to (A) Transport for Wales Rail Services, (B) Scotrail Rail and (C) Caledonian Sleeper Rail Services for the impact of industrial action.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department is not required to provide compensation directly to any of (a) Transport for Wales Ltd (b) ScotRail Trains Ltd (c) Serco Caledonian Sleepers Limited.

**■ Transport: South Tyneside****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[127775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much money South Tyneside Council has returned to his Department from grants allocated in the last two years as of 19 January 2023.

**Jesse Norman:**

South Tyneside Council has not returned any money from grants to the Department for Transport in the last two years as of 19 January 2023.

**TREASURY****■ Alcoholic Drinks: Imports****Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[125226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the context of personal allowances for bringing excise goods into the UK for personal use, what recent estimate his Department has made of the average value of (a) 42 litres of beer, (b) 18 litres of still wine, (c) four litres of spirits and other liquors with over 22 per cent alcohol content and (d) nine litres of sparkling wine and fortified wine up with up to 22 per cent alcohol content.

**James Cartlidge:**

HMRC does not hold values for the average price of alcohol brought into the UK under the personal allowance.

**■ Business Rates****Anthony Browne:**[\[126852\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the impact of business rates tax on online shops.

**Victoria Atkins:**

At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced a package of changes and tax cuts worth almost £13.6 billion over the next five years, including:

- a freeze to the business rates multiplier for 2023-24, a tax cut worth £9.3 billion over the next 5 years, meaning all bills are 6 per cent lower than without the freeze;
- an Exchequer funded Transitional Relief scheme worth £1.6 billion to protect an estimated 700,000 ratepayers facing bill increases due to increases in rateable value. The Government has announced that it will permanently scrap 'downwards caps' which had restricted falling bills in previous schemes. This will benefit around 300,000 ratepayers who will see their full bill decrease from April 2023.
- an increased 75 per cent relief for retail, hospitality and leisure (RHL) properties, up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business for 2023-24. This is a tax cut worth over £2 billion for around 230,000 RHL businesses, to support the high street and protect small shops.
- providing over £500 million of support over the next three years with a new Supporting Small Business. This will cap bill increases to £50 per month (£600 per year) for businesses losing some or all of their Small Business or Rural Rate Relief due to the revaluation.

Together with the revaluation, this package ensures bills will more accurately reflect current market values whilst protecting businesses from large bill increases.

**■ Customs: ICT****Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**[\[126555\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 92120 on Customs: ICT, what the cost to the public purse was for the establishment and operation of Government IT systems relating to trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as of 1 December 2022.

**Victoria Atkins:**

As stated in our answer of 5 December 2022 to Question 92120: HMRC spending on individual IT systems cannot be broken down to the level specified in the question. HM Treasury does not hold information on spending by other Government departments in relation to the matters specified.

**■ Imports: Tax Allowances****Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[125227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of personal allowances for people bringing excise and non-excise goods into the UK for personal use on the economy.

**James Cartlidge:**

Following a consultation in Spring 2020, on 1 January 2021, the Government extended duty-free sales to EU-bound passengers at UK ports and airports for the first time in over 20 years. This is a significant boost to all ports, airports and international rail terminals in England, Scotland and Wales, including smaller regional airports and rail hubs, which were not able to offer duty-free to the EU before.

The Government also introduced personal allowances for passengers entering Great Britain from the EU. During the consultation stakeholders expressed concerns about this change, particularly those that deal with large volumes of EU passengers travelling to Great Britain in a vehicle by ferry or train, given many passengers were used to bringing back unlimited amounts of goods from the EU. The Government therefore used its freedoms from EU rules to significantly increase alcohol allowances for all passengers. This enables visitors to bring in, for example, three crates of beer, two cases of wine and one case of sparkling wine, without having to pay the relevant taxes, with Great Britain having one of the most generous allowances in the world.

**Mary Glendon:**[\[127763\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a comparative assessment of the potential impact of personal allowances on bringing excise and non-excise into the (a) UK and (b) EU on tax revenues.

**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 tax revenue on goods brought into the UK that are within the permitted allowances. We also do not have access to information on EU tax revenue.

Therefore, we are unable to make a comparative assessment of the potential impact of personal allowances on UK and EU tax revenues.

## ■ Leisure: Energy

**David Warburton:**

[\[127866\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide further support towards energy costs for the public leisure sector in addition to the Energy Bill Discount Scheme.

**James Cartlidge:**

The new Energy Bills Discount Scheme will provide all eligible businesses and other non-domestic energy users across the UK, including the public leisure sector, with a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024, following the end of the current Energy Bill Relief Scheme. It will also provide businesses in sectors with particularly high levels of both energy use and trade intensity with a higher level of support.

Through the current Energy Bills Relief Scheme, the Government provided an unprecedented package of support for non-domestic users through this winter. The Government has been clear that such levels of support, unprecedented in its nature and huge scale, were time-limited and intended as a bridge to allow businesses to adapt.

The new scheme therefore strikes a balance between supporting businesses for a further 12 months, from April 2023 to March 2024, and limiting taxpayer's exposure to volatile energy markets.

This will help those locked into contracts signed before recent substantial falls in the wholesale price manage their costs and provide others with reassurance against the risk of prices rising again.

## ■ Nurseries: Business Rates

**Dan Carden:**

[\[124069\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a nursery rates relief scheme.

**Victoria Atkins:**

At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced a package of changes and tax cuts worth almost £13.6 billion over the next five years, including:

- a freeze to the business rates multiplier for 2023-24, a tax cut worth £9.3 billion over the next 5 years, meaning all bills are 6% lower than without the freeze;
- an Exchequer funded Transitional Relief scheme worth £1.6 billion to protect an estimated 700,000 ratepayers facing bill increases due to increases in rateable

value. The Government has announced that it will permanently scrap 'downwards caps' which had restricted falling bills in previous schemes. This will benefit around 300,000 ratepayers who will see their full bill decrease from April 2023.

- providing over £500 million of support over the next three years with a new Supporting Small Business. This will cap bill increases to £50 per month (£600 per year) for businesses losing some or all of their Small Business or Rural Rate Relief due to the revaluation.

Nurseries were previously eligible for full and partial business rates relief to support them through COVID. Businesses would have been eligible for the nurseries discount if the business.

- was on Ofsted's Early Years Register; and
- the premises was wholly or mainly used to provide the Early Years Foundation Stage of education.

#### ■ Revenue and Customs: Staff

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[126705\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if HMRC will (a) publish Equality Impact Assessments for their Human Resources proposals and (b) consult the trade unions on those assessments.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC publishes Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on decisions and changes that affect the workforce. These are published on internal HMRC platforms. It is standard practice for Trade Unions to be consulted on these assessments prior to their publication. HMRC publish impact assessments concerning its public-facing policy and services on GOV.UK.

#### ■ Small Businesses: Costs

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[125360\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to help support small and medium-sized enterprises in (a) Northern Ireland and (b) the rest of the UK with increased costs.

**James Cartlidge:**

The new Energy Bills Discount Scheme (EBDS), which is replacing the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) from 1 April 2023, will provide eligible businesses and other non-domestic energy users, including small and medium sized businesses, across the UK with a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024.

The UK Government and the devolved administrations support services providing advice and help for SMEs. Businesses in Northern Ireland can find resources on <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/>. They can also call Invest Northern Ireland for free advisory services (0800 181 4422).

More broadly, the Government has brought forward a number of measures which support smaller businesses over the past year. This includes cutting the cost of employment for hundreds of thousands of small businesses by increasing the Employment Allowance and helping smaller businesses access finance by extending the Recovery Loan Scheme.

## ■ Tax Evasion: Criminal Investigation

**Angela Rayner:**

[125387]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HMRC legal investigations into (a) individuals and (b) businesses were launched in financial year 2021-22; and the average length of those investigations.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Information on the total number of opened compliance checks in 2021-22 can be accessed within the latest HMRC quarterly performance publication as below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1101475/HMRC\\_quarterly\\_performance\\_data\\_table\\_Q4\\_2021\\_to\\_2022.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101475/HMRC_quarterly_performance_data_table_Q4_2021_to_2022.xlsx)

## ■ Treasury: Staff

**Sarah Olney:**

[126754]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the return on investment for each full time equivalent tax compliance officer in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

For HMRC, the return on investment of our compliance work goes beyond generating yield, and also includes mitigating harm, ensuring a level playing field for those who pay their taxes correctly, and deterring non-compliance from taking place.

Furthermore, understanding the exact value of our compliance work in a given year is complicated by:

- the natural variability in the work [HMRC](#) compliance undertakes including differences in the tax heads, and types of risk compliance officers can be deployed against;
- the difficulty in calculating marginal return from additional resources;
- the productivity and training lags for new starters versus experienced officers, with compliance officers taking up to 5 years of training and experience before being fully productive;
- and timing differences between when work is done, and the resulting yield is scored.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES****■ Equality Act 2010****Jonathan Ashworth:****[127767]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of amending the Equalities Act 2010 to make menopause a protected characteristic.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government welcomes the recent inquiry into the menopause by the Woman and Equalities Select Committee. As we have made clear, women experiencing the menopause already benefit from protection in the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics of sex, age and disability are all potentially relevant in offering this protection in the field of employment.

**■ Gender Recognition Certificates****Hilary Benn:****[126548]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will list the circumstances in which a person may be required to show a Gender Recognition Certificate.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government is clear that we want people who are transgender to be able to live their lives as they wish. As announced in September 2020, we believe the current provisions in the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) are effective and allow for those who wish to legally change their sex to do so. The process of applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) should, however, be modern and affordable. The newly developed digital application process for GRCs launched on 29 June last year.

The digital application page on gov.uk sets out the list of uses of a GRC which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-gender-recognition-certificate>

**■ Gender Recognition: Scotland****Anneliese Dodds:****[126791]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make an estimate of the number of hours that (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department have spent in discussions with representatives of the Scottish government on the potential cross-border issues relating to the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill in the last 12 months.

**Stuart Andrew:**

UK Government officials have had regular scheduled meetings with Scottish Government counterparts since the Gender Recognition Reform Bill's introduction in the Scottish Parliament. Consideration of potential cross-border issues formed a key part of this engagement.



Since taking up her role as Minister for Women and Equalities on 25 October 2022, the Minister also engaged directly with her Scottish Government counterpart, both in person and through correspondence.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Access to Work Programme

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[126582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what percentage of invoices for support under the Access to Work scheme were paid within 30 days in (a) 2022 and (b) to date in 2023; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce the time taken to pay of Access to Work scheme invoices.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The data to produce the requested information is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

However, we are transforming the Access to Work service through increased digitalisation, which will make the service more efficient, will make the application process easier, and will improve the time taken from application through to decision. We are also currently testing a revised digital payment journey for Access to Work claims which will provide Access to Work customers with the ability to submit claim information electronically. Moving away from the current clerical process will provide a more efficient, streamlined service for customers.

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[127900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the timescale is for the Access to Work Adjustment Passports pilot; and whether he plans to publish findings from the pilot.

**Tom Pursglove:**

To support transitions into and between employment, we are delivering a series of Adjustment Passport pilots. The Adjustment Passport has been developed with stakeholders and works to empower the user by providing a living document of the individual's adjustments and in-work support needs, support conversations with potential employers, raise awareness of Access to Work and reduce the need for reassessments.

The Adjustment Passport for graduates leaving university was delivered in three universities during 2022 - Wolverhampton University, Manchester Metropolitan University and Kings College London. The universities evaluated the pilot and published their findings in Autumn 2022.

An Adjustment Passport for young disabled people participating in a vocational programme (e.g. Supported Internships, Traineeships and Apprenticeships) commenced in January 2023 and will last for a period of 12 months with evaluation expected to be available once the test has completed.

In addition, the DWP are working with the Ministry of Defence to test an Adjustment Passport for Armed Forces Personnel, which is due to commence during 2023. Details surrounding the test are still being developed with the Ministry of Defence.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Compensation

**David Linden:**

[\[124059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department paid to claimants in payments related to gross inconvenience in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020, (d) 2021 and (e) 2022.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 20 January 2023]:* DWP can make a consolatory payment to a claimant in recognition for when gross inconvenience has been caused.

The table below shows the total amount spent on consolatory payments per calendar year (January to December) as requested.

### TOTAL CONSOLATORY PAYMENTS BY CALENDAR YEAR

Year	Amount Paid
2018	£323,446.33
2019	£355,484.37
2020	£342,901.82
2021	£551,513.69
2022	£580,016.18

\*Please note: The figure for 2022 has not yet been finalised, as the figures are reported quarterly, therefore the 2022 figure above represents the first nine months only.

As a Department, DWP has continuously improved the complaints process and recognises the increase in the amount of consolatory payments paid is indicative of the departments complaints process better acknowledging when things haven't gone as they should, and where appropriate to compensate the customer.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Older Workers

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[127768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many 50 Plus Champions are employed by his Department.

**Guy Opperman:**

There is a 50Plus Champion in each of the 37 Jobcentre Plus districts.

## ■ Jobcentres: Closures

**David Linden:**

[\[127881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2022 to Question 100665 on Question for Department for Work and Pensions, if he will publish planned or estimated closing dates for each of his Department's temporary job centres.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department has publicly committed to returning the Jobcentre estate to its pre-pandemic size, restated in a [Written Ministerial Statement in July 2022](#). The Department is currently reviewing the ongoing business need for these temporary Jobcentres.

The Department will provide more information in due course.

## ■ Jobcentres: Older Workers

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[127769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what training is (a) required of and (b) available to 50 Plus Champions employed at Jobcentres.

**Guy Opperman:**

Current training for 50+ champions includes;

- Explanation of the role and the purpose of the 50+ initiative.
- Issues which may affect workers gaining employment.
- Retirement planning and how work can help achieve the retirement individual's desire.
- Provision identification and support offerings for claimants.
- Benefits of a Mid-Life MOT
- Employee Partners

The facilitated learning also covers the skills required to hold mid-life MOT sessions effectively with groups of claimants. This covers how to be effective with the presentation and how to engage with the claimants to achieve positive outcomes.

Champions complete a supplementary workbook alongside the role to develop and reinforce further learning.

Champions are also signposted to Labour Market learning to help them understand what their local market looks and feels like.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[127770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what qualifications are required to be appointed a 50 Plus Champion at a Jobcentre.

**Guy Opperman:**

The 50 Plus champions were internally recruited using the expression of interest process based on DWP's success profiles which assess behaviours & strengths appropriate for the role.

There is 1.5 days initial training, with an ongoing training package.

**Members: Correspondence****Matthew Pennycook:**[\[127859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to respond to the letter of 22 December 2022 from the hon. Member for Greenwich and Woolwich on a constituent's PIP claim payments.

**Mims Davies:**

A reply was sent to the hon. Member for Greenwich and Woolwich by the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 23 January 2023.

**Occupational Pension Schemes (Administration and Disclosure) (Amendment) Regulations 2018****Stella Creasy:**[\[127756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether they plan to (a) revoke (b) retain or (c) replace the Occupational Pension Schemes (Administration and Disclosure) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

**Laura Trott:**

We will come forward with our plans to implement the measures in the Retained EU Law Bill in due course.

**Social Security Benefits: Appeals****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[126796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will include in his Department's Annual Report for the 2022-23 financial year a performance measure on the number and proportion of appeals against decisions by his Department to refuse (a) Employment Support Allowance, (b) Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work and (c) Personal Independence Payment that (i) lapsed in advance of the hearing and (ii) were overturned by the First Tier Tribunal.

**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[126797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to include data on (a) the number of requests for a mandatory reconsideration of decision by his Department to refuse an application for (i) Employment Support Allowance, (ii) Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work and (iii) Personal Independence Payment and (b) the proportion of those reconsiderations that resulted in a change of award as measures of performance in his Department's Annual Report for the 2022-23 financial year.

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[126798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to include data on the quality of disability benefit assessments carried out by (a) Atos, (b) Capita and (c) Maximus as a measure of performance in his Department's Annual Report for the 2022-23 financial year.

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[126799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, If he will take steps to include customer satisfaction scores for people who applied for (a) Employment Support Allowance, (b) Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work, (b) Personal Independence Payment and (c) other disability benefits in his Department's annual report for the 2022-23 financial year.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Department for Work and Pensions is committed to monitoring and reporting progress against the priority outcomes agreed for the department in the Spending Review 2021 settlement.

We will publish our Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23 in Summer 2023, which will include performance statistics on key measures and metrics, including customer satisfaction levels, and support provided to those in receipt of disability benefits.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Poverty

**Matt Western:**

[\[124043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of households that have fallen into poverty as a result of the equalisation of the State Pension age.

**Laura Trott:**

Changes to State Pension age were made over a series of Acts by successive governments from 1995 onwards, following public consultations and extensive debates in both Houses of Parliament.

We do not hold any recorded information of an impact assessment that informed the rises in State Pension age of the Pensions Act 1995.

## ■ UK Menopause Taskforce

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[127766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps the UK Menopause Taskforce has taken to support women in the workplace undergoing menopause.

**Mims Davies:**

The Menopause Taskforce was established by DHSC to bring together ongoing work to improve holistic support and care for menopause. So far it has focused on research and evidence on the menopause.

In July 2021, DWP asked members of the 50 PLUS Roundtable on older workers to look at the important issue of menopause and employment given the impact menopause can have on women's working lives, particularly in the latter stages of their careers. An independent 'menopause and the workplace' report was published later in 2021 and the Government's response was outlined in July 2022.

The Government has again committed, in its response to recommendation 6 of the Women and Equalities Select Committees report: Menopause and the Workplace, they will appoint a DWP Menopause Employment Champion. They will work with the Women's Health Ambassador on the issue of menopause and employment, and drive forward work with employers on menopause workplace issues and to spearhead the proposed collaborative employer-led campaign as outlined in the independent report.

### ■ Universal Credit: Cold Weather Payments

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[125487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing people in receipt of Universal Credit who work but have limited capacity to work to be eligible for the Cold Weather Payment.

**Laura Trott:**

Cold Weather Payments make an important contribution towards the additional heating costs incurred during periods of exceptionally cold weather, between 1st of November and the 31st of March each year.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Europe) (Leo Docherty):** [\[HCWS515\]](#)

The Hon. Member for Stirling (Alyn Smith) has been appointed as a full representative of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in place of the Hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Brendan O'Hara).

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ **Government Action on Major Conditions and Diseases**

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay):** [\[HCWS514\]](#)

As this House is aware, the health and social care system faces long-term challenges to ensure the public enjoy longer and healthier lives. Currently in England, 5.4 million people live with cardiovascular disease, around 8.6 million live with chronic respiratory disease and 8.2 million people live with mental health issues.

An increasing number of us live with one or more major conditions. People with diabetes are twice as likely to have depression. Nine in ten dementia patients have another long-term condition. Half of people with a heart or lung condition have musculoskeletal disorders.

Tackling the major conditions that lead to people spending more years in ill health is a significant opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people. That is why today, I am announcing that, in consultation with NHS England and colleagues across government, my Department will develop and publish a Major Conditions Strategy.

The Strategy will set out a strong and coherent policy agenda that sets out a shift to integrated, whole-person care, building on measures that we have already taken forward through the NHS Long Term Plan. Interventions set out in the Strategy will aim to alleviate pressure on the health system, as well as support the government's objective to increase healthy life expectancy and reduce ill-health related labour market inactivity.

Our approach will be rooted in the best understanding of the evidence to tackle the major conditions which contribute to the burden of disease in England, namely:

- Cancers
- Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke and diabetes
- Chronic respiratory diseases
- Dementia
- Mental ill health



- Musculoskeletal disorders

These areas account for around 60% of total Disability Adjusted Life Years in England. Tackling them is critical to achieving our manifesto commitment of gaining five extra years of Healthy Life Expectancy by 2035, and our levelling up mission to narrow the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy by 2030.

Our approach will harness the potential of whole person care, addressing the fact that our health and care system has been built in silos, often focused around specific diseases or organs in the body. Our workforce model needs to adapt, reflecting that the NHS is caring for patients with increasingly complex needs and with multiple long-term conditions. We need greater emphasis on generalist medical skills to complement existing deep specialist expertise in the NHS, supporting clinical professionals to heal with whole person care. The Major Conditions Strategy and the upcoming NHS Long Term Workforce Plan work together to set out the standards patient should expect in the short term and over a five year timeframe.

This is about shifting our model towards preserving good health, and the early detection and treatment of diseases. We have a proud record of opening new treatment possibilities in the NHS. Diseases that were once a death sentence have become conditions that can be managed over the long term. By harnessing innovation and technology we are increasingly capable of detecting diseases at an early stage, in some cases before symptoms emerge. Intervening at this point will reduce demand downstream on health and care services.

Healthy, fulfilled, independent and longer lives for the people of England will require health and care services, local government, NHS bodies, and others to work ever more closely together. People living in England's most deprived places live, on average, 19 fewer years in good health than those in the least deprived places. The Strategy will set out the supporting and enabling interventions the centre can make to ensure that ICSs and the organisations within them maximise the opportunities to tackle clusters of disadvantage in their local areas where they exist, informed by the Hewitt Review. This will include addressing unwarranted variation in outcomes and the care people receive in the context of the recovery from the pandemic.

This work combines our key commitments in mental health, cancer, dementia and health disparities into a single, powerful strategy. It will align to the government's ambitious Life Sciences Missions. We will take forward a separate Suicide Prevention Strategy this year.

Alongside work on common diseases the Department and the NHS also continue work on rare diseases, under the 2021 UK Rare Diseases Framework. All four nations of the UK have now published their first action plan, and England's second Rare Diseases Action Plan is currently being finalised.

As we develop this Strategy I continue to be grateful for the thoughts and contributions from colleagues across the House, stakeholders, citizens and industry. I will set out opportunities to contribute further in due course. We also intend to publish an interim report on the Strategy in the summer.

Strategies alone will not change outcomes. Delivery will require concerted effort from government and the NHS working in tandem, alongside social care, patient representatives, industry and partners across the health and care system.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ **Proposals to Strengthen the Response to Serious and Organised Crime**

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman):**

**[[HCWS513](#)]**

The Government is today launching a consultation on two proposals to strengthen the law on serious and organised crime.

Law enforcement agencies frequently encounter articles which they suspect are being used in serious crime but which they are unable to act on under existing legislation. The Government is therefore consulting on a proposal to create new offences to criminalise the making, modification, supply, offer to supply and possession of articles for use in serious crime. Such articles include, for example, vehicle concealments or 'hides' used to transport illicit commodities, sophisticated and bespoke encrypted communication devices, templates for 3D-printing firearms components and pill presses used to make illicit drugs.

The Government is also consulting on proposals to improve and strengthen the existing powers on Serious Crime Prevention Orders under the Serious Crime Act 2007. This includes enabling a broader set of law enforcement bodies to apply for such orders, as well as strengthening their monitoring arrangements.

The consultation seeks views to inform the Government's policy development. The consultation will run for eight weeks and will close on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023. If taken forward, both proposals would require changes in legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

A copy of the consultation document and two related impact assessments will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and are available on GOV.UK.

The Government is also announcing a package of measures to strengthen how police forces in England and Wales tackle serious and organised crime and protect our communities from harm. The approach is being led jointly by the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs Council's Serious and Organised Crime Lead, with implementation supported by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the National Crime Agency, the College of Policing and the Local Government Association.

We are investing around £2million to support the roll-out of 'Clear, Hold, Build', which is an evidence-based, end-to-end local partnership approach that will reduce serious and organised crime in the highest harm hot-spot areas in England and Wales. This includes new serious and organised crime community coordinators in the Regional Organised Crime Units to support police forces to deliver the most effective and efficient partnership response and a performance management and information system to enhance police

forces' ability to understand, capture and respond to their local serious and organised crime threat.

Later this year the Government also plans to publish a new strategy to update the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy which was published in 2018.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Inspectorate reviews into serious further offences

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Damian Hinds):**

[\[HCWS517\]](#)

Mr Speaker, today the Chief Inspector of Probation has published his Independent Review into the Probation Service's management of Jordan McSweeney, who murdered Zara Aleena on 26 June 2022 as she walked home after an evening out with friends.

Today's report follows another Independent Review into the management of Damien Bendall, who in September 2021 murdered an entire family – killing pregnant Terri Harris, her two children, John Paul and Lacey, and Lacey's eleven-year-old friend, Connie Gent. Bendall also pleaded guilty to rape.

Immediately upon learning that first Bendall and then McSweeney had been charged with murder whilst subject to probation supervision, Ministers asked the Chief Inspector to undertake independent reviews.

Before I address the Chief Inspector's findings, I wish to express my deepest sympathy towards the families and friends of the victims. They have suffered the most awful loss and continue to endure unimaginable suffering.

The Chief Inspector found serious failings in each case. The Probation Service did not assess the level of risk posed by McSweeney and Bendall properly – and that fundamental flaw meant that neither offender was managed as closely and robustly as was necessary to protect the public. I wish to apologise unreservedly to the families for these wholly unacceptable failings. We are determined to make sure that they are not repeated.

I have accepted the ten recommendations made by the Chief Inspector in the case of McSweeney, having accepted his seventeen recommendations in the case of Bendall. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has already implemented a comprehensive action plan to address the failings in the case of Bendall, including new mandatory checks with the Police and Children's Services before a probation officer may recommend to the Court that an offender may be sentenced to an electronically-monitored curfew. And HMPPS has today published its action plan to address the failings in the case of McSweeney, including mandatory training to improve the quality of risk assessments and new processes to ensure the swift recall of offenders who have breached their licence conditions and are no longer safe to be managed in the community.

Over and above the specific actions taken to implement the Chief Inspector's findings in each of the two cases, I should set out the action this Government is taking to strengthen the Probation Service and ensure that it is equipped to manage offenders effectively and so protect the public.

We have unified the Probation Service in order to raise standards. We recognise that the Probation Service needs more staff, which is why we have invested heavily, injecting extra funding of more than £155 million a year to deliver tougher supervision of offenders, reduce caseloads and recruit thousands more staff to make the public safer.

This has helped us boost our trainee probation officers by 2,500 over the last two years and we plan to recruit a further 1,500 by March this year.

Beyond these changes, we are reforming the parole system, as we announced in March last year, including increasing Ministerial oversight of release decisions for the most serious criminals.

I recognise that the action we have taken and continue to take cannot bring back Terri Harris, John Paul Bennett, Lacey Bennett, Connie Gent and Zara Aleena. However, I can assure their loved ones, this House and the public that we are determined to do everything in our power to make sure that these kinds of tragedy can never happen again.

I commend this statement to the House.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Local Government Update

**Minister for Local Government and Building Safety (Lee Rowley):** [\[HCWS516\]](#)

On 2 September 2022 my Rt Hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Greg Clark, announced that after due consideration he was using his powers under the Local Government Act 1999 to intervene at Thurrock Council ("the Authority"), in recognition of grave concerns about the scale of the financial and commercial risks potentially facing the Authority. As set out in Directions made under section 15(5) and (6) of the Act, Essex County Council were appointed to the role of Commissioner and powers granted to them to oversee the financial functions of Thurrock Council. Alongside this work Essex County Council were also appointed as a Best Value Inspector in order to assess whether there is best value failure in other functions of the Authority.

The Commissioner began their work to support the Authority with immediate effect and submitted their first report to the Secretary of State on 5 December 2022. The Best Value Inspection is ongoing, and on 13 December the inspection team provided the Secretary of State with an update letter which contained key findings and recommendations from their work so far and requested an extension to complete their final report. On 14 December it was agreed that the inspection team will have more time to complete their report and will now provide their report to the Secretary of State by 17 February 2023.

The Secretary of State and I have reviewed both documents in the context of the intervention.

Taken together, the Commissioner report and update letter lay bare the profound weaknesses in this Authority's financial function, which has resulted in unmanageable budget gaps in this financial year and in future years. This situation is primarily a result of the failure of the Authority's commercial investment strategy. The Best Value Inspection update letter sets out that in order to achieve value for money going forward, the Authority will need to undertake a programme of radical transformation in relation to its service delivery. The documents also reveal significant weaknesses in The Authority's governance function and raise pressing concerns about lack of capacity at Thurrock Council. The Best Value Inspection update letter posits that the Authority's financial failings are a manifestation of deeper systemic weakness in the historic and recent running of the Council.

Having carefully considered these two documents in the context of the intervention, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the Authority is not meeting its best value duty, both in terms of its known financial issues, and in relation to its governance and staffing functions. He is therefore considering further exercising the powers of direction in the 1999 Act to expand the intervention. Whilst we have not yet received the final Best Value Inspection, the Secretary of State and I agree that the evidence and recommendations presented in the Commissioner report and update letter are serious enough to warrant taking steps to expand the intervention now, in order to prevent further best value failure.

The proposed changes centre on the need to expand the scope of Commissioner's existing powers, which are currently limited to oversight of the financial function. The proposed expansion to the intervention package would give Commissioners powers over the Authority's governance and staffing functions and would instruct the Authority to take further actions to support its recovery, and the work of Commissioners, in order to carry out the improvement and transformation work that is so urgently required.

In detail, the Secretary of State is minded to issue further Directions to permit the Commissioners to exercise powers over:

- All functions associated with the governance, scrutiny and transparency of strategic decision making by the Authority to ensure compliance with the Best Value Duty. This will include oversight of an audit of the Authority's governance.
- All functions associated with the Authority's operating model and redesign of council services to achieve value for money and financial sustainability.
- The appointment, suspension and dismissal of staff in the top three tiers of the organisation, including powers to determine the process for making these appointments and dismissals, and to design a new officer structure.
- The development, oversight and operation of an effective performance management framework for senior officers.

The Secretary of State is minded to make further Directions to the Authority, instructing Thurrock Council to undertake the following actions to the satisfaction of Commissioners:

- To prepare, produce and implement an enhanced improvement and recovery plan (building on the existing improvement plan).
- To take steps to ensure that the role of Accountable Body to the Thames Freeport is exercised to the satisfaction of the Commissioners. This should be reflected in the improvement and recovery plan.
- To undertake any action that Commissioners may reasonably require to avoid, so far as practicable, incidents of poor governance that would, in the Commissioners' reasonable opinion, give rise to the risk of the Authority failing to comply with its best value duty.

The Secretary of State has also reviewed the model of the intervention as a whole and is minded to additionally appoint a Commissioner to act as Managing Director at the Authority. This appointment is intended to strengthen the intervention model and to increase the Authority's capacity to deliver vital improvements.

It is important to us that all interested parties, especially Thurrock residents, can express their views on these proposals before a final decision is made. We are inviting representations on the Commissioner's first report, the Best Value Inspection update letter, and the Secretary of State's proposals by 7 February 2023. In line with procedures laid down in the 1999 Act, officials in the department have written to the Authority today to notify them of the Secretary of State's proposals, and the Authority have been invited to submit representations to the same timeframe.

Should the Secretary of State decide to expand the scope of the intervention as set out in this statement, he will make the necessary statutory Directions under the Act. Pending a formal decision after the representations period, the department would issue new Directions to supersede and replace those issued on 2 September 2022, and an updated Explanatory Memorandum.

The challenges facing Thurrock Council are unprecedented and will require extensive work over many years to resolve. The Authority are at the beginning of a long journey to improve its finance and governance functions, and the department stands ready to support Commissioners in any way necessary as part of this vital work.

We look forward to receiving the Best Value Inspection report in February, which will provide an opportunity for the Secretary of State to consider if any further amendments to the Directions are needed. We also look forward to receiving the Commissioner's next report in June 2023, per the Directions issued on 2 September 2022.

A copy of the Commissioner's first report, and of the update on the Best Value Inspection, will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.