



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 February 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:28 P.M., 01 February 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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Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Economic Crime: Prosecutions

Hilary Benn:

[\[903445\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to ensure effective prosecution of fraud and economic crime.

Michael Tomlinson:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) continue to play a significant role in bringing fraudsters to justice. In 2021/2022, the CPS prosecuted 7,200 defendants, where Fraud and Forgery was the principal offence and the conviction rate was 84.1%.

In 2022-23 the SFO have successfully prosecuted three fraud cases resulting in four criminals being sentenced to a total of 48 years in prison; and also secured the largest ever corporate confiscation order in the UK against Glencore Energy (UK) Ltd, at £93m.

Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[903447\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to ensure effective prosecution of fraud and economic crime.

Michael Tomlinson:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) continue to play a significant role in bringing fraudsters to justice. In 2021/2022, the CPS prosecuted 7,200 defendants, where Fraud and Forgery was the principal offence and the conviction rate was 84.1%.

In 2022-23 the SFO have successfully prosecuted three fraud cases resulting in four criminals being sentenced to a total of 48 years in prison; and also secured the largest ever corporate confiscation order in the UK against Glencore Energy (UK) Ltd, at £93m.

■ Gender Based Violence: Prosecutions

Gareth Thomas:

[\[903444\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to increase the proportion of cases relating to violence against women and girls that are prosecuted.

Victoria Prentis:

Tackling violence against women and girls remains one of the government's top priorities, and we are doing all we can to make our streets and homes safer.

We're prioritising prevention, supporting survivors, and strengthening the pursuit of aggressors.

■ Police: Bureaucracy**Rob Butler:**[\[903446\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she has taken to reduce administrative requirements on the police for the submission of documents to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Michael Tomlinson:

I am working closely with colleagues across Government to identify and if possible to reduce the administrative burden on the Police and CPS. Of course, there is an important balance to strike in protecting sensitive personal information, whilst not over-burdening police officers.

■ Sexual Offences: Administration of Justice**Alex Sobel:**[\[131341\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 108334, on Sexual Offences: Disclosure of Information, and with reference to the revision of the Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines published in May 2022, what steps she is taking to help ensure that survivors of sexual violence remain engaged with the criminal justice system.

Michael Tomlinson:

In 2022 following the publication of independent research, the CPS launched its long-term Victim Transformation Programme, setting out their commitment to improve the service they provide to all victims. This programme will deliver a new Universal Service to improve the experience of all victims, and an Enhanced Service to support victims with the greatest need, helping ensure they remain engaged with the criminal justice system. Under Operation Soteria, and as part of the programme, over half of all CPS areas are now testing new, innovative approaches to engaging with adult rape victims. I was glad to see this work on a visit to the CPS in Bristol last November where I heard first hand from the CPS and support service providers about the success of the work so far.

■ Sexual Offences: Disclosure of Information**Alex Sobel:**[\[131340\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2022 to Question 108334, on Sexual Offences: Disclosure of Information, and with reference to the revision of the Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines published in May 2022, whether her Department will monitor the potential impact on victims of the changes to those guidelines.

Michael Tomlinson:

The revised Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines published in May 2022 introduced increased privacy protections for victims in respect of their counselling notes being accessed during the course of a criminal investigation. Prior written reasons must be recorded before accessing counselling notes of victims, and access can only occur where it is necessary and proportionate. The Attorney General's

Disclosure Guidelines are kept under constant review to ensure they are operating as intended. My officials and I engage with victims' representatives, as did my predecessor and extensively so during the recent review. I will continue to monitor the effective operation of Disclosure to ensure my guidelines support victims by ensuring the recently introduced robust tests to accessing sensitive material are applied by investigators and prosecutors.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Finance

Grahame Morris:

[\[133974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to (a) provide emergency businesses funding grants, (b) provide utility support and (c) defer business rates for businesses in financial difficulties.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In the Autumn statement, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years. However, business rates are a matter for HM Treasury.

Following a HMT-led review, the new Energy Bill Discount Scheme, will run from April until March 2024, and will continue to provide a discount to eligible businesses on their electricity bills.

■ Energy: Investment

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[133696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the US's Inflation Reduction Act on clean energy investment in the UK.

Graham Stuart:

The Department considers the impact of international policies on UK investment to ensure the Government meets its net zero and economic growth ambitions.

■ Energy: Meters

Andy Slaughter:

[\[133943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of (a) legislation and (b) regulatory guidance on the forcible installation of prepayment meters by energy suppliers; and whether his Department is taking steps to help tackle the forcible installation of prepayment meters.

Graham Stuart:

Prepayment meters (PPMs) allow customers to pay for energy on a pay-as-you-go basis and serve an important function by helping the avoidance of debt and court action.

Ofgem has stringent rules on the force-fitting of PPMs and has recently published a letter where it outlines steps it will be taking on tackling inappropriate supplier PPM practises including making sure suppliers are complying with those rules, which can be found here: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/letter-jonathan-brearley-secretary-state-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy-tackling-inappropriate-energy-supplier-prepayment-meter-practices>.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has also asked energy suppliers to commit voluntarily to stop this practice.

■ Energy: Prices

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[131101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Growth Plan 2022, whether it remains the Government's policy to meet environmental and social costs, including green levies, included in domestic energy bills for two years from the public purse.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 30 January 2023]: The Government is determined to ensure its environmental and social policies work for all energy consumers and increase our energy security.

The Government is setting the new unit rates for the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) from April 2023. This will include consideration of whether green levies will be covered by the EPG.

Nadia Whittome:

[134046]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce a requirement for energy suppliers to include at least one tariff with a zero standing charge in their core tariffs for domestic customers.

Graham Stuart:

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.

The Ofgem price cap sets a limit on unit rates and standing charges, and the Energy Price Guarantee subsidises the unit rate.

Nadia Whittome:

[134048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of the report by Ofgem entitled Retail Market Review, published in 2013, on the cost of energy for low income energy consumers.

Graham Stuart:

The 2013 Retail Market Review proposed a set of rules to make it easier for consumers to make better choices over their supply. Those aims were superseded in 2014 when Ofgem referred the energy markets to the Consumers and Markets

Authority (CMA). As a result of this, Ofgem introduced a price cap for PPM customers. The Government introduced a market-wide price cap on all default tariffs to protect the least engaged consumers. The price cap provides protection to all consumers, including low-income households.

The Government is developing a new approach to consumer protection which will apply from April 2024.

■ **Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups**

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[132619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will set out a publication timetable for the Government's ethnicity pay gap reporting guidance for businesses.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government responded to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities' report and recommendations with the "Inclusive Britain" report which was published in March 2022. In this report, the Government set out that ethnicity pay reporting will be voluntary and committed to publish guidance on ethnicity pay reporting. This will be published in due course.

■ **Growth Hubs**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[134006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of (a) small business awareness of and (b) small business satisfaction with the network of Growth Hubs.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government values the work of the network of 38 Growth Hubs in England both in directly providing advice and support to businesses of all sizes and sectors, and in joining up wider business support activities locally. Local Enterprise Partnerships reported that in 2021/22 Growth Hubs engaged with 2.2 million individuals and businesses in total, and reported an average customer satisfaction rate of 89% amongst users of their services.

Seema Malhotra:

[\[134009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have (a) engaged with and (b) been supported by Growth Hubs in each year since the establishment of those hubs.

Kevin Hollinrake:

Local Enterprise Partnerships have reported the following metrics for Growth Hub engagement and support.

YEAR OF OPERATION	INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES ENGAGED	BUSINESSES SUPPORTED – LIGHT, MEDIUM AND HIGH-INTENSITY SUPPORT
2017/18	897,940	130,833
2018/19	959,863	109,683
2019/20	1,658,616	168,737
2020/21	2,448,158	288,578
2021/22	2,224,186	182,170

■ Growth Hubs: Finance

Seema Malhotra:

[134008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been provided to Growth Hubs in each year since their establishment.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In 2022/23 BEIS provided £11m of core funding for the 38 Growth Hubs.

Levels of historic Growth Hub core funding by BEIS from 2015/16 to 2021/22 are set out in the Industrial Development Act 1982: [Annual Report 2021 to 2022](#) (paragraphs 106 - 110).

Local Enterprise Partnerships and their Growth Hubs are encouraged to seek additional sources of funding, and have also delivered a number of separately funded programmes on behalf of Government.

■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions

Bill Esterson:

[133633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 127749, what progress he has made on decarbonising the steel industry.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government remains committed to a decarbonised and sustainable steel sector and is working closely with industry to support its decarbonisation options. For instance, industrial sectors (including steel) can bid into Government competitive funds worth more than £1.5 billion to support them going green, cutting emissions and becoming more energy efficient.

Furthermore, we are also exploring a range of policies that could potentially mitigate the future risk of carbon leakage. The Government has committed to consult on this, and will do so in the spring.

Bill Esterson:

[\[133634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 127749 on Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions, which steel companies his Department has met to discuss these commercial decisions.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 16th January 20223 to Question [120910](#) on Iron and Steel.

I can confirm that the Government is working closely with steel companies to support their decarbonisation options. Details of specific conversations are commercially confidential.

■ Iron and Steel: Energy Bills Discount Scheme

Bill Esterson:

[\[133636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 127746 on Iron and Steel: Energy, if he will estimate how much on average the new Energy Bills Discount Scheme will save steel producers.

Bill Esterson:

[\[133637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Pursuant to the answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 127746 on Iron and Steel: Energy, if he will make an estimate of the savings generated for the steel sector by Government support for energy bills since 2013.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Energy Bills Discount Scheme (EBDS) will follow on from the Energy Bills Relief Scheme. It will come into force from 1 April 2023 and will continue until 31 March 2024. This provides energy intensive industries, such as steel, with support above a threshold price of £185/MWh for electricity and £99/MWh for gas, up to a maximum of £89/MWh and £40/MWh respectively on the first 70% of energy usage. The remaining 30% of usage will receive a lower amount of support if prices rise above the threshold for the universal level of support. This is in addition to over £800m in energy relief Government has provided the steel sector since 2013.

■ Iron and Steel: Trade Unions

Bill Esterson:

[\[133635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2022 to Question 77391 on Iron and Steel, if he will publish a list of trade unions in the steel sector the Government has met with.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Ministers and officials from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy frequently engage with steel trade unions.

I have recently met with Community Trade Union and I host a regular steel sector call which is attended by Unite, GMB and Community Trade Union.

■ **Small Businesses: Telephone Services**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[134005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many calls made to the Business Support Helpline (England) were unanswered in each of the last 12 years.

Kevin Hollinrake:

A call to the Business Support Helpline (England) is recorded as unanswered when the customer leaves the queue after going through the Interactive Voice Response process but before an adviser is able to answer, without leaving a voicemail to, for example, request a call back. The total number of unanswered calls to the helpline is only available from 2020. In 2020, with exceptionally high demand particularly in March due to COVID-19, 10,729 calls were unanswered (12% of total calls received). In 2021, there were 459 unanswered calls (2% of total calls), and 711 in 2022 (3% of total calls).

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Disease Control**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[131388\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government Property Agency, which manages the Cabinet Office property portfolio, has not purchased any mobile UV virus irradiation units.

■ **Cabinet Office: Racial Discrimination**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[129730\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department provides (a) mandatory or (b) voluntary (i) lectures, (ii) reading lists and (iii) other training on Critical Race Theory for employees in his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer my Right Honorable friend to PQ12079. As my Right Honorable friend the Minister for Women and Equalities set out, the Government believes that "critical race theory" is a controversial political ideology. The Government believes that the application of critical race theory to public services threatens to undermine integration and community cohesion, by exaggerating differences within communities; instead, we should be seeking to build and strengthen a shared local and national identity across class, colour and creed.

Cabinet Office D&I learning does not include Critical Race Theory and speakers must go through due diligence and be signed off by the Head of Business Unit before any talks are scheduled. "Critical Race Theory" should not form part of our training and the Department is reviewing its intranet to ensure it is consistent with this approach.

■ Civil Service: Consultants

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[133969\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the value for money of the use of external consultants by the civil service.

Jeremy Quin:

Consultants can bring highly valuable expertise to support Government in delivering outstanding public projects. It is essential that Government continues to be able to access the right skills at the right time, but also that we do so in the right way and deliver the desired outcomes. Government is committed to working together to get the most value from our spend and to achieve the highest quality results.

The Consultancy Playbook, published in May 2021 alongside the Sourcing Playbook, provides additional guidance when buying consultancy services. This supports Government's agenda to commission and engage with consultants more effectively, achieving better outcomes, better value for money, and improved civil service capability through the transferral of knowledge and skills.

Consultancy spend by department is published on GOV.UK

■ Cybersecurity

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[133966\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UK's cyber resilience.

Oliver Dowden:

As the Government outlined in the National Cyber Strategy 2022, significant progress has been made in the last decade in improving the UK's cyber resilience but further work remains.

The Strategy sets out the Government's ambitions to raise levels of resilience across all sectors by 2025, with a particular focus on our Critical National Infrastructure and making government an exemplar. We are also strengthening protections to online services and connected consumer devices to reduce the cyber security burden on UK citizens.

The Government continually assesses cyber risk and implementation of the National Cyber Strategy and we will publish annual reports on our progress.

■ Death: Statistics

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[133707\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of data collection methods for mortality statistics broken down by religious group.

Jeremy Quin:

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 26 January is attached.

Attachments:

1. [UKSA Response to PQ133707](#) [PQ133707 (1).pdf]

■ Ministers: Members' Interests

Dan Carden:

[\[131291\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to ensure that the List of ministers' interests is updated more regularly.

Oliver Dowden:

The published terms of reference for the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests require that the Independent Adviser prepare and publish a statement covering relevant interests of Ministers at least twice a year. Upon his appointment on 22 December 2022, the new Independent Adviser, Sir Laurie Magnus, committed to providing his Annual Report to the Prime Minister in May 2023 and to preparing the first List of Ministers' Interests for publication well before his Annual Report.

■ Veterans: Cost of Living

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[133970\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to support veterans and their families with the cost of living crisis.

Johnny Mercer:

Through its Veterans' Welfare Service, Veterans UK provides one-to-one welfare support and advice to veterans or anyone supporting a veteran, their families and dependants. We are also working with the charitable sector to continue to signpost dedicated support available to veterans.

We are also providing significant support to help people through these tough times by holding down energy bills and delivering up to £1,350 in direct cash payments to millions of vulnerable households.

The Government is committed to supporting all households with the current cost of living, through the Help for Households initiative. This includes serving personnel and veterans. Veterans are able to access all the support that the rest of the UK is eligible

for, including the Energy Price Guarantee, Cost of Living Payment and the Disability Cost of Living Payment.

Tackling inflation is this government's number one priority. We have a plan that will help to more than halve inflation this year and lay the foundations for long-term growth to improve living standards for everyone, including veterans.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Layla Moran:

[\[132577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) applications (a) are awaiting decision as of 25 January 2023; how many and what proportion of those applications were submitted more than a year ago; and what is the average length of time taken to process an ARAP application.

James Heappey:

As of 25 January 2023, we have 70,382 ARAP applications awaiting decisions, of which 66,568 are more than a year old. However, A finite number of people are eligible for ARAP: HMG knows who has worked with the British Armed Forces or partners, and based on our records we estimate there are fewer than 320 eligible Afghans are left to find.

As such, the Ministry of Defence is not simply processing applications at pace, but is focussing resource on finding in our casework system applications from the approx. 320 individuals we know are eligible for relocation and need our support.

Due to variables such as case complexity, conducting checks with other Government Departments, or response times from applicants to follow-up queries, it is not possible to provide processing timeframes as they vary considerably.

■ Air Force: Training

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[133578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many RAF fast jet pilots have successfully graduated from the MFTS programme in each of the last five years.

James Heappey:

The number of Royal Air Force pilots that have successfully progressed to Typhoon and Lightning Operational Conversion Units from the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS), in each of the last five years is the table below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF FAST JET PILOTS THAT HAVE GRADUATED FROM THE UKMFTS
2018-19	10
2019-20	20
2020-21	20
2021-22	10
2022-23	20

In accordance with the Data Protection Act and our obligations in relation to the protection of confidentiality when handling personal data, data have been rounded to the nearest 10, where "-" denotes zero and "~" denotes a number less than or equal to 5. Due to the rounding methods used, totals may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

The RAF has sufficient qualified aircrew to meet its frontline operational commitments.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[132322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has conducted a study on the potential impact of the standard of accommodation provided for members of the armed forces on levels of (a) recruitment and (b) retention in the armed forces.

Alex Chalk:

The motivations of individuals joining the Armed Forces are unique to each person and will be influenced by a number of considerations, of which accommodation may be one within our wider remuneration package which includes a non-contributory pension, subsidised accommodation, incremental pay, and a range of allowances on top of basic salary. Whilst the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has not conducted a specific survey or study into accommodation as part of the recruitment offer; we recognise its importance and that is why we have developed and are implementing measures, such as the Future Accommodation Model, to ensure we continue to attract and retain the best talent to Defence.

The impact of accommodation on retention in the Armed Forces is measured by the MOD in the annual Armed Forces Continuous Attitudes Survey (AFCAS). As part of the survey, Personnel are asked about their future plans and what factors are influencing intentions to leave. In the results of the most recent survey published in May 2022, 26% of personnel cited accommodation provision as a factor influencing their intention to leave compared to 37% citing it as factor influencing them to stay. A

full index of AFCAS survey results can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

The Standard of Service of Accommodation is one of the reasons that can be cited when a Service person chooses to leave through voluntary outflow. In 2021-22 it was cited by 5.8% of those who chose to cite a reason for leaving, placing it 17 out of the 22 reasons cited.

■ Artillery: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois:

[133551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Statement of 16 January 2023 on Ukraine: Update, Official Report column 36, what the revised Initial operating capability date is for the (a) Mobile Fires Platform and (b) interim artillery capability.

Alex Chalk:

In line with the Defence Secretary's announcement to the House on 16 January, delivery of the Mobile Fires Platform will be accelerated to bring this capability into service earlier this decade.

Simultaneously we are exploring options to replenish the artillery capability in the short-term following granting in kind of AS90 to Ukraine. Revised Initial Operating Capability dates for the interim and enduring capability are yet to be confirmed.

■ Challenger Tanks

Mr Mark Francois:

[133553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Statement of 16 January 2023 on Ukraine Update. Official Report column 36, how many Challenger 2 tanks he plans to upgrade to Challenger 3.

Alex Chalk:

The number of Challenger 3 remains under review to ensure the Army's Main Battle Tank fleet is sufficient to meet Defence's needs, in line with the Defence Secretary's statement on 16 January 2023.

■ Defence: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois:

[133555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's definition is of an Urgent Operational Requirement.

Alex Chalk:

Urgent Operational Requirements, are now referred to as 'Urgent Capability Requirements'. The Urgent Capability Requirement procurement process responds rapidly to unforeseen threats, mission critical operational risk, or to essential safety requirement that pose an intolerable risk to life. The urgency and unique nature of these requirements prevents the normal acquisition process from being followed, and

accepts that risk may be taken against performance, cost, or coherence with wider Defence equipment and activity programmes.

■ **HMS Prince of Wales: Repairs and Maintenance**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[133580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the propulsion defect affecting HMS Prince of Wales is; and when he expects it to be fixed.

Alex Chalk:

In September 2022, HMS PRINCE OF WALES suffered a starboard shaft coupling failure. During the investigation into the cause of the defect, an issue was also identified with HMS PRINCE OF WALES port shaft, and to prevent a similar defect occurring, rectification of this issue is expected will be completed before she commences her operational programme, as planned, in Autumn 2023.

The defects with HMS PRINCE OF WALES shafts are not believed to be a Class issue and HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH continues to undertake Strike Carrier duties until 2024 when HMS PRINCE OF WALES will take over as Very High Readiness Strike Carrier.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Disease Control**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[131390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Alex Chalk:

A search of centrally held information has found no record of any direct purchases of mobile UV virus irradiation units by the Ministry of Defence.

■ **Typhoon Aircraft**

Richard Foord:

[\[132627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average waiting time is for a pilot between selection for and beginning Typhoon flight training; and what the longest time is that a pilot has waited to begin that training.

James Heappey:

A pilot is selected to fly Typhoon on completion of their Advanced Fast Jet Training. The average waiting time between selection to fly Typhoon and beginning training on the Typhoon Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) was 28 weeks, with the longest waiting time being 49 weeks. The wait between selection and starting the Typhoon OCU has begun to reduce, with the most recent wait time being approximately eight weeks.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Prices****Claire Hanna:****[133791]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with Ofcom on the ability of customers to cancel fixed term broadband contracts without penalty when suppliers increase prices during the contract period.

Julia Lopez:

My Department engages regularly with Ofcom on a range of telecoms consumer matters. Ofcom has a statutory duty to monitor ongoing household affordability in the sector, and its General Conditions require telecoms companies to provide clear information about their contracts.

In June 2022, at a roundtable attended by Ofcom, leaders from broadband and mobile operators agreed a set of industry [commitments](#) to support people through the global rise in the cost of living. These include manageable payment plans and allowing households, who may be mid-contract but struggling with their bills, to switch to cheaper packages without penalty.

In November, DCMS convened a further ministerial roundtable with the industry, Ofcom, and consumer charities, to discuss further steps to support customers who may be struggling with their monthly bills.

Claire Hanna:**[133792]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what data her Department holds on the number of broadband customers in (a) Northern Ireland, (b) England, (c) Scotland and (d) Wales who were on social tariffs for the period in which the latest figures are available and how this compares with other regions in the UK.

Julia Lopez:

My Department does not hold data relating to the number of broadband customers on social tariffs broken down across the nations of the UK. Ofcom has a statutory duty to monitor and report on customer affordability in the telecommunications sector across the UK. Social tariffs are available across 99% of the UK from a range of broadband, mobile and landline providers. Ofcom's latest [Affordability Report](#) showed that 136,000 households across the UK were taking up a social tariff. We encourage anyone who is struggling to pay to contact their provider to see what support is available.

EDUCATION**■ British Students Abroad****Alex Sobel:****[131261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment her Department has made of the accessibility of study abroad for those who would have been eligible for the Erasmus scheme.

Robert Halfon:

Under the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated with the EU, the UK will continue to participate fully in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Programme until project completion. Certain projects may continue up to 2024.

The UK government is supporting access to study abroad through the Turing Scheme. The scheme provides grant funding for education providers and organisations to offer their students, learners and pupils undertake study or work placement across the globe. Participants can study or work anywhere in the world, subject to Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office travel advice.

For the 2022/23 academic year, the Turing Scheme is providing funding for over 38,000 pupils, learners, and students across the UK to study and work in over 160 destinations across the globe. More than half of these opportunities are for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the 2021/22 academic year, the Scheme provided funding for over 41,000 participants, with 48% of this for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

For comparison, Erasmus+ participant numbers for higher education (HE) were 15,784 in the 2015/16 academic year, 16,559 in 2016/17, 17,048 in 2017/18 and 16,596 in 2019/20. The Turing Scheme is providing funding for 23,472 HE placements in the 2022/23 academic year and provided funding for over 28,000 HE placements in 2021/22. Direct comparison across all sectors is not possible, given the data published by the European Commission for Erasmus+ doesn't specify numbers of student participants for other education sectors. Whilst Erasmus+ included some staff mobility, the Turing Scheme is focused on student placements.

In 2019/20, UK institutions received around €134 million of funding from the Erasmus+ programme. €41,257,969 of this was for in further education (FE) and vocational education and training (VET) and €87,621,663 in HE. In 2021/22 the Turing Scheme allocated £24,819,113.40 of funding in FE and VET, £67,001,941.25 in HE, and £6,710,407.60 in schools for student mobilities and accompanying staff. The figures for 2022/23 are £36,376,335.62, £62,115,424.80, and £7,616,999.60 respectively.

■ Children: Education

Sarah Champion:

[132368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that all local authorities make arrangements to identify children missing education, including children of new migrant families.

Nick Gibb:

Local Authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to identify children missing education in their area. This duty applies to all compulsory school age children, for example those who have recently moved to the local area, including children of new migrant families, who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

The Department has issued statutory guidance for Local Authorities, setting out key principles to enable them to implement this duty, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf. These principles include implementing robust policies and procedures, and putting in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with other agencies, including those who interact with migrant families.

This duty should be viewed alongside a Local Authority's wider safeguarding duties, including their duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, to cooperate with other agencies in improving children's well-being, including protection from harm and neglect. The Department's Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance outlines what Local Authorities must and should do to keep children safe.

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting Local Authority children's services to determine the effectiveness of services and arrangements to help and protect all children, including children missing education new to the area, and the experiences and progress of children in care. This includes unaccompanied child migrants and asylum seekers, but does not apply to migrant or asylum seeking children accompanied by a parent or adult with legal responsibility.

■ CITB: Learning Disability

Martyn Day:

[131312]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had discussions with industry representatives about the assistance available to ensure people with learning disabilities are adequately supported to sit the Construction Industry Training Board's Health, safety, and environment test.

Robert Halfon:

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

Under the Equalities Act 2010, employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities, as defined by the Act. The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) must have due regard to this.

As the management of the health, safety and environment test, including access arrangements for candidates, is an operational matter for the CITB, I have asked the CITB's Chief Executive, Tim Balcon, to write to the hon. Member with details of the assistance available to ensure people with learning disabilities are adequately supported to sit the test. A copy of his reply will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

■ Department for Education: Disease Control

Daisy Cooper:

[\[131400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Nick Gibb:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is currently funding a programme of work to assess the ability of air cleaning devices to mitigate aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other air borne pathogens. This includes research to assess the ability of UVC devices to mitigate aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other airborne pathogens.

As part of commissioning the Rapid Covid-19 Disinfection Study (RCADS), NHS Test & Trace, which is now part of UKHSA, purchased upper room ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (ur-UVGI) and active enclosed UVC devices via an accelerated open procedure as per government policy.

In addition, funding to purchase high efficiency particulate air filters with integral UVC was provided to Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and Addenbrookes Hospital as part of commissioning the Addenbrookes Air Disinfection Study.

■ King Edward VII School: Inspections

Olivia Blake:

[\[133798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to concerns from parents and teachers on the most recent Ofsted report on King Edward VII School in Sheffield, whether she has made an assessment of the circumstances of the production and delivery of that report; if her Department will investigate that case and consider the school's request for an appeal; and if she will meet with the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam to discuss that matter.

Nick Gibb:

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

■ Pupil Exclusions

Carla Lockhart:

[132538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of (a) primary and (b) post-primary school pupil in England have been expelled in each of the last three years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes figures from the school census on permanent exclusions and suspensions from state-funded schools in England. The latest full academic year figures are for the 2020/21 academic year and are available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england/2020-21>.

A table from this publication showing rates of permanent exclusions in primary, secondary, and special schools in England in the 2018/19 to 2020/21 academic years is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/5141203d-8691-4288-2cd5-08dafaf734a0>.

■ Pupil Exclusions: Cleethorpes

Martin Vickers:

[131203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many exclusions of (a) SEN and (b) other pupils there were in schools in the Cleethorpes constituency in each of the last three years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes figures from the school census on permanent exclusions and suspensions from state funded schools in England. The latest full academic year figures are for the academic year 2020/21 and can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england/2020-21>.

The attached table provides the number of permanent exclusions and suspensions for pupils with and without special educational needs (SEN) at state funded schools in Cleethorpes constituency between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Attachments:

1. [131203 table](#) [131203 Data spreadsheet.xlsx]

■ Pupils: Transgender People

Miriam Cates:

[132607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she (a) has issued or (b) plans to issue guidance to schools on the teaching of gender ideology.

Miriam Cates:

[132608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance she (a) has issued or (b) plans to issue to schools on policies on children who identify as transgender or present with gender dysphoria.

Miriam Cates:

[\[132609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data her Department holds on the number of pupils who identify as transgender or present with gender dysphoria in (a) primary schools and (b) secondary schools.

Miriam Cates:

[\[132610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance her Department has issued to schools on (a) the collection of pupil data on preferred pronouns and (b) the use of pronouns in schools that do not correspond to those of the pupil's legally registered sex.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises that this is a complex and sensitive subject for schools to navigate, which is why it is developing guidance to support schools in relation to transgender pupils. The guidance will cover a set of relevant topics. It is important that the Department considers a wide range of views to ensure the guidance is right. As such, the Department has committed to holding a full public consultation on the draft guidance, prior to publication.

With respect to data collection, schools are not legally required to collect data on pupils' preferred pronouns or on the number of pupils who identify as transgender or present with gender dysphoria. Schools are legally required to keep a school register containing information relating to all pupils, which should include their sex. They are required to provide details of pupil gender to Local Authorities, or to my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, where requested.

■ Relationships and Sex Education

Miriam Cates:

[\[132611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to ensure that all Relationships and Sex Education learning materials used in schools are shared with parents.

Nick Gibb:

All schools are required to share information about the curriculum with parents and the Department also expects schools to consult with parents when developing or reviewing their relationships and sex education (RSE) policy. The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance is clear that when consulting parents, schools should provide examples of the resources that they plan to use.

The Department does not expect schools to share all of the learning materials they use with parents routinely, but where parents request to see specific materials used to teach their children, schools are expected to respond positively.

The Department believes the majority of schools use high quality, appropriate resources and engage with parents openly and transparently on what they plan to use. The Department has been made aware of situations where this is not the case and as such, we will write to all schools to clarify how materials can be shared which, will enable them to engage with parents constructively going forward.

■ School Rebuilding Programme

Anna Firth:

[134055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data her Department holds on the amount of funds allocated to Blenheim Primary School in Leigh-on-Sea from the School Rebuilding Programme; when her Department expects to inform the School of the extent and details of their rebuild; and what estimate her Department has made of when that rebuilding work will commence.

Nick Gibb:

The 239 schools that were announced in December 2022 as part of the School Rebuilding Programme, including Blenheim Primary School, will enter delivery at a rate of approximately 50 per year, over a five year period from April 2023.

The Department is currently undertaking due diligence on these schools before scheduling them, with schools prioritised according to the condition need of their buildings, their readiness to proceed and efficiency of delivery. The Department has written to all Responsible Bodies with an update on timescales and upcoming information sessions.

The funding for each project will depend on the works being undertaken. The scope of each project will be confirmed following a detailed feasibility study and condition surveys of buildings to confirm the work required. Projects are procured directly by the Department and contract values are published on Contracts Finder, which can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>. These are usually published within 30 days of the contract being signed.

■ Schools: Energy

Rachael Maskell:

[132455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what methodology her Department uses for analysing the energy costs of schools; and whether she is taking steps to help reduce those costs.

Nick Gibb:

The Department understands that schools are facing challenges with rising prices, particularly in relation to energy costs. The Department consults regularly with schools, Local Authorities, and other stakeholders to understand the impact of this on schools' budgets.

The increases to school funding of £2.0 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25, announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement, will help schools to manage these higher costs. This is on top of significant funding uplifts that were announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021. Overall, core schools funding, including funding for both mainstream schools and high needs, is £4 billion higher this year than last year. It will rise by another £3.5 billion, on top of that, next year. Taken together, that means an increase of over 15% in just two years.

Schools have been benefitting from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which will run until the end of March 2023. This scheme has reduced how much schools need to spend on their energy and given schools greater certainty over their budgets over the winter months. The details of the scheme can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bill-relief-scheme-help-for-businesses-and-other-non-domestic-customers>.

The government has also announced a new energy scheme, the Energy Bill Discount Scheme, which will run from April 2023 to March 2024. All schools are eligible for this scheme, which will provide discounts to those schools paying the highest energy prices. The details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bills-discount-scheme>.

To help schools to improve their energy efficiency, the Department is allocating £500 million of additional capital funding this financial year for schools, sixth form colleges and further education (FE) colleges, to help improve energy efficiency. This comprises £447 million for schools and sixth form colleges and £53 million for FE colleges to spend on capital improvements to buildings and facilities, prioritising works to improve energy efficiency.

The Department has published guidance for schools and colleges on sensible steps for reducing energy use and small-scale works to improve energy efficiency, which can be implemented relatively quickly to make a difference through the colder months and beyond.

■ Schools: Inspections

Tom Randall:

[131447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of the closure of schools during the covid-19 outbreak on the regularity of Ofsted inspections.

Nick Gibb:

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

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

■ Teachers: Workplace Pensions

Stephen Morgan:

[131350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of allowing retired teaching staff to accrue further pension under the Teachers' Pension Scheme when returning to service.

Stephen Morgan:

[131351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department made of the potential merits of reviewing the Teachers' Pension Scheme abatement rules, specifically those rules relating to teacher's pension and re-employment earnings exceeding the salary of reference.

Nick Gibb:

Retired teachers are allowed to return to the profession and accrue further pension.

The Department reviewed the abatement provisions as part of scheme reforms and removed abatement for any service accrued under the career average scheme.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Tony Lloyd:

[132300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2023 to Question 120892 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, what the guaranteed minimum number of hours for seasonal migrant workers offered by each seasonal worker visa scheme operator is.

Tony Lloyd:

[132301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2023 to Question 120892 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, what the average working hours for seasonal migrant workers are at each seasonal worker visa scheme operator.

Mark Spencer:

The guaranteed minimum number of hours offered by each operator and the average working hours for seasonal migrant workers by each operator is commercially sensitive data. There are no zero-hour contracts.

The sponsor licence regime - [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors: sponsor a seasonal worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-sponsor-a-seasonal-worker) - places a broad range of responsibilities on Scheme Operators to ensure that the rights of migrant workers are protected, including being responsible for ensuring workers have sufficient work, as part of their sponsorship duties.

The Government keeps these protections under close ongoing review.

Tony Lloyd:

[132302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what welfare measures seasonal worker visa scheme operators have in place for workers who are left without work.

Tony Lloyd:

[132304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2023 to Question 120891 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, what redress is available to workers on the seasonal worker visa scheme if they are not paid; how those workers can access that payment; and how much was issued in redress for that purpose in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Mark Spencer:

The sponsor guidance - [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors: sponson a seasonal worker - GOV.UK](#) - provides information for approved scheme operators in the horticultural sector on how to sponsor an overseas worker on the seasonal worker immigration route. Breaching the sponsor guidance can result in the operator losing their license.

The sponsor guidance includes an overall requirement to maintain a high standard of welfare for seasonal workers. There is the expectation that Scheme Operators maximise the work opportunities for participating seasonal workers and we will continue to monitor this situation closely. Operators can transfer workers between farms to avoid seasonal workers being left without work.

The guidance also sets out the minimum pay requirements for this route, which includes paying a minimum hourly rate, alongside satisfying relevant National Minimum Wage regulations, including those on fair rates for piece work, and holiday pay. We do not collect data on redress of pay.

The guidance also requires operators to have appropriate procedures in place for workers to report any concerns they may have.

■ Chemicals

Dr Matthew Offord:

[131209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her Department's timeline is for publishing a UK Chemicals Strategy.

Rebecca Pow:

We are aiming to publish the Chemicals Strategy in 2023.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

Emily Thornberry:

[118881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to her Department's publication of spending over £500 with a Government procurement card, at which Hilton hotel did the Environment Agency conduct conflict resolution training for members of the Voluntary Bailiff Service in December 2021; and for what reason was that training required.

Rebecca Pow:

This payment was for venue hire, accommodation and subsistence for the training of nine delegates from the Voluntary Bailiff Service (Phase 2), a pilot partnership project between the Angling Trust and Environment Agency. This health and safety training was a two-day (27 and 28 Nov 2021) conflict resolution course, which the Environment Agency requires volunteers to attend and pass as part of its commitment to helping staff stay safe whilst rod licence and byelaw compliance checking. Health and safety training is key for this role, but this is not something the Environment Agency can deliver in-house.

The Environment Agency has a contract with Calders to procure venues for meetings and training. The training took place at Double Tree by Hilton, Dartford Bridge, Masthead Close, Crossways Business Park, Dartford, Kent, DA2 6QF. Out of three suitable venues identified by Calders in the locality specified, this venue came in as the second most competitive option. The most competitive location had become unavailable after the original booking due to an electrical fault.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Taxis**Ruth Jones:**[\[124079\]](#)

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

Mark Spencer:

Financial Year Amount (£)

2017/18 92,093

2018/19 141,412

2019/20 140,671

2020/21 10,971

2021/22 27,011

■ Dogs: Import Controls**Alex Sobel:**[\[131441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department plans to ban the import of dogs.

Rebecca Pow:

We do not have plans to ban the import of dogs.

■ Flood Control: Expenditure**Tim Farron:**[\[123905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of her Department's budget was spent on new equipment for dealing with flooding in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) leads on flood and coastal risk management, and is allocated funding from the Government to cover this work. This includes flood and coastal risk management schemes, natural flood management, maintenance of our flood and coastal assets, improving our flood incident response, systems, equipment, and staff training.

Between 2015-2021 the EA was allocated £2.6 billion to invest in flood and coastal risk management. Between 2021-2027 the EA has been allocated £5.2 billion to invest in flood and coastal risk management. As part of this allocation the EA invested in the following:

- 40km of temporary flood barriers
- 250 pumps, including 20 ultra-high-volume pumps, to divert water and assist with flood recovery
- Eight incident command vehicles (during the period 2014-2021).
- Vehicles/agricultural and construction assets.

In addition, for 2021/22 there are four broad categories of activities that are undertaken in managing defence assets, as set out in the [Flood and coastal erosion risk management: an investment plan for 2021 to 2027 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

A detailed breakdown of funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England for the year 2020/21, and the allocation for 2021/22 can be found here [Funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Details of the EA's Asset Information and Maintenance Programme can be found here: [Asset Information and Maintenance Programme \(data.gov.uk\)](#).

■ Food Banks**Geraint Davies:****[131113]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on creating financial incentives for making food available to a food banks, with a similar incentive structure to those for sending food waste to anaerobic digestors.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters, and Cabinet discussions are considered confidential.

There are tax incentives for companies to redistribute food. If a company donates its trading stock to a charity then the company in question would not have to include anything in its sales income for the value of the gift. This means, the company receives tax relief on the cost of the stock given away. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-limited-company-gives-to-charity/equipment-and-trading-stock>.

There is also encouragement to redistribute or use for animal feed, as the anaerobic digestion plant gate fees act as a disincentive for the food and drink sector to dispose of unwanted food. A gate fee is typically charged for the disposal of unwanted food at anaerobic digestion plants, whereas this is not required for food redistribution. The latest Waste and Resources Action Programme gate fee survey from 2021 indicates that the median gate fee to process food waste by anaerobic digestion in the UK is £30-33 per tonne.

The Green Gas Support Scheme provides tariff support for biomethane produced from anaerobic digestion. The scheme has an eligibility requirement for at least 50% of all biomethane (by energy content) to be produced using waste or residue feedstocks, including food waste.

■ Packaging: Recycling

Seema Malhotra:

[\[132359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential economic benefits for households of including bottles and cans in the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme rather than a separate Deposit Return Scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

This assessment has not been undertaken. The Government is committed to introducing a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers from 2025 and a final impact assessment for the DRS will be published later this year, which will address its full economic benefits. Until a DRS is operational in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, internal analysis determined producers of in-scope drinks containers will be subject to recycling obligations (evidenced by PRNs only) under the packaging extended producer responsibility scheme.

■ Pesticides: EU Law

Geraint Davies:

[\[131111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the Retained EU Law Bill will on UK pesticide standards; and whether all existing bans on active substances will be maintained as part of that legislation.

Mark Spencer:

Defra is in the process of analysing and assessing its retained EU law (REUL) stock to determine what should be preserved as part of domestic law, and what should be repealed or amended. This work will determine how we use the powers in the Bill, including in relation to the regulation of plant protection products.

In reviewing REUL, Defra's aim is to ensure that environmental law is fit for purpose and able to drive improved environmental outcomes, while also ensuring regulators can deliver efficiently. This will ensure the UK regulatory framework is appropriate and tailored to the UK. The Government has clear environmental and climate goals,

set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, and any changes to environmental regulation will need to support those goals.

■ **Sewage: Waste Disposal**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[131178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to abolish temporary deemed consent permits which allow raw and untreated sewage to be discharged into waterways by water companies.

Rebecca Pow:

Less than 0.5% of water discharge permits are Temporary Deemed Consents. These are low risk discharges and are already scheduled for update as part of ongoing permitting programmes.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Asia-Pacific Region: Visits Abroad**

Catherine West:

[\[117750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Ministerial-level visits have taken place to Asia-Pacific nations in each year since 2010.

Catherine West:

[\[117751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many visits to the Asia Pacific region have been undertaken by senior Civil Service officials in each year since 2010.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

UK Government Ministers and Senior Officials maintain regular contact with interlocutors in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Integrated Review, published in March 2021, affirmed the UK's increased focus and long-term commitment to the Indo-Pacific. The UK's increased focus on the region is a whole of Government effort and the UK continues to increase engagement across the region, including to strengthen including to strengthen defence, security and trade partnerships, and to and uphold and promote the international rules based system.

The FCDO fulfils the requirement, established since 2010, for government departments to publish transparency data in line with the Ministerial Code. The full set of FCDO published transparency returns, which include ministerial overseas travel and senior officials' travel costs (since the department's formation in September 2020), can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fcdo-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings#2020> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-senior-officials-business-expenses-and-hospitality-april-to-june-2022>.

Historic transparency data detailing ministerial overseas travel and senior officials' travel costs for the Department for International Development can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-department-for-international-development> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dfid-senior-executives-business-expenses-gifts-travel-and-meetings>.

Similarly, ministerial overseas travel and senior officials' travel costs for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minister-data#2011> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pus-data>

■ **Cameroon: Corruption and Press Freedom**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[131145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the death of Martinez Zogo in Cameroon in January 2023 on (a) press freedom and (b) anti-corruption efforts in that country.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

On 23 January, the British High Commission in Yaounde issued a statement condemning the torture and killing of journalists and welcoming the Government of Cameroon's commitment to carry out a thorough investigation. The UK regularly raises human rights with the Government of Cameroon, and in January officials from the British High Commission in Yaounde met with the Cameroonian National Anti-Corruption Commission to discuss anti-corruption efforts. We will continue to urge the authorities to investigate fully the circumstances surrounding Mr Zogo's death and ensure those responsible are brought to justice.

■ **China: Religious Freedom**

Andrew Lewer:

[131439]

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 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's hearing on 14 December 2022 entitled China's religious freedom violations.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's hearing on 14 December further highlights China's ongoing human rights violations.

The environment for freedom of religion or belief across China is very restrictive, including the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief.

We work within the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance and other international organisations and networks to promote and protect FoRB for all where it is threatened.

More broadly, we regularly raise the human rights situation in China directly with the Chinese authorities at the highest levels. Most recently, the Foreign Secretary did so in a meeting with his Chinese counterpart on 20 September.

■ China: Tibet

Navendu Mishra:

[R] [\[131356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of Chinese policy on minorities on Tibetan (a) language and (b) culture.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We closely monitor the human rights situation in Tibet, including reports of the erosion of Tibetan language and culture. We continue to urge China to respect all fundamental rights across the People's Republic of China, including in Tibet, in line with both its own constitution and the international frameworks to which it is a party. In June 2022, a concerted UK lobbying effort helped to secure the support of a record 47 countries for a statement at the Human Rights Council that urged China to comply with its obligations with regard to the protection of human rights, including in Tibet. We also continue to press the Chinese authorities to respect religious and cultural freedoms and allow unrestricted access to Tibet for international journalists, NGOs and diplomats.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Religious Freedom

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[131144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the risk of atrocities against religious communities in Ituri province of the Democratic Republic of Congo; and what steps he is taking to support efforts by (a) the Government of Democratic Republic of Congo, (b) MONUSCO, and (c) regional partner states of Democratic Republic of Congo to increase security in Ituri province and protect communities at risk of atrocity violence.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK remains committed to supporting efforts to build stability and reduce violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The protection of civilians in east DRC is of the utmost importance to the UK. The recent violence by armed groups has resulted in human rights abuses and a large spike in humanitarian need. This jeopardises efforts to pursue peace and prosperity and exacerbates the already severe humanitarian situation. In 2022, a Jo Cox Memorial Grant was used to fund research into current atrocity prevention efforts in eastern DRC. This showed how identity-based violence and mass atrocities might be better integrated into local early warning and early response mechanisms. The UK remains committed to working with the DRC Government, the UN Peacekeeping Mission MONUSCO and regional partners to address the drivers of conflict, demobilise armed groups and support dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms between local communities. The UK continues to be a major funder of MONUSCO and to liaise extensively on their

deployments to improve security and ensure the protection of civilians and the safety and security of UN personnel and humanitarian workers.

■ **Democratic Republic of the Congo: War Crimes**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[131208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has received reports of war crimes being committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

We note the reported findings of the United Nations Group of Experts investigation into the situation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) published on 16 December 2022. The report details abuses committed by multiple armed groups, including increased killings of civilians and attacks on UN peacekeepers. The UK remains committed to working with the DRC Government, the UN Peacekeeping Mission MONUSCO and regional partners to address the drivers of conflict, demobilise armed groups and support dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms between local communities.

■ **Developing Countries: Climate Change**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[131205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on the establishment of a funding facility to address climate-induced Loss and Damage as agreed at COP27.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

At COP27, the UK and all parties agreed to establish new funding arrangements to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and also decided to establish a fund for responding to loss and damage. It was agreed to establish a Transitional Committee under the UNFCCC to operationalise the new arrangements and fund, including to develop recommendations for COP28.

Since the decision, the UK has actively engaged with the establishment of the Transitional Committee, including by bidding for membership of the Committee. We are committed to making a positive contribution to the aims and objectives of the Committee.

■ **Developing Countries: Famine**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[131207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding his Department provided to the G7 Famine Compact in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact was agreed during the UK's G7 Presidency. Our share of the \$7 billion in humanitarian assistance to the countries one step from famine was all disbursed in the financial year 2021/2022. We continue to deliver on our policy commitments in the Compact. For example, in October we partnered with G7 President Germany and the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership to co-host a donor event on Financing for Early and Anticipatory Action.

■ Developing Countries: Food Supply**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[133679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 128691 on Food Supply, for what reasons the Global Food Security Action plan is confidential internal document; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing that plan.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The Global Food Security Action Plan is a working document that is regularly updated to direct and prioritise Official's work on food security, and to enable the FCDO to monitor and evaluate progress. We publish information on actions that have been taken in line with the plan, for example funding announcements and details of Ministerial visits and engagements. The FCDO engages regularly with a range of stakeholders to consult and inform them of the actions we are prioritising. We will consider publishing further information on the FCDO's overall approach to addressing food insecurity.

■ East Africa: International Assistance**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[131206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much (a) humanitarian and (b) development funding his Department has provided to (i) Somalia, (ii) South Sudan, (iii) Ethiopia and (iv) Kenya in this financial year.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK Government will meet its £156 million humanitarian commitment in East Africa in FY22/23. This includes lifesaving humanitarian support to Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea and Uganda. The FCDO is committed to transparency and we will publish details of the overall Official Development Assistance funding to each of these countries for financial year 22/23 in due course.

■ El Salvador: Detainees**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[133956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Salvadoran counterpart on reports of the detention of five

environmental campaigners, Miguel Ángel Gámez, Alejandro Laínez García, Pedro Antonio Rivas Laínez, Antonio Pacheco and Saúl Agustín Rivas Ortega.

David Rutley:

I [Minister Rutley] discussed human rights issues during my meeting with the El Salvadoran Ambassador, Vanessa Interiano, in December 2022. Support for human rights in El Salvador is a continuing priority for the British Embassy in San Salvador, and officials regularly call on the Salvadoran Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss human rights challenges, including the need to treat all prisoners, including environmental campaigners, in line with international human rights standards and constitutional protections.

■ **Eswatini: Human Rights and Rule of Law**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[131147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the death of Thulani Maseko in Eswatini on 21 January 2023 on (a) the rule of law, (b) human rights and (c) progress towards democracy in that country.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Mr. Maseko will be remembered as a champion of human rights and the rule of law for the people of Eswatini. The Government of Eswatini has issued a statement expressing their condolences and announcing that the authorities are already investigating the murder. We have urged a thorough investigation into his untimely death. We continue to encourage all parties to refrain from violence while pursuing peaceful means to address the country's political and socio-economic challenges, including the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights.

■ **Eswatini: Russia**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[129751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has received recent reports from the High Commission in Eswatini on Russian involvement in security in that country.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

We are committed to working with international partners to mitigate the impact of Russia's actions globally. The British High Commission in Mbabane provides regular reporting to Ministers of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the security context in Eswatini.

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

Catherine West:

[\[133761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 117752 on Asia-Pacific Region:

Foreign Relations, how many staff in his Department are assigned to the China Department.

Catherine West:

[\[133762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 117752 on Asia-Pacific Region: Foreign Relations, how many staff in his Department are assigned to the UK Mission to ASEAN.

David Rutley:

The publication of the Integrated Review in March 2021 affirmed the UK's increased focus and long-term commitment to the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific tilt is a whole of UK Government effort with staff focused on delivering UK objectives across the region, including to strengthen defence, security and trade partnerships, and to uphold and promote the international rules based system.

A significant and increasing number of FCDO roles in the UK and across the global network involve an element of China policy. This shift in focus and resource has been underway for a number of years. The FCDO dedicated an additional £3 million in 2020/21 and a further £3 million in 2022/23 to increase our capability on China, including a significantly expanded China Department and new China-related roles in the overseas network.

The UK also opened the UK Mission to ASEAN in 2019 to strengthen UK-ASEAN engagement. Since achieving ASEAN Dialogue Partner Status, the UK Mission to ASEAN has expanded with further roles planned by March 2023.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality

Catherine West:

[\[124031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department has spent on hospitality for (a) Ministers in his Department, (b) UK Government Ministers and (c) ministers of foreign governments visiting the UK in each year since 2010.

David Rutley:

I refer the hon member to my answer to PQ 105220 of 13 December.

Business Hospitality expenses are used to promote UK interests domestically and overseas, and to entertain visitors or contacts while supporting the FCDO's Policy Priorities. These can include indirect costs incurred due to representational requirements such as cleaning fees, staffing costs, or childcare for late evening receptions where it is mandatory for an officer to represent the UK. All expenses undergo rigorous oversight to ensure they are reasonable and adhere to FCDO spending regulations. The FCDO publish this data in the Annual Report and Accounts in Note 3 Operating Expenditure under "Business Hospitality". Prior to the merger, the FCO published this in Note 3 Operating Costs under "Business Hospitality" within the Annual Report and Accounts. DFID did not separately disclose the "Hospitality

and Entertainment" costs in their Annual Report and Accounts as these are too small. However DFID spend on "hospitality and entertainment" prior to the merger was £40,639 in 2017-18; £39,560 in 2018-19; and £45,236 in 2019-20.

DFID spend on hospitality and entertainment for financial years 2010-11 to 2016-17 is in the table below.

FY	SPEND £
2010-11	208,722
2011-12	173,872
2112-13	81,146
2013-14	112,527
2014-15	778
2015-16	169,279
2016-17	- 57,376

■ Gender Recognition

Dan Carden:

[\[131320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the written statement made on 9 January 2023 by the Minister for Women and Equalities on the Gender Recognition Act (2004) consultation, whether he has held conversations with his counterparts from those countries on the list of approved overseas countries on the potential impact of changes to that list on nationals from those countries who live in the UK and who are trans.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The FCDO continues to work with the Equality Hub, and where appropriate other Governments, to verify the status of legal gender recognition in countries or territories listed on The Gender Recognition (Approved Countries and Territories) Order 2011. Changes to this list will not restrict access to a UK Gender Recognition Certificate; overseas applicants can still apply on the standard track.

■ Hezbollah: Weapons

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[\[131376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of potential recent expansions of Hezbollah's weapons arsenal.

David Rutley:

It is the longstanding policy of successive British Governments that we do not comment on intelligence matters. The UK Government closely follows the security

situation in the Middle East and maintains a regular dialogue with international counterparts on this.

■ Humanitarian Aid: Children

Ben Everitt:

[\[130069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of his Department developing a cross-departmental child rights strategy to help support its humanitarian aid response for children.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK Government is committed to the promotion, protection and realisation of children's rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including when crises hit.

Children are a central part of FCDO's work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including through access to quality education and health care, or through protecting them from violence. Consideration of children's rights is integrated across recent strategies, including the recently published Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Strategy which commits the UK to enhancing support available to survivors and children born of sexual violence in conflict, and a new Position Paper on Addressing the Climate Crises through Girls' Education which recognises that girls can be agents of change in their communities.

■ Iran: Unmanned Air Vehicles

David Simmonds:

[\[131408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with his (a) US and (b) EU counterparts on ensuring components from western countries are not used by Iran in the production of armed drones.

David Rutley:

The UK is working alongside the US and EU to tackle Iranian weapons and components supply and to hold Iran to account for its support to Russia and its destabilising regional activity. This includes through the use of the UK's enhanced Military End-Use control which has improved the Government's ability to control non-listed components. The UK continues its support to maritime security operations in the Gulf which last year resulted in the recovery of Iranian weapons parts from unflagged vessels. The UN is shortly expected to publish its findings on the weapons following a UK invitation to view them.

■ Iran: Uranium

Stephen Crabb:

[\[131132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of reports that Iran has increased production of High Enriched Uranium at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant.

Stephen Crabb:

[\[131133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of Iran's nuclear breakout time in light of reports of its increased production of High Enriched Uranium.

David Rutley:

Iran's nuclear programme has never been more advanced than it is today. In November 2022 Iran announced it would take further steps to expand its nuclear programme, including increasing its production of High Enriched Uranium (HEU) at its underground facility at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant. This step, which further advances its programme, and carries significant proliferation-related risks, has no credible civilian justification.

Iran's continued escalation of its nuclear activities is threatening international peace and security and undermining the global non-proliferation system. We are considering next steps with our international partners.

■ **Land Mines: Bomb Disposal**

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[131355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding his Department plans to provide to the Global Mine Action Programme.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The Department is in the process of deciding the distribution of Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations over the remainder of our Spending Review period. This will be focussed according to the priorities set out in the International Development Strategy. We are committed to transparency with the public and predictability with our partners, and will update on planned ODA allocations, including for the Global Mine Action Programme, in due course.

■ **Mexico: Missing Persons**

Dan Carden:

[\[131318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations his Department has made to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances on disappearances in Mexico.

David Rutley:

We are closely monitoring the number of disappeared people in Mexico since records began, which is now over 110,000, according to official figures. The UN Committee for Enforced Disappearances visited Mexico in November 2021. We have engaged regularly with the UN Human Rights Office in Mexico following the Committee's visit on the topic of disappearances and regularly raise the topic with the Mexican Government. We welcome the Mexican Interior and Foreign Ministries' commitment to address areas highlighted in the UN Committee's report published following their visit.

■ Myanmar: Arms Trade**Catherine West:**[\[132424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many companies from (a) Russia, (b) India and (c) China that supply arms and equipment to the Myanmar military have been sanctioned by the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK is committed to targeting sanctions against individual and entities responsible for financing, arming and equipping the military. The UK sanctioned three Russian companies, under The Myanmar (Sanctions) Regulations 2021, in May 2022. Ural Avia LLC, SINS AVIA Trading House LLC and JSC Gorizont are all subject to an asset freeze for supplying parts for aircrafts used by the Myanmar Armed Forces. We have also sanctioned eight Myanmar companies responsible for procuring arms and spare parts from a range of countries; Htoo Group of Companies, Miya Win International Co Ltd, Sky Aviator Co Ltd, Dynasty International Co Ltd, Star Sapphire Group of Companies, Myanmar Chemical and Machinery Co Ltd, Myanmar New Era Trading Co Ltd and Synpex Shwe Co Ltd. We have sanctioned the Directorate for Defence Procurement which purchase arms for the military from both Russia and China. We are considering a range of further targets.

■ Myanmar: Development Aid**Sarah Champion:**[\[131200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to UK funding for the UNFPA (a) how much in total is allocated to projects in Myanmar and (b) if he will list those projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK is a leading healthcare donor in Myanmar, supporting life-saving maternal, newborn and child healthcare needs. Since 2019 the UK has contributed approximately over £3.2 million to Myanmar through The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This includes funding UNFPA's multi-donor ACCESS to Health Fund project which provides technical support on sexual and reproductive health. It also includes developing the Gender Based Violence Minimum Standards Helpline in Burmese and English.

■ Nigeria: Christianity**Jessica Morden:**[\[133581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Nigerian counterpart on the prevalence of deadly attacks on the country's Christian population.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK Government condemns all incidents of violence across Nigeria and is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all communities. I [Minister Mitchell] raised the effect of insecurity on communities in my engagements with

leading Nigerian presidential candidates in December 2022 and January 2023. Additionally, at the UK's Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in July 2022, the Nigerian High Commissioner reiterated his Government's commitment to freedom of religion or belief. We will continue to call on the Nigerian Government to assist affected communities and implement long-term solutions.

■ Offences against Children: British Nationals Abroad

Sarah Champion:

[\[133654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many registered sex offenders who are UK nationals made requests for consular assistance following their arrest for child sex offences between 2017 and 2022.

David Rutley:

Between 2017 and 2022, 24,864 British nationals sought consular assistance after being arrested or detained overseas. Of these, consular records indicate that in 287 of these cases, the arrest may have been related to a potential child sex offence. These cases include arrests that did not subsequently lead to formal charges, prosecution, or conviction.

■ Sanctions

Stephen Doughty:

[\[134017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the full-time equivalent staffing levels in each grade in his Department's sanctions unit were in each of the last five years.

David Rutley:

In 2020 there were just over 20 roles in the Sanctions Unit, which increased to 48 substantive roles by December 2021. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) expanded the Sanctions Unit in 2022, establishing the Sanctions Directorate, and has almost trebled the number of officials focused this work, with over 130 permanent staff. This number does not include those working across FCDO and its overseas network who have always covered sanctions as part of their wider roles.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[134019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many times Ministers in his Department were (a) consulted on and (b) asked to authorise (i) waivers and (ii) exemptions to sanction regimes in each of the last five years; and what the reasons for those waivers and extensions were.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[134020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many times officials in his Department were (a) consulted on and (b) asked to authorise (i) waivers and (ii) exemptions to sanction regimes in each of the last five years; and what the reasons were for those waivers and exemptions.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

All sanctions regimes contain a number of exceptions and licensing powers. Exceptions and licences help to ensure that the effects of sanctions are proportionate and avoid unintended consequences. Licences for financial sanctions are issued by His Majesty's Treasury's Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), licences for trade sanctions are issued by the Department for International Trade, and licences for transport sanctions are issued by the Department for Transport.

■ **Somalia: Peace Negotiations**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[129859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps his Department has taken to promote peace in Somalia.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK works closely with the Somali Government to support its programme for a more peaceful Somalia. This includes the provision of humanitarian relief, support for political reform and backing for the fight against al-Shabaab and transition to Somali-led security. We coordinate closely with international partners, including in our role as penholder on Somalia in the UN. The UK also supports stabilisation efforts in Somalia through our Early Recovery Initiative, which supports local political reconciliation and the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. During my visit last November, I [Minister Mitchell] pursued these issues with the Federal Government of Somalia.

■ **Tunisia: Elections**

Damien Moore: [\[131382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the legislative elections held in Tunisia on 17 December 2022.

David Rutley:

The UK believes that democratic institutions and accountable governments are the foundations on which open, stable and prosperous societies thrive. Following the second round of elections, it will be important for the Tunisian authorities and the new parliament, when it is established, to work together in an inclusive way to reassure Tunisians that key economic challenges are being addressed.

■ **Tunisia: International Monetary Fund**

Damien Moore: [\[131384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the proposed International Monetary Fund loan package for Tunisia.

David Rutley:

We have been clear about the importance of socio-economic stability in order to provide for the Tunisian people. The UK is closely following the proposed loan

programme of the International Monetary Fund and was disappointed to learn that the IMF board meeting to discuss the loan program for Tunisia was postponed. We encourage the resumption of talks and urge the Tunisian government to take forward the difficult but necessary reforms to stabilise the economic situation and bring socio-economic stability to Tunisia. We stand ready to support the swift implementation of the steps necessary to strengthen Tunisia's economic and financial situation.

■ **Tunisia: Politics and Government**

Damien Moore:

[\[131383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policy of the political and economic situation in Tunisia.

David Rutley:

The UK closely monitors the economic and political situation in Tunisia. We have made our views clear, calling for continued public commitment to and respect for all Tunisians' civil, political, social and economic rights and to the rule of law. Given the scale of the socio-economic and fiscal challenges, we encourage the Tunisian government to implement urgent reform steps and deliver on the demands of the Tunisian people. The UK stands ready to play a constructive role.

■ **Venezuela: Non-governmental Organisations**

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[133944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of a Bill proposed in the Venezuelan parliament to regulate the financing of non-governmental organisations.

David Rutley:

The UK firmly supports the right of civil society to operate freely in all countries, including Venezuela. Recent years have seen a worrying deterioration of the human rights situation in Venezuela, where the Maduro regime has used force against peaceful protesters; stifled media freedom; carried out arbitrary detentions and harassed journalists and human rights defenders. We have on frequent occasions made clear our concern for the Venezuelan people and that we consider the regime in large part responsible for the economic and humanitarian crises afflicting the country.

■ **Western Sahara: Sovereignty**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[131431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make representations to the Moroccan Government on freedom of expression for people calling for independence in Western Sahara.

David Rutley:

The UK is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, including in Western Sahara and the Tindouf refugee camps, as we regularly make clear to the parties. We have consistently supported language in relevant UN Security Council Resolutions that encourages the parties to continue their efforts to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara, including the freedoms of expression and association. Senior HMG officials raised the importance of media freedoms with the Moroccan Government at a Human Rights Dialogue between the two nations on 1 December 2022.

■ Zimbabwe: Development Aid**Navendu Mishra:**[\[131430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Government agencies and bodies (a) were operating in and (b) worked with the Republic of Zimbabwe as of 23 January 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Our Embassy to Harare represents the full range of UK Government interests in Zimbabwe. The Embassy currently houses staff from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Department for International Trade (DIT), Home Office (HO) and Ministry of Defence (MOD).

■ Zimbabwe: Health Services**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[131146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January to Question 122105 on Zimbabwe: Health Services, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Health Services Bill on (a) workers' rights, (b) rights of assembly and expression and (c) health service capacity in that country.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The Bill is in part designed to change the legal framework of health workers' rights in Zimbabwe - including, for example, potential imprisonment for undertaking industrial action.

It is possible this Bill and the potential changes to terms and conditions of service could negatively impact the ability of service providers to recruit and retain staff - thus reducing wider capacity in the health sector.

We regularly raise issues, including freedom of peaceful assembly and association, with the Zimbabwe government. The former Africa Minister discussed these issues with Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister last June, and our Ambassador made a public statement on this in October.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Staff

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[119247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral statement of 9 January 2023 on NHS winter pressures, what assessment he has made of mental health capacity and staffing resources within emergency departments.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 12 January 2023]: No such specific assessment has been made by the Department of Health and Social Care.

NHS systems must ensure that there are clear pathways for mental health patients who are accessing care via emergency departments and who need to remain in acute hospital settings until their care can be transferred. This should be supported by access to 24/7 liaison mental health teams (or other age-appropriate equivalent for children and young people), both in A&E and on the wards.

Guidance was published in 2016 setting out the Evidence-based Treatment Pathway for Urgent and Emergency Liaison Mental Health Services for Adults and Older Adults. This includes an overview of staffing models and best practice, including Core 24 models and examples.

■ Ambulance Services

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[134049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support NHS ambulance services with service pressures.

Will Quince:

A delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services was published on 30 January. This sets out plans to bring down Category two response times to 30 minutes next year, with further improvements towards pre-pandemic levels the following year, including through delivering 800 new ambulances (including 100 specialist mental health vehicles).

The National Health Service winter resilience plan is increasing NHS bed capacity by the equivalent of at least 7,000 general and acute beds, helping reduce pressure in accident and emergency so that ambulances can get swiftly back out on the road.

An additional £250 million has been made available to enable the NHS to buy up beds in the community to safely discharge thousands of patients from hospital, and capital for discharge lounges and ambulance hubs. These measures will help improve flow through hospitals and reduce ambulance handover delays. This is on top of the £500 million already invested last year.

■ Ambulance Services: Emergency Calls

Stephen Morgan: [\[133767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to reduce wait times for Category 2 ambulance calls.

Will Quince:

A delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services was published on 30 January. This sets out plans to bring down category two response times to 30 minutes next year, with further improvements towards pre-pandemic levels the following year, including through delivering 800 new ambulances (including 100 specialist mental health vehicles).

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■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Tom Hunt: [\[132571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement made in the Women's Health Strategy published in July 2022, what assessment he has made of the impact on patients of the additional breast screening units his Department plans to fund in East Suffolk and North Essex NHS foundation trust.

Helen Whately:

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust has benefited from the additional funding with new mammography equipment installed at Colchester Hospital, to replace an existing machine. This installation is expected to take place within the next few months.

Additionally, the trust's mobile breast screening unit will be receiving a £12,000 technology upgrade as part of this programme. This upgrade will allow staff at the unit to send images back to the hospital digitally, improving efficiency.

These upgrades will benefit patients through efficiency upgrades allowing staff to spend more time in clinical settings.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Dean Russell: [\[133797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on analysing the responses from the call for evidence for the 10-year Cancer Plan.

Helen Whately:

The Government announced on 24 January that it will publish a Major Conditions Strategy. Cancer will be a significant element of the new Strategy, and we will ensure that all the learning from the over 5,000 submissions to the call for evidence will be considered.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments**Rachael Maskell:**[\[122166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of providing (a) radiotherapy and (b) chemotherapy treatments in York on travel times for patients.

Helen Whately:

No assessment has been made.

Radiotherapy services are currently provided to patients living in the York area at Castle Hill Hospital in Cottingham, East Yorkshire or at the Leeds Cancer Centre.

Chemotherapy services are provided by York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust at York and Scarborough hospitals and at a mobile chemotherapy unit, which is funded by York Against Cancer.

Specialised services are not available in every local hospital because they have to be delivered by specialist teams of health professionals who have the necessary skills, experience and access to equipment and medicines.

■ Cancer: Mortality Rates**Rachael Maskell:**[\[125401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of (a) late cancer diagnosis and (b) delayed cancer treatment on trends in the prevalence of cancer mortality.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 20 January 2023]: No specific assessment has been made.

Improving early diagnosis of cancer is a priority for the National Health Service. That is why one of the core ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan is to diagnose 75% of cancers at stage one or two by 2028.

■ Cardiovascular Diseases and Cholesterol**Henry Smith:**[\[132380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help prevent (a) high cholesterol (b) cardiovascular diseases; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of inflation on the (a) prevalence and (b) treatment of those diseases.

Neil O'Brien:

The Department is taking steps to prevent high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease (CVD) by taking forward a programme of work to modernise the NHS Health Check and ensure that as many people as possible benefit from this prevention programme. This includes developing a national digital NHS Health Check to complement the in-person service and enable people to self-check at home.

The National Health Service's priorities for 2023/24 are set out in the NHS operational planning guidance. This includes objectives on preventing CVD by improving the management of hypertension and CVD risk. Primary Care Networks' service requirements also include objectives to improve hypertension case-finding and diagnosis, diagnosis of familial hypercholesterolaemia and cholesterol management.

The Department has not assessed the potential impact of inflation on the prevalence and treatment of CVD.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening**Peter Gibson:**[\[133665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the uptake of cervical screening.

Peter Gibson:[\[133667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure equity of access to cervical screening.

Neil O'Brien:

A range of improvements and innovations have been brought in to help improve uptake and equity of access in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme. In some Primary Care Network areas, appointments can now be made in any primary care setting, rather than just at the patient's own general practice, where they are registered; during evenings and on weekends; and via integrated sexual health clinics. Additionally, laboratories that analyse samples can now operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to accommodate surges in capacity.

To improve uptake and equity of action, an evaluation on the acceptability and effectiveness of Human papillomavirus (HPV) self-sampling (i.e. individuals taking their own cervical screening sample) as a primary cervical screening option is taking place. The YouScreen Study aims to provide evidence on the acceptability of self-testing and is offering this test to non-attenders aged 25-64 and those at least six months overdue for cervical screening. The HPVValidate study aims to see if self-testing provides the same level of accuracy as an HPV test undertaken by a clinician.

The findings from these studies will be used to inform a UK National Screening Committee recommendation on cervical screening. If the outcome proves positive, self-sampling could lead to an increase in uptake as it will reduce some of the

barriers that prevent people from attending for screening, including availability of appointments, physical disability, and past trauma.

■ **Death and Diseases: Cost of Living**

Wes Streeting:

[132502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of cost of living pressures on levels of (a) illness and (b) mortality in winter 2022-23.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 31 January 2023]: No specific assessment has been made. We are working across Government and with external partners to identify those most vulnerable to the health impacts of the increased cost of living and the actions which can be taken to support them.

The Government recognises the need to support low-income and vulnerable households in the context of increasing cost-of-living. This winter we are spending £55 billion to help households and businesses with their energy bills, amongst the largest support plans in Europe. A typical household will save around £900 this winter through the price guarantee in addition to the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme.

We have also put in place the largest ever increase to the National Living Wage, for 2 million workers, taking it up to £10.42, which is worth over £1,600 a year to a full-time worker aged 23 and over.

■ **Dental Services**

Chloe Smith:

[129773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the extent to which dental practices which have NHS patient availability are updating the NHS Find a Dentist webpage to show this; and whether he plans to take further steps to encourage practices to update those listings.

Neil O'Brien:

On 25 November 2022 we introduced a contractual responsibility for National Health Service dentists to keep their NHS.UK profiles up to date so that patients can find a dentist more easily. Practices are required to update their NHS.UK profiles at least once every 90 days, including information on whether they are accepting new patients.

Commissioners will have access to a report showing which practices are non-compliant, with monitoring due to come into effect from end of March 2023.

Tom Hunt:

[133690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of dentists offering services on the NHS.

Neil O'Brien:

Since 2020/21 (during COVID), there has been an increase of 539 dentists delivering National Health Service care and an 120% increase in courses of treatment delivered.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care. These will increase access to NHS dentistry by adults and children, whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices.

We have taken action to implement these changes, including through regulations that came into effect on 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: Contracts****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[117786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on (a) the prototype dental contract reform programme and (b) the first stage of dental contract reform.

Neil O'Brien:

The Department administered the prototype dental contract reform programme through the NHS Business Services Authority. This programme was used to provide National Health Service treatment that would otherwise have been provided through existing dental services.

Spend on revenue and capital for the prototype dental contract reform programme is summarised in the table below.

YEAR	REVENUE £	CAPITAL £	TOTAL £
2021	860,928	N/A	860, 928
2020	842,019	N/A	842,019
2019	939, 480	N/A	939, 480
2018	1,030,887	N/A	1,030,887
2017	628,321	119,067	747,388

2016	566,225	101, 861	668, 086
2015	642,282	160, 495	802, 777
February 2011 – March 2014	2, 625, 190	1, 400, 094	4, 025, 283
Total	8, 135, 331	1, 781, 517	9,916, 848

Spend in the table covers, development and maintenance of IT systems, admin support of the pilot and prototype dental practices, clinical support, programme and project management reporting and statistical analysis, engagement with practice management system providers.

Data is not yet available for spend on the first stages of dental contract reform, announced in July 2022, as this is currently in the implementation phase.

■ Dentistry: Migrant Workers

James Wild:

[\[127914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to reform Health Education England processes for completing the Performer List Validation by Experience to help reduce the time taken to consider applications.

Neil O'Brien:

The Health Education England (HEE) Performers List Validation by Experience (PLVE) process is in place to enable overseas dentists who have passed the Overseas Registration Examination to join the National Health Service Performers List in a supportive and safe environment. We keep this process under review.

Provided all the necessary application information is available, an eligible dentist will be accepted into HEE's PLVE process within four to six weeks. Once confirmed by NHS England, the dentist will join the Performers List at that point, not at the end of the PLVE process. The time then spent practising NHS dentistry with the PLVE model will depend on the support needs of the individual applicant and does not affect their Performers List status .

Dentists entering the Performers List through the PLVE method take time to develop an understanding of the NHS system and to ensure they are safe to practice unsupervised.

■ Dentistry: Qualifications

Giles Watling:

[\[131387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to allow private dentists in Clacton who trained overseas to see National Health Service patients.

Neil O'Brien:

All dentists wishing to practice in the United Kingdom, must register with the General Dental Council (GDC). The Government has laid secondary legislation to provide the GDC with greater flexibility on how it operates the Overseas Registration Exam and to expand the registration options open to international dentists. This will enable the GDC to increase the number of dentists it can assess, potentially allowing overseas dentists to join its register more quickly.

In addition to being registered with the GDC, dentists wishing to see National Health Service patients in England must apply to join the Dental Performers List (DPL), managed by NHS England. Any dentist registered with the GDC, whether trained in the UK or overseas, can apply to join the DPL. Inclusion on the DPL provides assurance that they are fit to provide NHS dental services, and it is for NHS England as the holder of the DPL to determine which dentists, who trained overseas, can see NHS patients.

■ Dentistry: Training**Holly Mumby-Croft:**[\[131422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of dental training places in (a) England and (b) East of England.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government trains around 800 dentists per year but the cap on dental school places was temporarily lifted for students who completed A-Levels in 2020 and in 2021 and who had an offer from a university in England to study dentistry, subject to their grades. As a result, 895 dental students entered training in 2020 and 980 dental students entered training in 2021 helping ensure a larger potential pipeline for dentists in coming years, including in the East of England

The Government funded extra 19 dental specialty posts in 2022/23. Additional Dental Specialty Training posts are being targeted to high needs specialties and geographies to seek to improve dental training distribution, including in the East of England.

The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan this year and this will include independently verified projections for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in 5-, 10- and 15-years' time, taking full account of improvements in retention and productivity. The workforce plan is for the whole of the NHS workforce, including dental care professionals.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence**Dan Carden:**[\[125459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2022 to Question 110819, on Members: Correspondence, for what reason his Department has yet to respond to correspondence dated 23 November 2022 from the

hon. Member for Liverpool Walton; what his Department's target is for responding to correspondence from hon. Members; and in what proportion of cases that target is met.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 20 January 2023]: We will answer the hon. Member's correspondence of 23 November 2022 as soon as possible. The Department has a target of replying to correspondence from colleagues from both Houses of twenty working days. Performance against this target is reported on annually by the Cabinet Office. The latest available data can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-on-responses-to-correspondence-from-mps-and-peers.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Disease Control**

Daisy Cooper:

[132543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether their department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Maria Caulfield:

A search of the Department's procurement and contracts database shows no record of a contract for or purchase of mobile UV virus irradiation units by the Department or NHS Supply Chain.

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency report that they are currently funding a programme of work to assess the ability of air cleaning devices to mitigate aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other air borne pathogens. This includes research to assess the ability of UVC devices to mitigate aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other airborne pathogens

As part of commissioning the Rapid COVID-19 disinfection Study, the Department's NHS Test & Trace team purchased upper room ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (ur-UVGI) and active enclosed UVC devices.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Equality**

Chris Stephens:

[R] [133756]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure his Department complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code; and whether that monitoring data gathered is shared with union representative.

Will Quince:

The Department collects data to enable monitoring of our policies and action plans in compliance with 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code.

The Departments HR hold regular meetings with the trade unions on a monthly basis where routine information is shared. In addition, trade unions can access a range of HR information published on the department's intranet.

The Department also publishes detailed workforce data covering age, gender, ethnic origin, disability, and other protected characteristics as part of the departments Public Sector Equality Duty Report that is publicly available on the GOV.UK website.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Holiday Leave**

Chris Stephens: [R] [[132468](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has notified staff to (a) tell or (b) remind them that they can sell annual leave in the last four months.

Will Quince:

No. The Department has not had an annual leave selling scheme in the last four months.

■ **Eating Disorders: Young People**

Rachael Maskell: [[129932](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to remove age specific transition points between adolescent and adult services for young people with eating disorders for continuity of care.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England is developing whole pathway models of care for children and young people and adults with eating disorders with the aim of ensuring fewer inpatient admissions by 2024/25. Transition between services is being considered as part of this.

NHS England has also commissioned Academic Health Science Networks to take forward a project on transitions between children and young people's services and adults' services. The project seeks to map national and international best practice, with an aim to showcase a range of evidence-based approaches via an e-learning webinar that will be available to children and young people's eating disorder services and adult eating disorder services across England.

■ **Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards**

Mark Pritchard: [[132312](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will commission further research into the health impacts of e-liquids containing propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin in vaping products.

Neil O'Brien:

The Department is currently considering how best to commission further research into the health impacts of e-liquids, including those containing propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin. In September 2022, we published the last in a series of evidence reviews entitled 'Nicotine vaping in England'. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update/nicotine-vaping-in-england-2022-evidence-update-main-findings#:~:text=vaping%20prevalence%20in%20England%20in,0.6%25%20and%200.7%25%20in%202021>

This report confirmed that vaping carries only “a small fraction of the risks” of smoking but is not risk free.

■ Emergency Calls: Standards

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[134050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the average wait time for 999 calls for medical emergencies in (a) January 2022, (b) June 2022 and (c) December 2022.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[134051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) 999 and (b) 111 calls were made in December (i) 2021 and (ii) 2022.

Will Quince:

The mean average waiting time for 999 calls in January, June and December 2022 is shown in the table below.

MONTH IN 2022	MEAN AVERAGE 999 CALL ANSWER TIME (SECONDS)
January	19
June	36
December	88

Source: NHS England

The number of 999 and 111 calls answered in December 2021 and December 2022 is shown in the table below.

MONTH	999 CALLS ANSWERED	111 CALLS ANSWERED
December 2021	925,118	2,131,223
December 2022	1,014,489	2,920,058

Source: NHS England

■ Epilepsy: Children

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[133536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps with the Intractable Epilepsy charity to arrange a roundtable meeting to help secure collaborative trials in epilepsy medicines for children.

Will Quince:

The Department does not believe a roundtable discussion would be beneficial to securing collaborative trials at this time. Manufacturers are responsible for generating evidence to support the use of their products, and the Government encourages any researcher aiming to set up collaborative trials to contact the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) for scientific and research advice. The NIHR remains open to receiving good quality proposals for research in this area as a priority and stands ready to support researchers to develop applications.

■ Gambling: Public Health

Liz Twist:

[\[131301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the potential merits of recognising gambling as a public health issue; and what steps is he taking to address the relationship between gambling and suicide.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government remains committed to tackling gambling-related harms and prioritising gambling as a public health issue. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the lead Government department responsible for gambling policy, is currently leading a review of the Gambling Act (2005). The Department of Health and Social Care continues to work with DCMS to strengthen the current public health approach, including encouraging actions to prevent harms from arising in the first place.

To address the relationship between gambling and suicide, we are focused on ensuring those experiencing harms are able to access the right treatment and support in a timely manner. NHS England remain on track to deliver against their Long Term Plan commitment to create 15 specialist gambling treatment clinics by 2023/24. As at time of writing, there are now eight of these clinics in operation across England.

On 24 January 2023, we announced that we will publish a new National Suicide Prevention Strategy later this year. As part of the development of the strategy, we will consider the changing pattern of risk of suicide associated with issues such as harmful gambling and the Department will engage with key stakeholders, across both the gambling and health sector, during this process.

■ Genito-urinary medicine

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[126564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Sexual and Reproductive Health Action Plan will include targets for reducing STI incidence in England.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 23 January 2023]: In August 2022, we published the Women's Health Strategy for England which sets out our 10 year ambitions and actions we are taking to improve health for women and girls including sexual and reproductive health. We also published a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) action plan in 2021 which sets out the actions that we are taking over the period 2022 to 2025 to move towards ending HIV transmissions and HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome related deaths within England by 2030. We remain committed to improving sexual and reproductive health, including reducing sexually transmitted infections incidence, in England.

■ Health Services: Standards

Henry Smith:

[\[132381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 28 June 2022 to Question 21237 on Health Services: Standards, what progress he has made on reviewing that progress against the commitments relating to cardiovascular disease and cholesterol; whether those targets will not be removed from the updated NHS Long Term Plan; and if he will publish the updated NHS Long Term Plan in January 2023 at the latest.

Neil O'Brien:

Progress against cardiovascular disease (CVD) commitments in 2021-22 includes 56,000 more patients identified as having a 20% or greater 10-year risk of developing CVD being treated with lipid lowering therapies; 1.1 million more people had their hypertension controlled; and 46,000 more people with atrial fibrillation were treated with an anti-coagulant compared to 2020-21.

The National Health Service's priorities for 2023-24 are set out in the NHS operational planning guidance, detailing an ongoing commitment to the goals of the NHS Long Term Plan, including those on cardiovascular disease. There are specific objectives in the guidance for improving the management of people with hypertension and high cholesterol.

The Hewitt review is currently looking at the scope and options for national targets and how to empower local leaders to improve outcomes for their populations and the Department looks forward to considering its conclusions.

As the Secretary of State announced on 24 January, the Department is developing a strategy for major conditions, including cardiovascular disease, with an interim report

due summer 2023. This will build on the commitments already made in the NHS Long Term Plan.

■ **Health: Disadvantaged**

Liz Twist:

[\[130051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2023 to Question 117924 on Life Expectancy, when the Government will set out its plans to reduce health disparities.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government announced on 24 January 2023 that it will publish a Major Conditions Strategy. An interim report will be published in the summer. The strategy will set out a strong and coherent policy agenda that sets out a shift to integrated, whole-person care. 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.

The strategy will tackle conditions that contribute most to morbidity and mortality across the population in England including, cancers, cardiovascular disease, including stroke and diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, dementia, mental ill health and musculoskeletal conditions.

Health disparities exist across a wide variety of conditions from cancer to mental health, and contribute to stark and unacceptable variation in the number of years people live in good health. Therefore, the Major Conditions Strategy will apply a geographical lens to each condition to address regional disparities in health outcomes, supporting the levelling up mission to improve health and reduce disparities. As material for the Major Conditions Strategy will cover many of the same areas as the Health Disparities White Paper (HDWP), we will no longer be publishing the HDWP.

■ **Health: Females**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[132291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of findings of the most recent Hologic Global Women's Health Index on the comparison between the standard of women's healthcare in the UK compared to other western countries.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy

Claire Hanna:

[\[132548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps with suppliers of hormone replacement therapy products to (a) monitor and (b) improve the supply of those products in all regions.

Claire Hanna:

[\[132549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of hormone replacement therapy products; and which products are affected by supply issues as of 25 January 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

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

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. 19 SSP's for HRT products have been issued since April 2022, and a much smaller number of SSP's remain in place as the supply position of several products affected by short term supply issues have been resolved.

We continue to work with suppliers and other stakeholders such as the National Health Service and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency 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. We hold quarterly industry roundtables involving suppliers, wholesalers and community pharmacists to monitor the position and discuss actions being taken.

We regularly share communications about shortages and discontinuations with the NHS and have issued a number of communications about HRT supply issues to date. We have updated supply information about all HRT products, including those currently affected by supply issues, on the Specialist Pharmacy Services Medicine Supply Tool for NHS staff, including GPs, to access.

■ Hospices: Energy

Hilary Benn:

[\[131142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of rising energy bills on the hospices, including their financial stability.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 30 January 2023]: No assessment has been made. Following a HM Treasury led review into the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, the new Energy Bill Discount Scheme will run from April until March 2024 and continue to provide a discount to eligible non-domestic customers, including hospices.

Hospitals: Discharges**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[132554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients who need ongoing social care support can leave hospital safely.

Helen Whately:

The Department is working closely with NHS England, local government and social care providers to ensure that patients who need ongoing social care support can leave hospital safely. We have made available £500 million to support safe and timely discharges from hospital this winter. We committed a further £200 million to fund short term National Health Service step-down care packages and wrap-around primary and community health services to support patients' recovery.

Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination**Peter Gibson:**[\[133664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the uptake of the HPV vaccine.

Dean Russell:[\[133799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage uptake of the HPV vaccine.

Maria Caulfield:

The HPV vaccination programme is delivered in different locations to maximise access and make getting vaccinated easier. This includes school-based delivery, with alternative sites set up for those not in mainstream education, or for those who missed their initial offer. GP practices also offer HPV vaccinations for anyone until their 25th birthday, and anyone unsure about their eligibility or vaccination status should contact their GP for advice.

To support this DHSC, NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) provide an annual communication campaigns to promote the HPV vaccine in settings like GP practices and universities. It is important that everyone takes up the vaccinations to which they are entitled; for themselves, their families, and wider society.

Peter Gibson:[\[133666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure equity of access to HPV vaccination.

Maria Caulfield:

The HPV programme is a universal offer and is primarily delivered in schools, which helps to combat health inequalities by reaching children from disadvantaged backgrounds, vulnerable families, and others who may not be registered with a general practice but who are still in education. Alternative sites are available for

anyone not in mainstream education or who have missed their initial offer, and regional teams host catch up clinics in schools and local venues in areas with low uptake. Vaccine information is also provided in a range of languages to raise awareness of the HPV vaccine and allow access to accurate information for a variety of communities.

■ **Huntington's Disease**

Hilary Benn:

[\[133535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Integrated Care Boards in England have a dedicated care co-ordinator for Huntington's Disease.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not held. NHS England specialised commissioning does not centrally commission dedicated care co-ordinators for Huntington's Disease within integrated care boards.

■ **Hyperactivity: Health Education**

Dean Russell:

[\[133795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder among (a) the public and (b) medical practitioners.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department is not currently taking specific steps to increase awareness of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) among the public and medical practitioners.

General practitioners are responsible for ensuring their own clinical knowledge remains up-to-date and for identifying learning needs as part of their continuing professional development. The MindEd e-learning platform for medical professionals has several modules regarding ADHD.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence have published the guideline 'Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management' for healthcare professionals, commissioners and providers and people with ADHD, their families and carers. Integrated care boards and National Health Service trusts should have due regard to this guidance in exercising their functions.

■ **Income Support**

Chloe Smith:

[\[133573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the Minimum Income Guarantee rates for 2023-24; and whether he will make a statement.

Chloe Smith: [\[133574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the uprating of benefits on the Minimum Income Guarantee rates.

Chloe Smith: [\[133575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussion with Cabinet colleagues on the impact of the Minimum Income Guarantee on the living standards and quality of life of disabled people.

Chloe Smith: [\[133576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the level of the Minimum Income Guarantee on (a) disabled people and (b) local authority budgets.

Helen Whately:

The minimum income guarantee (MIG) rates are reviewed annually, with a review of the rates for the next financial year currently ongoing. Following the last review, the MIG was increased in line with inflation from 6 April 2022. The rates for 23-24 will be published in a Local Authority Circular.

There has been no specific discussion with Cabinet colleagues on the impact of the MIG on the living standards and quality of life of disabled people, and no specific assessment has been made of the impact of the level of the MIG on disabled people and local authority budgets.

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Carla Lockhart: [\[132536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people aged under 60 in the UK have been diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease in each of the last three years broken down by region of the UK.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Intensive Care

Rachael Maskell: [\[132431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of retention in Intensive Therapy Units.

Will Quince:

No specific assessment has been made.

Rachael Maskell: [\[132443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the resilience and pandemic preparedness of the acute intensive care system.

Maria Caulfield:

Pandemic preparedness is an area the Department keeps under constant review. Our strategic approach to pandemic preparedness evolves in response to new scientific information, lessons learned from prior pandemics, responses to other infectious disease outbreaks and rigorous exercising to test our response mechanisms.

In planning for a broader range of pandemic scenarios, we are taking a flexible capabilities-based approach to pandemic preparedness. We are ensuring that we have the right capabilities in place to provide a whole-system response to future pandemics that mitigates the pressures an extreme surge in demand can put on National Health Service intensive care capacity.

The Department is making sure that the NHS intensive care system is prepared for future health emergencies. That's why, as announced in the Autumn Statement, the Government is investing an additional £3.3 billion in each of the next two years to enable rapid action to improve urgent and emergency, elective, and primary care performance to pre-pandemic levels.

■ Intensive Care: Health Professions**Rachael Maskell:**[\[132437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of skills loss on the ability of Intensive Therapy Units to (a) deliver care through an experienced team and (b) train staff to acquire the level of professional competency that is required in that clinical setting.

Will Quince:

Whilst we have made no specific assessment, we have commissioned NHS England to develop a long term plan for the NHS workforce for the next 15 years. The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan will look at the mix and number of staff across all parts of the country and will set out the actions and reforms that will be needed to reduce supply gaps and improve retention.

The plan is for the whole of the NHS workforce in England.

Rachael Maskell:[\[132441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to ensure that there is a clear workforce strategy for intensive care which is consistent with high quality professional standards.

Will Quince:

The appropriate staffing of intensive care services is a matter for the National Health Service. However, the Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a long term plan for the NHS workforce for the next 15 years.

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan will look at the mix and number of staff across all parts of the country and will set out the actions and reforms that will be needed to

reduce supply gaps and improve retention. The plan is for the whole of the NHS workforce in England.

■ Intensive Care: Hospital Beds

Rachael Maskell:

[132430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ICU beds there are in England; what the average occupancy of those ICU beds is; and what guidance he provides to hospitals on levels of safe occupancy of those beds.

Will Quince:

NHS England publishes weekly data on adult critical care, paediatric and neonatal beds in the Urgent and Emergency Care Winter Sitrep. This shows that in the week ending 22 January 2023, there was a daily average of 6,110 total ICU beds available in England, of which the daily average occupancy was 76.2%:

- Of the total ICU beds, 4,049 beds were adult critical care, of which 80.6% were occupied.
- 356 beds were paediatric intensive care beds, of which 81.7% were occupied.
- 1,705 bed were neonatal critical care beds, of which 64.8% were occupied.

Latest statistics can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/uec-sitrep/urgent-and-emergency-care-daily-situation-reports-2022-23/>

Guidance for the delivery of intensive care services is a matter for NHS England and relevant professional bodies. No such guidance is provided by the Department.

■ Ipswich Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments

Tom Hunt:

[132580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the planned new accident and emergency department at Ipswich Hospital on (a) ambulance waiting times and (b) capacity pressure at the hospital.

Will Quince:

East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) have considered the impact of the planned new accident and emergency department at Ipswich hospital on ambulance waiting times and capacity pressures as part of the NHS England assurance process.

ESNEFT anticipates that the new Urgent Treatment Centre at Ipswich hospital will ease pressure on the hospital's Emergency Department, freeing up staff to focus on providing care for the most critically ill and seriously injured patients.

■ Malnutrition: Children

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[120935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of children being admitted to A&E with an (a) primary and (b) secondary diagnosis of malnutrition per (i) month and (ii) year.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 16 January 2023]: NHS Digital has provided a count of Emergency Care Data Set attendances where a primary or secondary diagnosis of malnutrition was recorded and the patient was aged under 0-17 years old, for each month between April 2021 and November 2022 in England. This information is provided in the table below.

ACTIVITY IN ENGLISH NHS HOSPITALS AND ENGLISH NHS COMMISSIONED ACTIVITY IN THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

Year	Month	Primary diagnosis	Secondary Only	All diagnosis
2021	April	12	7	19
2021	May	28	2	30
2021	June	20	8	28
2021	July	21	2	23
2021	August	29	10	39
2021	September	25	5	30
2021	October	25	2	27
2021	November	20	7	27
2021	December	22	1	23
2022	January	15	3	18
2022	February	17	4	21
2022	March	16	4	20
2022*	April	27	2	29
2022*	May	29	6	35
2022*	June	19	4	23
2022*	July	22	1	23
2022*	August	19	2	21

ACTIVITY IN ENGLISH NHS HOSPITALS AND ENGLISH NHS COMMISSIONED ACTIVITY IN THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

2022*	September	13	2	15
2022*	October	19	1	20
2022*	November	26	7	33

Source: Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS), NHS Digital

(* provisional data)

Some health conditions can lead to malnutrition in some children. This includes eating disorders, although malnutrition itself is not an eating disorder. Through the NHS Long-Term Plan, investment in children and young people's community eating disorder services has risen every year since 2016, with an extra £54 million per year from 2022/23. This extra funding will enhance the capacity of children and young people's community eating disorder teams across the country.

■ Medical Equipment: Energy

Beth Winter:

[\[133805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2022 to Question 102899 on Medical Equipment: Energy, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of National Health Services specialised services' financial rebates for energy costs.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not have plans to assess the adequacy of NHS England specialised services' financial rebates for energy costs at this time.

However, certain specialised National Health Services, such as home haemodialysis, do include the provision of financial support to offset increased energy costs faced by patients using medical equipment at home. NHS England has uplifted tariff prices by +4.1% this year to account for inflationary costs and to support NHS Trusts in uplifting their local reimbursement tariffs for patients. Home Oxygen Suppliers also reimburse patients for the cost of electricity required to run oxygen concentrator devices in patients' homes and reimbursements are currently in line with regional averages. Cost is passed onto Integrated Care Boards as part of contractual arrangements.

In addition, the Government's cost of living support package further delivers £15 billion worth of support measures to assist the most vulnerable with rising energy costs.

■ Mental Health Services

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[133778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 January on Mental Health Update, HCWS512, whether she has made an assessment of the effectiveness of ways in which the Government could reduce the need for mental health crisis services.

Maria Caulfield:

We recognise the benefits to people of avoiding a mental health crisis by ensuring that they get the mental health support they need as soon as possible through prevention, early intervention and community-based mental health services. We keep this under continuous assessment in conjunction with NHS England through the implementation of the community mental health framework and the other mental health ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan.

In addition, the responses we received to our call for evidence to inform our mental health plans have been analysed and will be considered as part of the development of mental health policies in the Major Conditions Strategy.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[133779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 January on Mental Health Update, HCWS512, whether he has made an assessment of the potential benefits of investment in (a) talking therapy and (b) other preventative mental health services.

Maria Caulfield:

We continue to invest in National Health Service talking therapy services so that people can access a range of evidence-based psychological therapies approved by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. The NHS Long Term Plan committed an additional £2.3 billion a year to expand and transform NHS mental health services in England by 2023/24. This includes the ambition to increase access to NHS talking therapy services to cover a total of 1.9 million adults and older adults.

An independent report by the Centre for Mental Health has demonstrated the impact of social approaches to preventing and promoting better mental health at a local level. To address the mental health impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce mental health inequalities, the £15 million Better Mental Health Fund invested in 314 local projects promoting better mental health and wellbeing in 40 of the most deprived local authority across England in 2021/22.

In addition, the responses we received to our call for evidence to inform our mental health plans have been analysed and will be considered as part of the development of mental health policies in the Major Conditions Strategy.

■ Mental Health Services: Solihull

Julian Knight:

[\[133641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department is taking to increase access to mental health services in the Solihull constituency.

Maria Caulfield:

Through the NHS Long Term Plan, we are investing an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 to expand these services for adults, children and young people in England, including in Solihull.

On top of this we provided an extra £500 million in 2021/22 to accelerate our expansion plans and address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need, and invest in the National Health Service workforce.

■ Midwives: Stockport

Navendu Mishra:

[\[135459\]](#)

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 constituency in (a) 2010, (b) 2015, (c) 2020 and (d) 2023.

Will Quince:

The Department does not hold information on National Health Service staff by constituency. Data on staff working across hospital and community health services is collected and reported based on the hospital trust that employs staff. Therefore, data is presented for the relevant local hospital trust.

The table below 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.

STOCKPORT NHS

FOUNDATION

TRUST	OCT-10	OCT-15	OCT-20	OCT-22
Number of FTE Midwives	117	115	138	147

Source: NHS Digital Workforce Statistics

Data for 2023 is not yet available and so the most recently published data has been provided instead.

■ Midwives: Training

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[133802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people applied for undergraduate pre-registration midwifery courses in each year since 2015.

Will Quince:

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) publish data on the number of applicants to midwifery courses in England. The number of applicants between 2018-19 and 2021-22 are shown in the table below.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Applicants	8,140	8,750	11,040	10,340

Source: UCAS end of cycle 2022, published at the following link:

<https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-sector-level-end-cycle-data-resources-2022>

Published UCAS data only covers the period from 2018-19 onwards.

■ Mortality Rates

Andrew Western:

[132576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the highest annual number of excess deaths in 2022 compared to previous years.

Neil O'Brien:

There are a range of different organisations producing different estimates of excess deaths based on different methodologies.

Provisional Office of National Statistics data show 32,088 excess deaths in England in 2022, compared with 51,907 in 2021 and 72,258 in 2020. These figures do not adjust for age and size of the population.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities has been reporting on excess mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic, via its Excess Mortality report. Its estimates, which do adjust for age and size of population, indicate that excess deaths in England were also lower in 2022 than in the two preceding years of the pandemic.

The Department are closely monitoring figures on excess deaths. It is likely that a combination of factors has contributed to excess deaths in the latter part of 2022, including high flu prevalence, cold weather, the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

■ NHS: Drugs**Jim Shannon:**[\[132367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help secure international agreements to support (a) access to and investment in R&D and (b) cost effective procurement of medicines for the NHS.

Will Quince:

The Department has an international function that maintains relationships with other ministries of health and international organisations, such as the World Health Organization. Through these relationships, we create and maintain opportunities for Government to secure international agreements to support access to and investment in research and development and advance policies that protect the health of United Kingdom citizens and improve health for people around the world.

■ NHS: Staff**Jim Shannon:**[\[131190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the NHS England long-term workforce plan.

Will Quince:

The Government has committed to publishing the workforce plan this year and this will include independently verified projections for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in five, 10 and 15 years' time, taking full 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.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[132553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to expand the NHS workforce in England.

Will Quince:

We are continuing to grow the National Health Service workforce. As of November 2022, there were over 4,800 (3.8%) more full-time equivalent doctors and over 10,900 (3.5%) more full-time equivalent nurses from the previous year. Overall, there are over 41,800 (3.4%) more full-time equivalent staff working in the NHS.

Since September 2020 all eligible nursing, midwifery and allied health profession students receive a non-repayable training grant of a minimum of £5,000 per academic year. Additional funding is available for those studying in certain disciplines, with further financial support available for childcare, accommodation costs and travel. For the third year we have seen over 26,000 acceptances to undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery programmes. There were 3,700 more acceptances in 2022 than in 2019, a 16% increase.

We are on track to recruit 50,000 more nurses across hospital and general practice settings by 2024, with over 38,000 more nurses in November 2022 compared with September 2019. The Government has also funded 1,500 more medical school places each year for domestic students in England, a 25% increase over three years. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and has delivered five new medical schools in England.

We are also expanding routes into professional roles in the NHS. Funding for up to 200 Medical Doctor Degree Apprentices has been confirmed as part of a pilot scheme, making careers in medicine more accessible and helping to boost the number of NHS doctors. The new Medical Doctor Degree Apprenticeship aims to provide an alternative route into medicine to deliver a workforce that is more representative of local communities.

Furthermore, the Government continues to expand NHS apprenticeship opportunities from entry level to postgraduate advanced clinical practice. A person can join the NHS as an entry level healthcare assistant apprentice with a view to eventually qualifying as a registered nurse. From August 2021 to June 2022 there were over 3,300 nursing degree apprenticeship starts.

To support long term workforce planning the Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a Long Term Workforce Plan looking at the next 15 years. The high level long term workforce plan will look at the mix and number of staff required across all parts of the country and will set out the actions and reforms that will be needed.

■ **Obesity: Surgery**

Jim Shannon:

[\[129786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of people under the age of 50 who have had weight loss surgery in the last five years.

Neil O'Brien:

Data from the Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet (2021) shows the total number of individuals under 54 years old who have had a primary or secondary procedure of bariatric surgery is 15,394 between 2017/18 to 2019/20. Data for 2020/21 and 2021/22 will be published in due course.

■ **Patients: Safety**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[134052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patient safety incidents were reported as a result of ambulance service delays in each year since 2010.

Will Quince:

Information on patient safety incidents is not held in the format requested.

Information on patient safety incidents, including those relating to ambulance services, is published by NHS England as part of the National Reporting and Learning System and is available at the following link:

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

■ **Scarlet Fever and Streptococcus: Antibiotics**

Jim Shannon: [133595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of antibiotics to help tackle (a) Strep A and (b) Scarlet Fever.

Will Quince:

We have taken decisive action to boost supply of antibiotics used to treat Strep A and demand has reduced. We are continuing to work with manufacturers and wholesalers to ensure that they expedite deliveries, bring forward stock they have to make sure it gets to where it is needed and boost supply to meet demand. We have issued eight Serious Shortage Protocols to allow pharmacists to supply an alternative form of penicillin V, or alternative antibiotic, to make things easier for them, patients and general practices.

■ **Streptococcus: Antibiotics**

Wes Streeting: [104215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of supplies of antibiotics used to treat children with Strep A.

Wes Streeting: [104216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to secure more supplies of antibiotics used to treat Strep A.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 13 December 2022]: Supply issues affecting antibiotics used to treat Strep A appear to be improving, as decisive action has been taken to boost supply and demand has reduced. We are continuing to work with manufacturers and wholesalers to ensure that they expedite deliveries, bring forward stock they have to make sure it gets to where it is needed, and boost supply to meet demand.

We have issued eight Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) to allow pharmacists to supply an alternative form of penicillin V, or alternative antibiotic, to make things easier for them, patients, and GPs.

■ **Surgical Mesh Implants**

Emma Hardy: [132504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on waiting time limits in use by mesh treatment centres beyond which patients are removed from the waiting list for treatment.

Maria Caulfield:

Patients are not removed from the waiting list after a certain time limit.

Vaccination**Jim Shannon:**[\[131165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department takes to ensure that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation reviews new vaccines and immunisations (a) shortly after marketing authorisation and (b) in a timely manner.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department works with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to ensure that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation is resourced to undertake reviews of newly authorised vaccines in a timely manner following market authorisation.

The timetable for such consideration is dependent on a number of factors including the current burden of disease to the population, whether an effective vaccine is already in use, the amount of evidence available and whether further evidence is required to reach a clear decision.

Vaccination: Take-up**Jim Shannon:**[\[131164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2022 to Question 94752 on Vaccination, with reference to the findings of the UK Health Security Agency's reports on (a) Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV) coverage report, England, April 2020 to March 2021, dated 23 November 2021 and (b) Shingles vaccine coverage (England): annual report of the financial year 2021 to 2022, last updated 11 November 2022, what steps his Department is taking to increase vaccine uptake.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department works with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the NHS to improve immunisation access by providing clear, accurate information about eligibility, and the benefits of vaccines.

For both the adult pneumococcal and shingles vaccinations, general practices (GPs) proactively invite patients to come forward throughout the year when they reach the eligible age. GPs also provide these vaccines opportunistically when patients visit their GP for any other reason. The Department encourages anyone unsure of their vaccination status or eligibility, to contact their GP for advice.

■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access**Stephen Metcalfe:**[\[132374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has received evidence from the life sciences industry of the impact on UK R&D investment and potential increases in payment rates under the voluntary and statutory schemes for branded medicines; and if it will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The Department has been consulting on a proposed update to the Statutory Scheme for branded medicines and the life sciences industry has been able to express its views as part of this consultation process.

In considering the responses, the Department is carefully taking into account any evidence submitted on potential impacts for the United Kingdom life sciences sector.

The Government remains firmly committed to the Statutory and Voluntary schemes for branded medicines and to working with the pharmaceutical industry to deliver on the ambitions set out in the Life Sciences Vision to create an environment that facilitates innovation for the development of medicines in the UK.

HOME OFFICE**■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers****Tony Lloyd:**[\[132303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2023 to Question 120891 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, how many monitoring visits to seasonal worker visa scheme operators and growers her (a) Department and (b) the Home Office carried out in (i) 2021 and (ii) 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office does not routinely publish data on monitoring visits to seasonal worker visa scheme operators.

■ Asylum: Sefton**Peter Dowd:**[\[134035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department most recently discussed with Sefton Council the potential placement within the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton of people claiming asylum.

Peter Dowd:[\[134036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has discussed with Sefton Council the use of holiday parks in the borough as accommodation for people claiming asylum.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office are engaged with a number of local authorities on sourcing appropriate accommodation for asylum seekers. We are committed to engaging with local authorities and local partners to support successful delivery. The Home Office most recently met with Sefton Council on 12th January 2023 to discuss asylum support in the area.

As detailed in the Prime Minister's statement to the house on 13th December, the Home Office are identifying options to provide alternative accommodation to support asylum seekers, this includes exploring the use of holiday parks. The Home Office are engaged with a number of local authorities, including Sefton Council, on sourcing appropriate accommodation for asylum seekers.

■ Cannabidiol**Crispin Blunt:****[131106]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will hold discussions with the FSA on (a) the safety of Cannabidiol (CBD) products and (b) the process by which the FSA assesses the risks presented by those products; and if she will seek advice from the FSA to inform her decision on the regulation of CBD products.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office works with the Food Standards Agency on the issue of CBD products, given our respective responsibilities for the regulation of controlled drugs and novel foods.

The Home Office will continue to work with the Agency as we consider our response to the advice provided by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on CBD products.

■ Crime: Research**Emily Thornberry:****[133963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the third edition of the research report on the economic and social costs of crime; and whether her Department has already received a draft of that report from the independent researchers.

Chris Philp:

The Economic and Social Costs of Crime second edition was published by the Home Office in July 2018 and is still in use by the Department. The report is currently the most comprehensive source for the estimated economic and social costs of the crimes, committed against individuals and businesses.

The department is reviewing more up to date estimates but is not in a position to publish. The review is being conducted by Home Office officials and not by external researchers.

References: [The economic and social costs of crime \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

■ HM Passport Office: Training

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[132514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what compulsory training is in place for public-facing staff of HM Passport Office on communicating with and supporting families who have fled domestic violence who are applying for passports.

Robert Jenrick:

His Majesty's Passport Office delivers mandatory training to public-facing staff that is designed to enable recognition of vulnerability indicators, and to help them to meet the needs of vulnerable customers.

Further guidance for HM Passport Office staff regarding vulnerability considerations, including those suffering from domestic abuse, can be found on GOV.UK:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vulnerability-considerations-caseworker-guidance/vulnerability-considerations-for-passports#Vulnerability_consideration:_abuse

■ Home Office: Disease Control

Daisy Cooper: [\[131392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office has no record of purchasing mobile UV virus irradiation units.

■ Home Office: Written Questions

Jessica Morden: [\[131161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 January to Question 122098 on Home Office: Written Questions, what proportion of (a) ordinary and (b) named-day written questions her Department answered on time between January and July 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

According to statistics provided by the Table Office, between January and July 2022 the Home Office answered 3,103 written questions. 60% of named-day written questions were answered on time. 75% of ordinary written questions were answered within a 5-day target and 85% of ordinary written questions were answered within a 10-day target.

The Home Office is working to improve our performance in answering written parliamentary questions, for details on this continuous improvement I refer the Hon Member to the letter sent from the Home Office to the Procedure Committee dated 21 June 2022

https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/23223/documents/169558/default/opens_in_a_new_tab.

■ Immigration: Staff

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[133606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's news story entitled Immigration enforcement surge since pledge to tackle illegal working, published on 23 January 2023, what the timescales are for the planned recruitment of 200 new Immigration Enforcement staff; which unit within Immigration Enforcement those staff will be recruited to; and whether the planned 200 new Immigration Enforcement staff are included in the target to recruit 700 new staff to the Small Boats Operational Command, announced by the Prime Minister on 13 December 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

A campaign for 200 criminal and financial investigators within Immigration Enforcement will launch next month. We expect these officers to be in post by the summer. These roles are not part of the 700 new staff being recruited into the Small Boats Operational Command.

■ Passports: Applications

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[132513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what systemic provisions are in place to support families who have fled domestic violence who wish to apply for passports that require countersignatures and documentation that might be difficult for them to secure given significant changes in their circumstances such as relocation or a change of name.

Robert Jenrick:

HM Passport Office has in place comprehensive guidance on handling passport applications from vulnerable customers, this includes victims of domestic violence.

This allows examiners to exercise discretion in applying normal requirements in relation to documentation or countersignatures.

■ Passports: Gender

Rachel Maclean:

[\[132587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will update the passport office application process to replace the word gender and the options male and female with the word sex and the options male and female.

Robert Jenrick:

British passports are issued to include the person's sex marker indicating whether they are male or female, in accordance with standards set by International Civil Aviation Organisation. HM Passport Office currently has no plans to replace use of the word gender, or the male and female options, as part of the passport application process.

■ Passports: Gender Recognition

Rachel Maclean:

[132589]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether applications for passports to the Passport Office require additional documentation along with self-declared gender to clarify whether a person is (a) male or female or (b) in possession of a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Robert Jenrick:

Passport applicants are required to submit evidence to enable HMPO to identify them and to issue a passport containing all necessary biographical information. This includes the person's sex marker indicating whether they are male or female, in accordance with international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. This will often include production of the person's birth certificate. Where a customer applies to change the sex marker in their passport or requests a sex marker which differs from their gender registered at birth, they are required to show they are using the new identity for all official purposes and will normally be required to submit a gender recognition certificate, a re-registered birth certificate or evidence from a medical practitioner that their gender change is likely to be permanent. HMPO guidance on handling gender recognition cases can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-recognition>.

HM Passport Office currently has no plans to replace use of the word gender, or the male and female options, as part of the passport application process.

■ Psilocybin

Crispin Blunt:

[131114]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2022 to Question 67096, on Psilocybin, and to the Answer of 23 January 2023 to Question 126511, on Psilocybin: Misuse, for what reason she will not conduct a review of the harms of psilocybin.

Chris Philp:

Psilocybin, as an "ester of psilocin", is controlled as a Class A drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and has been since the Act was introduced. As set out in the response to Parliamentary Question 67096, the Government has no plans to commission the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to assess the classification of Psilocybin.

A review of classification is not currently a priority in the context of the significant challenges of drug misuse set out in Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs, which the government is focused on tackling through the 10-year Drug Strategy, including work to improve treatment and recovery services, tackle drugs supply and reduce the demand for drugs in society.

■ Shoplifting: Prosecutions

Andrew Selous:

[\[903441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that perpetrators of shoplifting are charged.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises the significant impact that shoplifting can have, not only on businesses but also the wider community and consumers.

We are working closely with retailers, trade organisations, police and enforcement partners across England and Wales via the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) to ensure the response to crimes affecting the retail sector, including shoplifting, is as robust as it can be.

We also support the police-led National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) and National Police Chiefs' Council to help ensure businesses and police are working effectively together to tackle shoplifting. This includes encouraging businesses to report incidents when they occur, gather relevant evidence and work closely with the police to ensure incidents are dealt with appropriately.

The Crime and Policing Minister wrote to PCCs and Chief Constables in September 2020, setting out that the theft of goods valued up to £200 from a shop should be prosecuted as a criminal offence and therefore should not constrain the ability of the police to arrest or prosecute someone in the way they feel is most appropriate.

We expect that all reported crimes, including shoplifting, should be taken seriously and properly investigated.

JUSTICE

■ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences: Administration of Justice

Emily Thornberry:

[\[131153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) mean and (b) median time was from offence to case completion for cases of (i) rape, (ii) sexual offences, excluding rape and (iii) domestic abuse for each quarter between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022.

Edward Argar:

Timeliness data relating to offences is measured at the point of the offence occurring. For that reason, it can include historical offences that are not reported to the police for several months or even years and can skew in particular mean averages. The average number of days taken from offence to completion for rape and sexual offences (excluding rape) in England and Wales, by court type for the latest four published quarters has been provided (As attached). It is not possible to separately identify cases of domestic abuse, which will be recorded under the specific offences for which they are prosecuted, e.g., Violence cases.

Attachments:

1. [131153_table](#) [2023-01-30 PQ 131153 (table).xlsx]

■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide**Rachel Maclean:****[132579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he expects to publish the Government's response to the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review.

Edward Argar:

The government commissioned an independent expert, Clare Wade KC, to undertake a review of domestic homicide sentencing. The Terms of Reference stated that the review would be submitted to the Secretary of State for Justice by the end of 2021 and that we would then consider the review and its recommendations before determining whether further consultation is needed or publishing the report.

The independent reviewer required more time than anticipated to complete the review and it was delivered to the department in June 2022. The Review examines a number of important and complex issues. Therefore prior to publication of the review and response, the government is carefully considering its recommendations and next steps.

This government is fully committed to ensuring that the sentencing framework responds appropriately to cases of domestic homicide and that sentences reflect the severity of these crimes.

■ Drugs: Trials**Emily Thornberry:****[131158]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) mean and (b) median time from offence to completion was for trials regarding the (i) production, (ii) supply and (iii) possession with intent to supply of class A drugs in each quarter between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022.

Edward Argar:

Timeliness data relating to offences is measured at the point of the offence occurring. The average number of days taken from offence to completion for trials regarding the (i) production, (ii) supply and (iii) possession with intent to supply of class A drugs in England and Wales, by court type for the latest four published quarters has been provided. (As attached).

Our decisive action in the courts kept justice moving during the face of an unprecedented pandemic and as a result, the outstanding caseload in the Crown Court had reduced from around 60,400 cases in June 2021 to 57,300 cases at the end of March 2022.

However, the caseload increased again from April, primarily due to the Criminal Bar Association action, and stood at 62,500 at the end of October. The caseload is now beginning to decrease and stood at 61,900 at the end of November 2022.

We have removed the limit on sitting days, extended 30 Nightingale courtrooms and are extending our plans for judicial recruitment to increase sitting capacity and improve waiting times for victims.

To provide additional capacity in the Crown Court, magistrates sentencing powers have been extended from 6 to 12 months for a single Triable Either Way offence to allow more cases to be heard in the magistrates' court.

Attachments:

1. [Table](#) [2023-02-01 PQ 131158 Table.xlsx]

Emily Thornberry:

[131159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) total and (b) effective trials there were for the (i) production, (ii) supply and (iii) possession with intent to supply of class A drugs in each quarter between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022.

Edward Argar:

Data on total and effective trials in the Crown Court can be found in the attached tables (table 1 for production of class A drugs offences, table 2 for supply of class A drugs and table 3 for possession with intent to supply class A drugs). There are a number of reasons why a trial may be ineffective, including witness absence, insufficient juror availability and the defence not being ready.

Attachments:

1. [Tables](#) [2023-02-01 131159 Table.xlsx]

■ **Electric Scooters: Road Traffic Offences**

Gill Furniss:

[134016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many rental e-scooter riders have been convicted of causing an obstruction under regulation 103 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 since 2020.

Edward Argar:

This information can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Fraud: Administration of Justice**

Emily Thornberry:

[131156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) mean and (b) median time was from offence to completion for cases of fraud in each 12-month period ending on 30 September (i) 2017, (ii) 2018, (iii) 2019, (iv) 2020, (v) 2021 and (vi) 2022.

Edward Argar:

Timeliness data relating to offences is measured at the point of the offence occurring. For that reason, it can include 'historical' offences that are not reported to the police for several months or even years and can skew in particular mean averages. The average number of days taken from offence to completion for fraud offences in England and Wales, by court type, in each 12-month period end on 30 September

2017-2022 has been provided alongside charge to completion estimates to account for potential 'historical' offences. (As attached).

Attachments:

1. [131156_table](#) [2023-01-30 PQ 131156 (table).xlsx]

■ **HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Standards**

Ruth Cadbury:

[131238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the service provided by HM Courts and Tribunals Service at processing applications for probate.

Mike Freer:

Despite the unprecedented challenges faced by the probate service during the Covid 19 pandemic, and the increased volume of applications that have been seen since, the average length of time taken for a grant of probate following receipt of the documents required has been maintained at between five and seven weeks – with the average responses being almost 1 week faster in quarter 3 of 2022 than the yearly average for 2020 and 2021.

Average waiting times for probate grants, up to September 2022, are published on gov.uk via Family Court Statistics Quarterly (Table 25):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2022>.

HMCTS has increased resources to meet the higher demand following an increased number of estates requiring probate and is further increasing resourcing to further bring down overall timeliness on digital and paper applications.

The improvement of the online probate system remains a priority for HMCTS, to ensure more applications can be issued first time and resources can be focused on reducing waiting times.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Disease Control**

Daisy Cooper:

[131397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Mike Freer:

We have no records of purchasing any units.

■ **Offenders: Probation**

Sam Tarry:

[131412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders are waiting to be allocated a probation officer.

Sam Tarry:

[\[131413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what is the average waiting time for the allocation of offenders to probation officers.

Sam Tarry:

[\[131414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the target waiting time is for the allocation of offenders to probation officers.

Damian Hinds:

As of 25 January 2023, 1655 people on probation were awaiting to be allocated to a Probation Practitioner (Probation Officer, Probation Services Officer (PSO) or training Probation Officer (PQiP). This will include cases very recently sentenced and still going through the allocation process.

Our workload measurement tool tells us that 0.4% of the total caseload is allocated outside of the Probation Officer allocation policy to PSOs or PQiPs.

Whilst there is no target for allocation of a person on probation to a Probation Practitioner; timely allocation enables the first face-to-face appointment with a person on probation to take place within five working days of sentence for a community order and suspended sentence order and one working day for those on release from prison.

The Probation Service is introducing a digital tool to support case allocation decisions. The tool will allow for efficient allocation of cases, ensuring adequate consideration and identification of case complexity when being allocated to a probation officer.

■ Prison and Probation Service: Recruitment

Sam Tarry:

[\[131411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many probation officers have been employed by HM Prison and Probation Service in each year since 2010.

Damian Hinds:

The quarterly HMPPS workforce statistics [publication](#) covers staffing information.

■ Prisoners: Transgender People

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[132617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will set out a timetable for the review into the policy framework for trans prisoners.

Damian Hinds:

Our review of the policy framework has completed, and we will be publishing an updated policy framework shortly, which will set out the new guidance in detail and how it will be implemented by HMPPS. The implementation of this new policy will take effect soon after we have published the revised framework.

■ Prisons: Wales

Steve Reed:

[\[134021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the total cost of litigation damages paid to prisoners in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Damian Hinds:

The requested information prior to 2016-2017 cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost. The total cost of litigation damages paid to prisoners in England and Wales in each completed financial year from 2016-17 is provided in the table below.

YEAR	LITIGATION DAMAGES PAID ON PRISONER CLAIMS
2016-17	£2,640,290
2017-18	£4,519,519
2018-19	£4,586,001
2019-20	£7,621,648
2020-21	£6,074,143
2021-22	£5,258,338

We successfully defend two-thirds of compensation cases brought by prisoners and always make sure debts to victims and the courts are paid before any payment is made to the offender.

■ Probation

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[131404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that offenders released from prison on probation are being safely supervised.

Damian Hinds:

Action to enable the safe supervision of those released from custody on licence or under post-sentence supervision starts before they leave prison with critical work undertaken by prison and probation staff. In the majority of cases (except very short sentences where they are managed by their home probation region) this involves a formal handover from the prison offender manager to the community offender manager. This arrangement was introduced as part of the Offender Management in Custody initiative, and monitoring is in place at a national level through a Service Level Agreement in order to promote continuous improvement in this area and ensure compliance with national standards. The handover is intended to focus on public protection measures, sharing of information, and the opportunity for the offender and the community offender manager to begin building a good relationship.

The Probation Service has a range of measures in place to promote the safe supervision of offenders in the community. Every offender's risk is assessed, and will be re-assessed if there is any indication that the level may have increased. Offenders released on licence are required to abide by a set of standard conditions, to which additional conditions may be added to take account of a particular risk the individual may pose. Offenders who breach their licence are liable to immediate recall to custody.

HM Inspectorate of Probation reports to the Government on the effectiveness of work with those who have offended, with the aim of reducing re-offending and protecting the public. The quality of supervision is also measured through HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS)'s annual Sentence Management Audit. Recommendations made by both internal and external scrutineers are implemented via regional Quality Improvement Plans. HMPPS auditors will conduct regular reviews of the delivery of these plans through 2023-24, as one of the measures we have in place to promote high standards of supervision.

Sam Tarry:

[\[131415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the (a) assessment and (b) management of the risks of serious harm to the public posed by people on probation by HM Prison and Probation Service.

Damian Hinds:

The quality of risk assessment and risk management is centrally assured by HMPPS's Operational and System Assurance function, in order to provide a robust assessment of the quality of sentence management.

This assurance work covers the quality of risk assessments and the adequacy of the management of Risk of Serious Harm. The annual audit exercise for 2022-23 is in progress.

Each probation region also completes its own assurance of the quality of practice, including on risk assessment and risk of serious harm, using a specialised audit tool. From 2023-24 onwards, the HMPPS assurance team will validate the results of these regional audits, to ensure consistency and continued focus on the quality of practice.

The required learning in relation to risk assessment, planning and management is currently being re-developed to include a greater understanding of actuarial predictor tools as well as building upon prior learning to focus upon application to more complex cases.

■ Probation Service

Steve Reed:

[\[131196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he is taking steps to help reduce the case workloads of probation officers.

Damian Hinds:

We are working to reduce workload pressures through recruitment and retention of staff and published the first Probation Service Recruitment and Retention Strategy in April 2021.

To reduce workloads, the Probation Service is committed to increasing recruitment of Probation Officers, particularly in areas with significant local employment market challenges. We exceeded our recruitment targets for 2020/21 and 2021/22, recruiting 1,007 and 1,518 trainees respectively, and aim to recruit a further 1,500 trainees this financial year.

We have centralised recruitment of key operational roles to expedite recruitment in 6 priority regions, including London, and mobilised schemes to financially incentivise new and existing staff to move permanently to areas with the most significant staffing challenges.

We have increased local outreach to improve awareness of Probation and the roles available, as well as refreshing our marketing to ensure we are attracting sufficient applications. We are committed to widening routes to achieve probation qualifications by developing pathways for existing staff, as well as creating routes for those without a graduate degree.

A prioritisation framework has been introduced to provide clarity for Probation staff on prioritisation of tasks and what can be reduced/paused when capacity issues begin to impact on operational delivery.

Steve Reed:[\[131204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of privatising and then nationalising the Probation Service.

Damian Hinds:

It is not possible to disaggregate the full cost of implementing the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms in 2015 and then the unification of the Probation Service in 2021 from the wider costs of delivering probation services.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[131405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent cross-departmental discussions he has had on reducing pressures on the Probation Service.

Damian Hinds:

We have unified the Probation Service and injected extra funding of more than £155 million a year to deliver more robust supervision, reduce caseloads and recruit thousands more staff to keep the public safer. We have recruited a record-breaking 2,500 trainee probation officers over the last two years and we plan to recruit a further 1,500 by March 2023.

Recruitment of key operational roles has been centralised to accelerate recruitment in 6 priority regions, including London. There are schemes available to provide financial

support to encourage new and existing staff to move permanently to areas with the most significant staffing challenges.

In collaboration with local probation regions, the Department for Work and Pensions and Career Transition Partnerships, local outreach has increased to improve awareness of Probation and the roles available. Marketing campaigns have been rolled out to attract undergraduate/students to work in part time roles.

The Probation Service is also committed to widening routes to achieve probation qualifications by developing pathways for existing staff, as well as creating routes for those without a graduate degree.

Sam Tarry:

[131418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent cross-departmental discussions he has had on reducing pressures on the Probation Service.

Damian Hinds:

To support manageable workloads, the Probation Service is increasing recruitment to fill Probation Officer vacancies, particularly in areas with significant local employment market challenges. The Probation Service has exceeded recruitment targets for 2020/21 and 2021/22, recruiting 1,007 and 1,518 trainees in respective years. The target for 2022/2023 is a further 1,500 trainees.

In collaboration with local regions, the Department for Work and Pensions and Career Transition Partnerships, local outreach has increased to improve awareness of Probation and the roles available, as well as refreshing marketing to attract applications. The Probation Service is committed to widening routes to achieve probation qualifications by developing pathways for existing staff, as well as creating routes for those without a graduate degree.

The recruitment to key operational roles has been centralised to expedite recruitment in 6 priority regions, including London. Marketing campaigns have been rolled out to attract undergraduate/students to work in part time roles. There are schemes available to provide financial support to encourage new and existing staff to move permanently to areas with the most significant staffing challenges.

To increase the retention of staff, exit interviews are being used to understand the reasons behind staff leaving Probation, so that we can take targeted action across departments to address them.

■ Probation Service: Greater London

Sam Tarry:

[131426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to HM Prison Inspectorate's report entitled Independent, serious further offence review of Jordan McSweeney, published on 24 January 2023, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of that report on the level of (a) excessive workloads and (b) staffing vacancies in the Probation Service in the London region.

Damian Hinds:

The Probation Service has accepted the recommendations from the HM Probation Inspectorate Report following the serious further offence review of Jordan McSweeney and has an action plan in place.

Following the successful unification of the Probation Service for England and Wales, the Probation Service received an additional annual funding of £155 million. We have significantly increased staff recruitment and have exceeded trainee Probation Officer recruitment targets for 2020/21 and 2021/22, recruiting 1,007 and 1,518 trainees in respective years. The target for 2022/2023 is a further 1,500 trainees.

We are strengthening probation officer numbers so that we can reduce caseloads and focus on strengthening the probation officer's relationship with those they supervise, thereby providing more consistent management and delivery of sentence plans, as well as better assessment and management of risk.

■ Probation Service: Staff**Sam Tarry:**[\[131417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the potential effect of the size of the probation workforce on that service's ability to meet its caseload effectively.

Damian Hinds:

The Probation Staffing Model identifies the staffing required to deliver the Probation Target Operating Model with acceptable caseloads.

The Probation Service has unified into a single organisation which spans England and Wales. This has ended the fragmentation which existed under the previous system and improved how the service functions.

The unified Target Operating Model seeks to achieve consistency and quality delivery as well as new ways of measuring and managing workload. The unified Probation Service has received extra funding of more than £155 million a year to deliver more robust supervision, reduce caseloads and recruit more staff to keep the public safer. We have recruited a record-breaking 2,500 trainee probation officers over the last two years, and we plan to recruit a further 1,500 by March 2023.

The Probation Service has introduced a Prioritisation Framework to provide clarity for probation practitioners on prioritisation of tasks and what can be reduced/paused when capacity issues begin to impact on operational delivery. It has also introduced a case allocation tool to support best practice case allocation decisions and actions. The tool will ensure quicker allocation of cases and improved accuracy and consistency.

■ Probation Service: Standards

Sam Tarry:

[131438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he will request a Royal Commission on the performance of the Probation Service.

Damian Hinds:

The government does not intend to request a Royal Commission into the performance of the Probation Service. We are aware of the challenges faced by the service and are committed to driving improvements urgently.

On 26 June, the Probation Service was reformed to create a unified service that is responsible for managing all offenders which is being delivered through an additional investment of £155 million. This resource is being used to recruit and retain a strong and diverse workforce to address the high workloads and improve the overall performance of the Probation Service, as public protection is our highest priority.

The performance of the Probation Service is closely monitored by both internal and external scrutiny bodies including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) who provide independent scrutiny of Probation Services in England and Wales. They focus on the quality and impact of the Probation Service, providing authoritative and evidence-based judgements and guidance leading to improved outcomes for individuals and communities. The Probation Service also undergoes regular audits completed by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Operational and System Assurance Group. This regular scrutiny means that the issues are identified and swift action is taken to address them, for example record recruitment was achieved in 2021 with over 1,500 trainee probation officers enrolled, helping to fill recruitment vacancies.

Regular feedback on probation performance is received from HMIP who inspect every Probation Delivery Unit on a three-year cycle and provide thematic inspections on specific areas. HMIP also undertake reviews of serious further offences as directed by the Secretary of State for Justice, which provides greater impartiality on the performance and state of the Probation Service.

■ Probation: Finance

Sam Tarry:

[131416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much the Government has spent on providing bail outs to private probation companies in the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

There have been no Government bail outs to private probation companies in the past five years.

■ Reoffenders

Sam Tarry:

[131427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce trends in the level of serious further offences.

Damian Hinds:

Under 0.5% of offenders under statutory supervision are charged with a serious further offence in any one year, but we know that each offence has a devastating impact on the victims and their families. We carry out a thorough review into each one to identify whether our practice needs to change for the better management of future cases.

Risk cannot be eliminated entirely. However, every offender released from prison is managed in the community on licence, subject to robust licence conditions designed to address the specific risks which the offender presents. Known sexual and violent offenders are managed under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). MAPPA are a statutory framework, in which the Prison and Probation Services are required to work together to assess and manage offenders' risks. Offenders who breach their licence conditions so as to exhibit increased risk are liable to be recalled to custody.

Public protection is our primary concern, and unto that end:

- We have unified the Probation Service and greater focus on quality and outcomes has been placed at the centre the unified Probation Service National Standards and performance framework;
- We have injected extra funding of more than £155 million a year to deliver more robust supervision, reduce caseloads and recruit thousands more staff to keep the public safer. We have recruited a record-breaking 2,500 trainee probation officers over the last two years, and we plan to recruit a further 1,500 by March 2023;
- We are improving information sharing with the Police and Children's Services, investing an extra £5.5 million a year to recruit more probation staff who are specifically responsible for accessing domestic abuse information held by the police, and children's safeguarding information held by councils;
- We have introduced a new child safeguarding policy framework, setting out clear requirements and best practice to support staff;
- We introduced legislation to clarify and strengthen agencies' ability to share information on sexual and violent offenders under MAPPA and added a dedicated chapter to the statutory MAPPA guidance on domestic abuse and stalking; and
- We have undertaken a range of activity to strengthen known gaps in risk assessment and management, including improving our required learning, updating and developing guidance documents to support practitioners and providing learning events to enable staff to learn from experts and those with lived experience.

■ Reoffenders: Reviews

Sam Tarry:

[131409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to HM Prison Inspectorate's report entitled Independent serious further offence review of Jordan McSweeney, published on 24 January 2023, whether he plans to implement all recommendations in that review.

Damian Hinds:

On the 24 January 2023, the Probation Service published its action plan in response to HM Inspectorate of Probation's findings. All 10 recommendations have been accepted, and the document sets out what action will be taken to implement the recommendations. The action plan can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jordan-mcsweeney-independent-review-action-plan>.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Buildings: Battersea

Marsha De Cordova:

[132559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many buildings in Battersea constituency have had unsafe cladding removed in the last 12 months.

Lee Rowley:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN [127898](#), noting that remediation work has started or been completed on nine buildings in the Battersea constituency, identified as having unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding.

■ Buildings: Sustainable Development

Tulip Siddiq:

[131335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing a comprehensive definition for sustainable buildings in the National Planning Policy Framework as part of his Department's objective to improve environmental outcomes.

Lucy Frazer:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. At a high level, it defines the objective of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

To support delivering this objective in practice, the National Model Design Code also highlights that sustainable construction is the practice of creating buildings using

processes that are environmentally responsible and resource efficient. The NPPF sets out that all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences.

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Disease Control**

Daisy Cooper: [\[131396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Dehenna Davison:
No.

■ **Flats: Insulation**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[131236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help people living in flats with unsafe cladding, bought using Help to Buy loans, obtain specialist valuations.

Lucy Frazer:
All customers who wish to pay off their equity loan need to have their home professionally valued first to ascertain its current market value. Those whose properties have building safety issues, such as unsafe exterior cladding, can present additional challenges in valuing. The process to get a valuation and redeem an equity loan for properties affected by cladding can be found on Target, the loan administrator's, website. We are aware that some customers are having difficulties finding a valuer prepared to value their properties, and have been working with the Homes England and RICS to try to find ways to help customers, including potentially unlocking more valuation options for them in the future.

On December 6, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) published new valuation guidance for buildings 11 metres and above with cladding [here](#). This guidance reflects the leaseholder protections in the Building Safety Act which confirmed that those at fault, not blameless leaseholders, will be the ones to pay to fix unsafe cladding, and the solutions in place to fix buildings 11m+. This new guidance will help to resolve difficulties in valuing properties where cladding is present.

■ **Freeports**

Conor McGinn: [\[131234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if the Government will commit to support freeports for the life of the development, rather than for a specific time period, including at Parkside.

Dehenna Davison:

Details of the Government's free ports programme are published on gov.uk and include a generous package of tax reliefs until 2026 for eligible businesses on Freeport tax sites like Parkside. We are also backing Freeports over a 25-year period through local retention of all business rates growth above an agreed baseline.

■ Homelessness: Rural Areas**Paula Barker:****[131370]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in levels of homelessness in rural areas.

Felicity Buchan:

The department publishes homelessness data [here](#).

■ Housing First: Standards**Paula Barker:****[131364]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of housing supply in Housing First pilot areas.

Paula Barker:**[131365]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of expanding Housing First to areas beyond existing pilots.

Felicity Buchan:

The department has commissioned a consortium, led by ICF, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the sub-regional Housing First pilots, which will run for the duration of the pilots. Four reports have been published to date, with the final report due at the end of 2023. The reports are available [here](#).

■ Levelling Up Fund**Jack Brereton:****[131260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what criteria were used in awarding round two of the Levelling Up Fund; whether these were different to those used in round one; and how levels of multiple deprivation were factored into determining the areas which should receive funding.

Dehenna Davison:

I refer the my Hon Friend to my answer to Question UIN [129836](#) on 26 January 2023 and to the published [prioritisation of places methodology note](#) and [index update note](#) published on gov.uk, which outline the metrics and methodology used in the Levelling Up Fund's Index of Priority Places.

The published [Explanatory Note for LUF round 1](#) sets out the approach to assessment and decision making for round 1.

Olivia Blake:[\[133793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reasons guidance on the eligibility criteria for the Levelling Up Fund (a) changed from constituency area to local authority area and (b) was made public after the bidding process was complete; and what assessment he has made of the potential financial impact of changes to the eligibility criteria on applicants deemed ineligible.

Dehenna Davison:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [129836](#) on 26 January 2023.

■ Liverpool City Region: Local Government Finance

Bill Esterson:[\[128625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what funding has been allocated to the six boroughs in the Liverpool City Region since 2010.

Lee Rowley:

Local authorities receive a wide range of grants from multiple government departments to reflect their broad responsibilities. Information on specific grants, including where relevant the amount returned, is held by the department that is responsible for administering the grant.

Core funding for local authorities is available through the local government finance settlement. We measure core funding through 'Core Spending Power' which consists of grant funding, redistributed business rates and council tax. It reflects regular, annual funding government makes available to deliver local authorities to deliver key services, both incorporating central grants and locally raised taxation, and allows comparisons across years which ensures a transparent measure of available funding. Due to changes in the function and financing of local government, comparable data on Core Spending Power is not available prior to 2015/16. Allocations back to 2015/16, including provisional allocations for 2023/24 are available [here](#).

CORE SPENDING POWER

Local Authority	2015 - 16£ million	2016 - 17£ million	2017 - 18£ million	2018 - 19£ million	2019 - 20£ million	2020 - 21£ million	2021 - 22£ million	2022 - 23£ million	2023 - 24£ million
Halton	104.0	100.7	102.9	105.0	106.7	113.1	116.8	125.7	137.9
Knowsley	152.5	146.3	149.3	152.3	154.5	165.0	172.3	186.8	206.7
Liverpool	445.0	436.2	445.9	454.2	460.7	492.6	505.8	547.2	606.3
Sefton	221.8	216.5	221.2	227.3	231.0	245.7	252.4	273.7	301.1
St Helens	141.8	137.7	141.6	144.8	146.8	156.8	162.2	176.7	194.4

CORE SPENDING POWER

Wirral	261.9	252.2	257.8	264.4	268.3	285.0	297.4	321.2	355.4
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■ **Local Government Finance: Greater Manchester**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[131358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding has been allocated to each local authority in Greater Manchester since 2010.

Lee Rowley:

Local authorities receive a wide range of grants from government departments to reflect their broad responsibilities.

Details of core funding for local authorities is available through the local government finance settlement but due to changes in the function and financing of local government, comparable data on Core Spending Power is not available prior to 2015/16. Allocations back to 2015/16, including provisional allocations for 2023/24, are available [here](#).

■ **Private Rented Housing**

Paula Barker:

[\[131369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the supply of housing in the private rented sector.

Felicity Buchan:

The English Housing Survey provides information on households and housing stock. The proportion of Private Rented Sector (PRS) households has remained relatively stable for nearly a decade. The PRS was 19% of households in 2013-14 and continues to be at 19% according to the latest data for 2021-22.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Social Security Benefits**

Sir Alan Campbell:

[\[131149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to prevent landlords in the private rented sector from stipulating that they will not accept tenants in receipt of social security payments.

Felicity Buchan:

The White Paper '*A Fairer Private Rented Sector*', published in June 2022, sets out our plan to bring forward legislation banning blanket 'No DSS' practices. The government remains committed to introducing a Renters Reform Bill within this Parliament, and we will do so as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Ben Lake: [\[131327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding has been allocated to the Welsh Government for the Financial Year 2023-24 from the £150 million UK-wide funding to help support Ukrainian guests move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness among those people.

Ben Lake: [\[131328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason local authorities in Wales are unable to access the £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund.

Felicity Buchan:

Local authority funding is a devolved matter in Wales and primarily funded via the Barnett formula.

However, the £150 million of funding will be allocated between the different parts of the UK in relation to their proportion of Ukrainian guests. This money is to help support Ukrainian guests move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness. The Secretary of State will be writing to local authorities to set out further details of this once the allocation method has been finalised.

As referenced in the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) by my Rt. Hon Friend, the Secretary of State, on 14 December 2022, the Local Authority Housing Fund has been identified from within existing England-only Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities budgets and as such there is no additional Barnett formula funding for devolved governments.

The UK Government continues to work closely with the Devolved Governments, including the Welsh Government, as well as local authorities in Wales on support for Ukrainian and Afghan arrivals

■ Regional Planning and Development: East of England

Daisy Cooper: [\[131381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make assessment of the potential merits of the proposal in the Levelling Up the East of England report, published on 13 December 2022 by the all-party parliamentary group on East of England and the East of England Local Government Association, of developing a rural and coastal levelling up strategy.

Dehenna Davison:

Further to the answer given to the Hon Member to Question UIN [125523](#) on 20 January 2023, the Levelling Up White Paper recognised the challenges and opportunities that rural and coastal communities across the UK face, and the Government has taken care to make sure that all communities left behind will benefit.

■ Social Rented Housing: Older People

Alexander Stafford: [\[129974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has issued guidance to local councils on offering social housing intended for elderly residents to younger applicants.

Alexander Stafford: [\[129981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the practice of offering social housing intended for elderly people to younger applicants on the level of housing stock available for elderly residents.

Alexander Stafford: [\[129982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the number of occasions on which (a) Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has and (b) other councils have offered social housing intended for elderly residents to a younger applicant citing equality legislation in each of the last three years.

Dehenna Davison:

Local authorities are responsible for allocating social housing through schemes they set locally. These are governed by a framework of rules set by central government which ensure social housing is prioritised for those in housing need. There is high demand for social housing, and it necessary that those who need it most are given priority.

It is for local authorities and Private Registered Providers to decide how to use their freedoms within this framework of rules to balance the need to allocate housing to those who need it most with the aim of building safe and stable communities.

■ Social Rented Housing: Standards

Matt Western: [\[129999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many social landlords have self-referred to the Regulator of Social Housing following the Chief Executive's letter to landlords of 22 November asking them to do so if their homes did not meet relevant standards.

Dehenna Davison:

The Regulator is currently considering the information it received following the Chief Executive's letter to landlords of 22 November.

■ Universities: East of England

Daisy Cooper: [\[131385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Levelling Up in the East of England report published by the East of England APPG and the East of England Local Government Association on 13 December 2022, if he will

make it his policy to expand University Enterprise Zones to other Universities in the East of England region in addition to those which are already in place.

Dehenna Davison:

A full programme evaluation is ongoing for the University Enterprise Zones. The Government will consider how lessons learned from this programme will inform future investment to support local growth and innovation. The Chancellor announced that Investment Zones will be refocused to catalyse a limited number of the highest potential knowledge-intensive growth clusters. Research institutions and Universities will be crucial to this new approach, the Government will work with them, and other partners, to consider how best to support clusters as part of the refocused programme. The APPG's report was discussed at the Westminster Hall debate on 31 January.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

■ Local Government: Elections

Rachael Maskell:

[\[135283\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Lancaster and Fleetwood, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, whether the Committee has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing Ukrainian refugees resident in England to vote in local elections.

Cat Smith:

Neither the Speaker's Committee nor the Electoral Commission has made an assessment of the matter raised. Changes to the franchise are for Parliament to consider, and not for the Electoral Commission.

Where Parliament decides to make changes to the franchise, the Commission will work with government and the electoral community to ensure they are implemented effectively.

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services: Disability

Julian Sturdy:

[\[133614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to require buses to display audio-visual passenger information for people with sight and hearing loss.

Mr Richard Holden:

We plan to require the provision of audible and visible information on local bus and coach services across Great Britain, and will introduce the Accessible Information Regulations shortly.

■ Bus Services: Finance

Peter Aldous:

[\[132341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department will take to ensure bus networks have adequate funding to support communities when this phase of the Bus Recovery Grant Funding ends in April 2023.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Government has made available nearly £2 billion since March 2020, through emergency and recovery grants, to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the bus sector. This support is currently in place until the end of March 2023. The Department is actively considering its support for the bus sector from April 2023.

The Government already provides around £250 million annually to support bus services through the Bus Service Operators Grant, and supports spending of around £1 billion a year so that older and disabled people can travel on buses throughout England for free.

The Government is also taking proactive steps to help increase patronage by providing £60 million to help bus operators cap single fares at £2 on services in England outside London from 1 January to 31 March 2023. Over 130 operators covering more than 4,600 routes are participating in the scheme, which will help increase patronage on buses and help millions save on their regular travel costs.

■ Department for Transport: Equality

Chris Stephens:

[\[R\] \[133740\]](#)

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

Jesse Norman:

The Department complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code by collecting and analysing a range of data on, for example, recruitment, career development, promotion, job allocation and resignations. This data is published in the Department's Equality Monitoring report. The department also carries out pay modelling and analysis of performance pay. This includes analysis to monitor diversity impacts.

This information is both publicly available and can be shared with trade unions on request.

■ Electric Scooters

Peter Gibson:

[\[133703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to (a) complete e-scooter trials and (b) publish the report on the outcomes of e-scooter trials.

Jesse Norman:

The current e-scooter trials, which are live in 25 areas across England, have been extended from November 2022 to 31 May 2024.

The Department published the findings report of the national evaluation of e-scooter rental trials in England on 15 December 2022.

Gill Furniss:[\[134015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the research entitled National evaluation of e-scooter trials report, published on 15 December 2022, how many penalties have been issued by e-scooter trial providers as a result of a rider abandoning an e-scooter in the last 12 months.

Jesse Norman:

The day to day running of any trial is for the local authority and its scooter operator partner(s). Operational data of this type is not held by the Department for Transport and was not collected from operators as part of the trials evaluation study.

■ Shipping: Liberia**Alex Cunningham:**[\[133973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to investigate the suspected fatality of a worker employed on the Liberian registered Valaris vessel on 22 January 2023 en route to Dundee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Richard Holden:

On 26 January 2023, the Liberian Registry notified the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) that at about 1900 hours on 22 January a UK national had been discovered as missing from the Liberian flagged Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit *Valaris 121*, which was under tow to Dundee and was some 98 miles east of Aberdeen at the time. The Liberian Registry has commenced an investigation in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation's Casualty Investigation Code. The MAIB has registered the UK as a Substantially Interested State in the Liberian investigation and has offered support.

■ Stansted Express Railway Line**Mr Jonathan Djanogly:**[\[131135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to restore four trains per hour on the Stansted Express.

Mr Jonathan Djanogly:[\[131136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when more frequent rail services on the Stansted Express will be restored.

Mr Jonathan Djanogly:[\[131137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the million passengers per annum (MPPA) rate was for London Stanstead station when trains serviced that station from

London at least four times per hour; what the expected MPPA rate of that station is for 2023-24; and when a decision on restoring at least four trains per hour from London to that station will be next reviewed.

Huw Merriman:

Stansted Express services are operated by Greater Anglia which continues to carefully monitor passenger numbers on the route; targeted adjustments to service levels will be made when required. Greater Anglia continues to work closely with Network Rail and Manchester Airport Group, which manages Stansted Airport, to ensure service levels are adequate. In terms of passenger numbers at Stansted Airport railway station, the last data set available relates to April 2019 - March 2020 and shows that there was an estimate of 8,474,784 station entries and exits. The data for 2023/24 is not yet available. The Office of Road and Rail produces this data and it will be available in due course.

■ **West Coast Main Line: Standards**

Alison McGovern:

[\[131211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of industrial action by rail workers on the ability of Avanti West Coast to adequately improve their service before their extended contract expires.

Huw Merriman:

On 11 December Avanti West Coast (AWC) implemented major changes to its timetable, increasing services from four trains per hour to seven trains per hour, which is expected to lead to an improvement in reliability. The delivery of the new timetable has been restricted by strike action and, on non-strike days, bad weather and engineering works, which has meant that passengers are yet to see a sustained improvement.

The Department will review AWC's operational performance over the term of the Emergency Measures contract as one of the important factors when considering the contractual arrangements for train services on the West Coast Main Line beyond 1 April 2023, recognising that not all factors are within AWC's control. Whether there has been stable industrial relations and cooperation from Trade Unions will be taken into consideration.

TREASURY

■ **Business Rates: Small Businesses**

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[131459\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Government's business rates policy in supporting small and medium-sized businesses.

Victoria Atkins:

Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) is available to businesses with a single property with a rateable value below £15,000. Properties under £12,000 receive 100 per cent relief, and there is tapered support available to properties valued up to £15,000.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities publishes statistics annually (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-non-domestic-rates-collected-by-councils>) which show that over a third of properties in England (700,000) already pay no business rates at all as a result of 100 per cent SBRR, with an additional 51,000 in the taper.

The eligibility criteria for SBRR ensures that it effectively targets the smallest businesses where help is needed most and provides good balance between support and cost to the Exchequer.

At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced a package of changes and tax cuts worth £13.6 billion over the next five years. This includes new measures to reduce the burden of business rates on firms, including a freeze in the multiplier for 2023-24, extended relief for high street businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector, an exchequer funded transitional relief scheme, and targeted support for small businesses.

■ Cars: Taxation**John Redwood:****[133532]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the level of tax on cars on car (a) manufacturing and (b) sales in the UK.

James Cartlidge:

The Government keeps all taxes under review and when making decisions about the tax system the Chancellor considers a wide range of factors including the competitiveness of the UK tax regime and its impact on industry and consumers. The Government uses the motoring tax system where it is most effective in incentivising the uptake of vehicles with low CO2 emissions (for example through favourable first year Vehicle Excise Duty and company car tax treatment), and balances simplicity and fairness within taxes, whilst ensuring the sustainability of the public finances over the long term.

Beyond the tax system, the Government supports the automotive manufacturing sector through capital grants for the electrification of UK vehicles and their supply chains. This support will ensure the automotive sector is globally competitive and at the forefront of the transition to net zero.

■ Catering: Public Sector**Nadia Whittome:****[134043]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is taking steps to support public sector catering suppliers who are fulfilling their public sector contracts but servicing at a loss as a result of food inflation.

John Glen:

Government departments manage their relationships with third-party suppliers in line with the Sourcing Playbook, which sets out the core principles to successful outsourcing; achieving value for money and successful service delivery. Decisions on outsourcing are made according to Treasury guidance and the Sourcing Playbook, which focuses on setting our projects up for success, right from the start. The Government's Contract Management Principles make clear that there should be flexible approaches to dealing with change through joint working with suppliers and that costs should be controlled with strong change control mechanisms.

As the Prime Minister has set out, one of the five immediate priorities for the government is to halve inflation this year to ease the cost of living and give people financial security.

■ Electricity Generation: Taxation**Philip Dunne:**[\[133587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Electricity Generator Levy on investment in renewables, including (a) onshore and offshore wind infrastructure and (b) solar power projects; and if he will make a statement.

Philip Dunne:[\[133589\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he or his officials have held discussions with their counterparts at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the Electricity Generator Levy and work to disincentivise unabated fossil fuel generation, including meeting the Government's decarbonisation commitments.

James Cartlidge:

As announced at Autumn Statement from January 2023 a 45% tax is being levied on the extraordinary returns being realised by certain electricity generators. This will help fund support for households and business with their energy bills as well as vital public services.

The levy will only be applied to extraordinary returns defined as returns from selling electricity for a period at an average price of more than £75/MWh. This is approximately 1.5 times the average price of electricity over the last decade. The Government considers this to be a proportionate approach to recovering a share of the extraordinary returns electricity generators are receiving while leaving generators a share of the revenue from high electricity prices. HM Treasury has worked closely with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the levy.

The Office for Budget Responsibility considered the impact of the levy on its economic and fiscal forecasts which was published at Autumn Statement in its economic and fiscal outlook.

■ High Income Child Benefit Tax Charge

Janet Daby: [131432]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the High Income Child Benefit Charge on people eligible to pay that charge during the cost of living crisis.

Victoria Atkins:

The adjusted net income (ANI) threshold of £50,000 for the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) affects a small proportion of taxpayers with comparatively high incomes. HMRC data also shows that the vast majority of those liable to HICBC have incomes above the UK Higher Rate Threshold. The Government has no plans to alter the current threshold for the HICBC.

Nonetheless, the Government understands the difficulties that families across the income distribution are facing with the cost of living. That's why have taken decisive action to support households through these challenges. For example, the Energy Price Guarantee will be extended from April 2023 until April 2024, saving the average household in Great Britain £900 over the financial year.

■ Revenue and Customs: Staff

Beth Winter: [131466]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many staff of HM Revenue and Customs work in customer service.

Beth Winter: [131467]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to increase the number of HMRC staff working in customer service.

Beth Winter: [131468]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the metrics HMRC uses to monitor its customer service performance.

Victoria Atkins:

Our customer service performance is published on a monthly and quarterly basis on GOV.UK here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-monthly-performance-reports>)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-quarterly-performance-updates>

■ Revenue and Customs: Standards

Beth Winter: [131461]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of HMRC establishing a formal compliance yield target with his Department.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC's internal target for compliance yield in 2022-2023 has been set at £36 billion.

HMRC is currently engaging with HM Treasury on its 2023-2024 performance targets.

Beth Winter:

[\[131465\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of HMRC's rate of return on investment for (a) covid-schemes fraud and error and (b) tax compliance recovery.

Victoria Atkins:

At Budget 2021, the Government announced an investment of over £100 million in the Taxpayer Protection Taskforce, to be in place for two years to April 2023, to combat fraud in the COVID-19 financial support schemes administered by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self Employed Income Support Scheme and Eat Out To Help Out). Including amounts recovered through compliance work on the COVID-19 schemes before the taskforce was formed, HMRC expects to recover £1.1bn by September 2023.

On 13 October 2022, HMRC set out their plans in an issue briefing "*HMRC issue briefing: tackling error and fraud in the Covid-19 support schemes*" to transition COVID-19 compliance activity to business-as-usual compliance teams by the end of September 2023.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax

Anthony Browne:

[\[131407\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an estimate of the impact on the number of property transactions of the increase in the residential nil-rate threshold announced in September 2022.

Anthony Browne:

[\[131434\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the impact of Stamp Duty Land Tax on the annual number of property transactions.

Victoria Atkins:

Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) continues to be an importance source of Government revenue, provisionally raising £14.1 billion in 2021/22.

In September 2022, the Government doubled the level at which purchasers of residential property start paying SDLT from £125,000 to £250,000. The nil-rate threshold under First Time Buyers Relief was also increased from £300,000 to £425,000 with the maximum purchase value for which relief can be claimed increased from £500,000 to £625,000. This will ensure around 43 per cent of purchasers will pay no SDLT.

This measure will remain in place until 31 March 2025 to boost mobility and support the property market during a difficult economic period.

■ Tax Avoidance

Beth Winter:

[131469]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of (a) the total wealth of and (b) the tax gap for taxpayers who have an income greater than £200,000 or assets greater than £2,000,000 since 2010; and what assessment he has made of recent trends in levels of tax avoidance.

Victoria Atkins:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) publishes statistics on identified personal wealth in the UK in its Distribution of personal wealth statistics. The Distribution of personal wealth statistics are available at: [Distribution of personal wealth statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/distribution-of-personal-wealth-statistics). Latest estimates of personal wealth are only available according to the value of the estate and averaged over the period 2014 to 2016.

Details of the individuals wealthy population are available at: [Tax by different customer groups – 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tax-by-different-customer-groups-2021-to-2022).

HMRC estimates the size of the tax gap, which is the difference between the amount of tax that should, in theory, be paid to HMRC, and what is actually paid. The tax gap statistics are published annually and are available at: [Measuring tax gaps - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/measuring-tax-gaps).

The latest estimate of the wealthy customer group tax gap was £1.5 billion for the tax year 2020-21. Historical figures for the tax gap for wealthy customers can be found in table 1.4 of the online tables [Measuring tax gaps tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/measuring-tax-gaps-tables).

■ Tax Evasion

Beth Winter:

[131462]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HMRC staff work on compliance yield in relation to the tax gap.

Victoria Atkins:

Figures for 2021 to 2022, the latest year for which figures are available, can be found here: [Managing tax compliance following the pandemic \(nao.org.uk\)](https://nao.org.uk/publications/managing-tax-compliance-following-the-pandemic).

Not all staff working in Customer Compliance Group (CCG) will be directly working on compliance activity that closes the tax gap.

CCG brings in the majority, but not all, of HMRC's compliance yield.

Beth Winter:

[131463]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to increase the HMRC staff working on compliance yield in relation to the tax gap.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to tackling tax avoidance, evasion, and all other forms of tax non-compliance. Our tax gap is on a long-term downward trend and is among the lowest worldwide, falling from 7.5 per cent in 2005-06 to 5.1 per cent in 2020-21.

HMRC has considerable resources and staff numbers to tackle non-compliance in the tax system. As set out in HMRC's Annual Report and Accounts, in the last three financial years HMRC's Customer Compliance Group has spent £3.8 billion on tackling avoidance, evasion and other forms of non-compliance, including £1.2 billion in 2019-20, £1.2 billion in 2020-21, and £1.4 billion in 2021-22.

At Autumn Statement 2022 the Government announced a further £79 million investment to enable HMRC to allocate additional staff to tackle more cases of serious tax fraud and address tax compliance risks among wealthy taxpayers. This is forecast to bring in £725 million of additional revenue over the next five years.

Beth Winter:

[131464]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the level of investment required in HMRC compliance teams to reduce the size of the tax gap.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to tackling tax avoidance, evasion, and all other forms of tax non-compliance. Our tax gap is on a long-term downward trend and is among the lowest worldwide, falling from 7.5 per cent in 2005-06 to 5.1 per cent in 2020-21.

HMRC has considerable resources and staff numbers to tackle non-compliance in the tax system. As set out in HMRC's Annual Report and Accounts, in the last three financial years HMRC's Customer Compliance Group has spent £3.8 billion on tackling avoidance, evasion and other forms of non-compliance, including £1.2 billion in 2019-20, £1.2 billion in 2020-21, and £1.4 billion in 2021-22.

At Autumn Statement 2022 the Government announced a further £79 million investment to enable HMRC to allocate additional staff to tackle more cases of serious tax fraud and address tax compliance risks among wealthy taxpayers. This is forecast to bring in £725 million of additional revenue over the next five years.

Beth Winter:

[131470]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC compliance staff have a dedicated unit working on wealthy taxpayers who have an income greater than £200,000 or assets greater than £2,000,000.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC define individuals as 'wealthy' if they have incomes of £200,000 or more, or assets equal to or above £2 million in any of the last 3 years. There are approximately 800,000 wealthy customers.

Wealthy customers are managed by the Wealthy Team within HMRC's Customer Compliance Group. Further information about HMRC's compliance approach for Wealthy customers can be found here

[Overview of how HMRC collects the right tax from wealthy individuals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-of-how-hmrc-collects-the-right-tax-from-wealthy-individuals)

■ Taxation**Dan Carden:** [131302]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) Secretary of State for International Trade since their return from the World Economic Forum in Davos on the potential merits of stronger tax legislation on (i) billionaires and (ii) large corporations.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to ensuring everyone contributes their fair share of tax in the UK. That includes the most profitable companies and the wealthiest individuals.

The income tax system is highly progressive. The top 5 per cent are projected to pay half of all income tax in 2022-2023. The top 1 per cent are projected to pay over 28 per cent of all income tax in 2022-2023.

Equally, in financial year 2020-2021, 52 per cent of total Corporation Tax (CT) receipts (or £26.8 billion) were contributed by approximately 4,100 companies, which represents only 0.3 per cent of all companies who had an amount of CT to pay.

■ Treasury: Disease Control**Daisy Cooper:** [131393]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

James Cartlidge:

No mobile UV virus irradiation units have been purchased by the Treasury.

As part of the transparency agency spend over £25,000 and Government Procurement Card (GPC) spend over £500 are published at the following links

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/25000-spend>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collection/gpc-spend>

■ Treasury: Equality**Chris Stephens:** [R] [133747]

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

James Cartlidge:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer that I gave on 30th January to PQ 128661:

The Treasury collects and publishes data on protected characteristics in its [annual reports](#) on the public gov.uk website, in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and GDPR 2018 regulations. Departmental monitoring data is made available to staff in the department as necessary – including union representatives.

■ Treasury: Training

Sir John Hayes:

[\[129731\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department provides (a) mandatory or (b) voluntary (i) lectures, (ii) reading lists and (iii) other training on Critical Race Theory for employees in his Department.

James Cartlidge:

The information requested is not centrally held.

However, Ministers believe that the application of critical race theory threatens to undermine integration and community cohesion, by exaggerating differences within local communities. Instead, we should be seeking to build and strengthen a shared local and national identity across class, colour and creed.

The Government has a plan for an Inclusive Britain which will address the causes for racial disparity, which are complex and are not always caused by discrimination or prejudice. The central mission of our approach is to improve people's lives, and to do that we need to address the root causes of the disparities that they face.

■ VAT

Anthony Browne:

[\[131410\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an estimate of the additional VAT collected from an average household on expenditure related to a property purchase including (a) home improvements, (b) decoration and (c) furniture purchases.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC does not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products or services. Businesses are not required to provide HMRC with figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Scheme

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[133765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications to the Access to Work Scheme were (a) unsuccessful and (b) submitted for reconsideration in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Scotland in 2022.

Tom Pursglove:

The information requested about unsuccessful Access to Work applications that have been made in England, Wales and Scotland is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

However, the Access to Work statistics includes how many applications result in provision being approved from 2007/08 to 2021/22. Please see Table 3 of the Access to Work statistics.

The latest Access to Work statistics can be found here:

[Access to Work statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/access-to-work-statistics).

■ Access to Work Scheme: Visual Impairment

Marsha De Cordova:

[133772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department monitor the satisfaction of blind and partially sighted applicants to the Access to Work Scheme.

Tom Pursglove:

There is no specific measure of customer satisfaction in Access to Work, but a range of insight is gathered through customer complaints, compliments, telephone calls and social media. This provides a range of unpublished internal information that allows leaders to understand what is working well, and where improvements could be made.

This customer experience insight is measured for all customers which includes those who are blind and partially sighted.

■ Consumer Goods: Carbon Monoxide

Geraint Davies:

[133931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with representatives of the gas industry on training for operatives to reconnect, relight and test gas appliances for carbon monoxide.

Mims Davies:

Regulating the safety of gas work is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Standards of training in gas work are overseen by the Gas Safe Register as the Standard Setting Body, and EU Skills who facilitate the Strategic Management Board (SMB). The SMB is deemed to be the scheme owner for the nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for individual gas fitting operatives training in gas work. HSE have a standing invitation to attend all SMB meetings as an observer.

As part of a core training module, all Gas Safe registered engineers are given an awareness of carbon monoxide risks and are trained to carry out the safety checks required by law after work has been carried out. Testing of gas appliances for carbon monoxide is covered in an optional module and businesses should ensure engineers are trained and assessed in this module if they are to carry out such work.

HSE is also a panel member on the industry-led approving committee of metering / ESP Natural Gas Training specification.

■ Cost of Living Payments

Caroline Lucas:

[\[133959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Millions of low-income households to get new Cost of Living Payments from Spring 2023, published on 3 January 2023, if he will make a comparative assessment of the effect of the (a) Energy Price Guarantee and (b) Energy Bill Support Scheme on the estimated average incomes on a real-terms basis of (i) households in receipt of means-tested benefits, (ii) people with disabilities and (iii) pensioners between financial years (A) 2022-23 and (B) 2023-24; and if he will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

The analysis requested is not readily available and to produce it would incur disproportionate cost.

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living this winter and is taking action to help. The Government's Energy Price Guarantee will save a typical British household around £900 this winter, based on what energy prices would have been under the current price cap - reducing bills by roughly a third. This is in addition to the £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme, paid over six months starting in October 2022.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Disease Control

Daisy Cooper:

[\[131402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Mims Davies:

A number of ultraviolet (UV) based virus irradiation units (VIU) were purchased during the Covid 19 pandemic. These were procured to support the overall respiratory infection control measures in specific scenarios. They were installed in a number of small Interview Under Caution rooms and were also added to a number of the new temporary job centres, that were created during the height of the pandemic.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Jobcentres

Alison McGovern:

[\[133982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on delivery of support by (a) job centres and (b) work coaches since 2011.

Guy Opperman:

The department does not account for Job Centre expenditure as a whole. Departmental Estates and IT costs are accounted for centrally and not charged to Job Centres. To provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

The cost of Work Coaches is provided below, where available;

	£M
2021/22	951.4
2020/21	689.0
2019/20	570.0
2018/19	564.3
2017/18	542.0
2016/17	542.8
2015/16	533.9

Data for years prior to this is not available.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Multiple Sclerosis

Sir Stephen Timms:

[\[133935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with Multiple Sclerosis are in receipt of (a) income-related Employment and Support Allowance and (b) new-style contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.

Tom Pursglove:

In May 2022, there were around 21,800 people on ESA whose main condition was multiple sclerosis. Of these, around 4,000 were in receipt of Income-Related ESA and around 12,000 were in receipt of Contributory (New-Style) ESA, with a further 4,300 in receipt of both Income-Related and Contributory ESA. There were also around 1,500 who were only receiving National Insurance Credits.

Sir Stephen Timms:

[\[133945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of people with Multiple Sclerosis who are in the Employment and Support Allowance (a) Support Group and (b) Work-Related Activity Group.

Tom Pursglove:

In May 2022, there were around 21,800 people on ESA whose main condition was multiple sclerosis. Of these, around 400 were in the Work-Related Activity Group and around 20,000 were in the Support Group, with the remainder being in the assessment phase or receiving National Insurance credits only, and not assigned to a particular group.

■ Food Banks

Rachael Maskell:

[\[132404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will make an estimate of the number of families accessing foodbank (a) vouchers and (b) foodbank more than once a month.

Mims Davies:

Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation. There is no consistent and accurate measure of foodbank usage at a constituency or national level.

We understand the data limitations in this area, and therefore from April 2021 we introduced a set of questions into the Family Resources Survey (FRS) to measure and track food bank usage. The first results of these questions are due to be published in March 2023 subject to usual quality assurance. Our commitment to include questions in the Family Resources Survey show how seriously we take this issue; the data is vital to ensure we understand the full picture.

■ Food Poverty

Rachael Maskell:

[\[131250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will hold discussions with Cabinet colleagues on (a) methods to identify in schools families experiencing food poverty and (b) provide additional welfare support to those families in those circumstances.

Mims Davies:

We recognise the importance of understanding who is experiencing food poverty. That is why we introduced a set of questions into the Family Resources Survey (FRS) to measure and track foodbank usage from April 2021. The first results of these questions are due to be published in March 2023 subject to usual quality assurance.

The Government spends approximately £1 billion annually on Free School Meals (FSM) and remains committed to supporting children, including through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and school breakfast clubs. The Government provides funding of over £200 million a year for HAF, which provides healthy meals and holiday club places to children from low-income families. The Government is allocating £24 million over two years for the national school breakfast programme, which benefits over 2,000 schools across the country. We want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals. To support this, we provide an Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to make it as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility.

This Government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes in this country. In 2022/23 we will spend £245 billion through the welfare system in Great Britain including £111 billion on people of working age. In 2023/24, subject to parliamentary approval, we are

uprating all benefit rates and State Pensions by 10.1%, and in order to increase the number of households who can benefit from these uprating decisions, the benefit cap levels are also increasing by the same amount.

With over 1.16 million vacancies across the UK, our focus is firmly on supporting people into and to progress in work. Our approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risk of poverty. The latest available data on in-work poverty also shows that in 2019/20, there was only a 3% chance of children being in poverty (absolute, before housing costs) where both parents worked full-time compared with 42% where one or more parents in a couple was in part-time work.

■ Fuels: Safety

Geraint Davies: [\[133930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the representatives of the fuel industry on the potential merits of awareness campaigns on the dangers of (a) carbon monoxide poisoning and (b) other fuel related dangers.

Geraint Davies: [\[133933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the fuel industry on publishing research into toxins from the products of combustion from broken appliances.

Mims Davies:

Gas safety and, more broadly, carbon monoxide (CO) awareness is a cross government issue. Whilst the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) holds the government lead on domestic gas safety, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is responsible for public health; including to advise and raise public awareness of CO. HSE, UKHSA and others contribute to the work of the Cross-Government Group on Gas Safety and Carbon Monoxide, which publishes an Annual Report.

The Gas Safe Register (GSR) run the approved registration scheme for gas engineers on behalf of HSE and, as part of their remit, have responsibility for raising awareness of gas safety and the risks of CO exposure. GSR publish a range of gas safety information and guidance on their website, and regularly run media campaigns to promote key gas safety messages to the general public. This includes promoting and delivering the annual national safety campaign "Gas Safety Week" which has wide ranging coverage.

Further information for gas consumers and landlords relating to domestic gas health and safety is also published on HSE's website.

■ Health and Safety Executive: Wind Power

Kenny MacAskill: [\[135417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for offshore windfarm operations in international waters.

Mims Davies:

Health and safety standards for workers employed on offshore windfarms on the United Kingdom Continental Shelf (UKCS) are regulated in Great Britain by the Health and Safety Executive.

The Energy Act 2004 vests rights to The Crown Estate and the Crown Estate Scotland to license the generation of renewable energy on the UKCS within the Renewable Energy Zone out to 200 nautical miles.

Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**Rachael Maskell:**[\[131249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment has he made of the effectiveness of the under-occupancy penalty; and what steps he is taking to help ensure that penalty does not contribute to household poverty.

Mims Davies:

No assessment has been made.

The removal of the spare room subsidy policy applies to claims for housing support where the claimant is living in the social rented sector in a property that is deemed too large for their needs. The policy aims to strengthen work incentives and seeks to encourage greater mobility within the social rented sector.

The policy allows for the provision of an additional bedroom in certain circumstances such as to support the needs of disabled people and carers.

For those who require additional support Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available from local authorities. DHPs can be paid to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs. Since 2011 we have provided nearly £1.6 billion in DHP's to local authorities.

In November 2022 at Autumn Budget the Chancellor announced a significant package of cost of living support for the most vulnerable claimants for 2023/24, meaning around 8 million households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to a further £900 in Payments in 2023/24. We are also continuing to provide support to all households through the Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24. The benefit cap will also be uprated by 10.1% in 2023-24.

In addition, to protect the most vulnerable, working-age and disability benefits will be increased in line with inflation for 2023-24.

The government is also extending the Household Support Fund providing an additional £1bn to help with the cost of household essentials, for the 2023-24 financial year, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding for this support to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the

cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

■ Jobcentres

Alison McGovern:

[\[133980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long on average a work coach meeting with a claimant lasts for.

Guy Opperman:

The Department does not record and then collate the timing of every work coach's interaction with every claimant. To do so would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Natural Gas: Safety

Geraint Davies:

[\[133936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will amend legislation on gas safety checks undertaken by landlords to ensure that the person making the check must either (a) undertake a service according to manufacturer's instructions or (b) follow the procedures in part four of BS7967 to use Flue Gas Analysers meeting EN50379 to measure the combustion gases for (i) parts per million of CO and (ii) the ratio of CO to CO₂ and keep a record of those measurements.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is responsible for the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR), which include landlord gas safety duties.

There are no plans to amend the legislation because, under Regulation 36(2) of GSIUR, landlords are already required to ensure that relevant fittings and flues are maintained in a safe condition. The Approved Code of Practice states effective maintenance of appliances usually involves an ongoing programme of regular/periodic inspections together with necessary remedial work. In the absence of specific manufacturers' instructions, it explains what minimum effective maintenance should include.

The Regulations also require landlord gas safety checks to include examinations of a gas appliance, including its operation so as to ensure its safe functioning. This can be achieved in a number of ways including by use of a flue gas analyser. The Landlord Gas Safety Record should include confirmation that the checks undertaken comply with these requirements.

Prescribing the use of flue gas analysers could have an unintended consequence of narrowing the scope of the checks as they cannot be used on all types of appliances.

■ Social Security Benefits: Eligibility

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[134047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the suitability of information on their eligibility for benefits sent to members of the public

who (a) do not have access to the internet, (b) are unable to use the internet, (c) are unable to read or write and (d) do not have English as their first language.

Guy Opperman:

DWP seeks to identify individuals who have complex user needs and / or require additional support to enable them to access our benefit and services. We provide a tailored service that recognises those with complex needs at any point throughout their journey and ensures appropriate support is made available quickly. This includes those who do not have internet access.

DWP continuously reviews and improves the service for people who claim, or seek to claim, benefits to ensure services are accessible and responsive to citizen needs. All new work coaches undergo mandatory training in the identification and support for vulnerable customers. Specific training and guidance is provided for all staff on working with different vulnerable groups.

DWP's Jobcentres provide access to services for claimants who need face-to-face support. Jobcentres also display, outside each site, a telephone number with details of how to contact DWP. Jobcentre colleagues are available to those claimants who need us most.

Help to Claim support is delivered independently by Citizens Advice, in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland, with support provided through telephony and digital channels. Those individuals who are unable to access support via these channels can go to their local Jobcentre, local libraries, local advice centres and community organisations where they can use computers with internet access free of charge.

DWP has contracted provision for Interpreter and Translation Services. This provision meets Equality Act 2010 obligations and can be arranged for claimants where English is not their first language, or who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired. It is DWP's policy to use an interpreter when we need to communicate with a claimant who:

- cannot communicate adequately in English
- has complex needs and, or may need additional support; and
- cannot provide their own interpreter.

Individuals can choose to use their own interpreter if they prefer.

■ **Support for Mortgage Interest**

Beth Winter:

[133806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure the affordability of mortgages for people reliant on Support for Mortgage Interest, who have recently experienced an increase in their mortgage interest rates.

Mims Davies:

Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) makes a contribution towards eligible mortgage interest to enable people to remain in their homes without fear of repossession. SMI

is calculated by applying a standard rate of interest to the capital balance on the outstanding loan. The standard interest rate is set at a level equal to the Bank of England's published monthly average mortgage interest rate. This rate was selected because it is an average of the rates that apply to claimants' mortgages including fixed and variable rate mortgages. This will change when the Bank of England average mortgage rate differs by 0.5 percentage points or more from this figure.

■ Unemployment: Multiple Sclerosis

Sir Stephen Timms:

[133946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of people with Multiple Sclerosis who are economically inactive.

Tom Pursglove:

The specific information requested is not available.

The Prime Minister has tasked the DWP's Secretary of State to look in detail at the issue of workforce participation. This involves working with other Government departments, including the Department of Health and Social Care, to identify and understand the barriers preventing people from joining the workforce and/or resulting in people leaving the workforce early.

Disabled people and people with health conditions are a key focus of this work, which will build on the Government's existing package of support to help disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work.

Background

Headline estimates on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity are produced using the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which provides internationally recognised information on the UK labour market. The LFS also asks respondents about any long-term (lasting or expected to last 12 months or more) physical or mental health condition they may have with 18 different conditions, or groups of conditions, to select from. Multiple Sclerosis would normally be recorded under the category Progressive Illnesses (not included elsewhere), which also includes conditions such as Cancer, symptomatic HIV, Parkinson's Disease and Muscular Dystrophy. A breakdown for the individual conditions within this category is not available from the LFS.

In 2021/2022, the number of economically inactive people who reported having a Progressive Illness was 410,000 (or 5% of the total number of people who were economically inactive).

Source: [The employment of disabled people 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2022)

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Taxis

Jon Trickett:

[\[63949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department spent on taxi cabs for (a) ministers and (b) civil servants in each of the last three years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 November 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Mark Spencer:

The following table sets out expenditure on taxis in each of the given years. A split by ministers and civil servants could not be obtained on this occasion without incurring disproportionate costs.

YEAR	TAXI SPEND (£)
2019	46,668
2020	9,722
2021	20,317

The following table sets out expenditure on taxis in each of the given years. A split by ministers and civil servants could not be obtained on this occasion without incurring disproportionate costs.

YEAR	TAXI SPEND (£)
2019	143,210.25
2020	30,288.49
2021	19,898.34

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ NHS: Staff****Wes Streeting:**[\[127844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of NHS staff who have emigrated to work in Australia in each of the last five years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 31 January 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Will Quince:

~~There are no plans to make an estimate.~~

The department does not hold an estimate of the information requested.

■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access**Stephen Metcalfe:**[\[132374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has received evidence from the life sciences industry of the impact on UK R&D investment and potential increases in payment rates under the voluntary and statutory schemes for branded medicines; and if it will make a statement.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 February 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Will Quince:

The Department has been consulting on a proposed update to the ~~s~~Statutory ~~s~~Scheme for branded medicines and the life sciences industry has been able to **give evidence** ~~express its views~~ as part of this consultation process.

~~In considering the responses, the Department is carefully taking into account any evidence submitted on potential impacts for the United Kingdom life sciences sector.~~

The Government remains firmly committed to the ~~s~~ ~~S~~ statutory and ~~v~~ ~~V~~ voluntary schemes for branded medicines and to working with the pharmaceutical industry to deliver on the ambitions set out in the Life Sciences Vision to create an environment that facilitates innovation for the development of medicines in the UK.

TRANSPORT**■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions****John Spellar:**[\[117446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many new net zero emission buses were funded by his Department in the last five years; what the power source was for those buses; and how many and what proportion of those buses were manufactured in the UK.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 January 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Richard Holden:

We have committed to funding 4,000 zero emission buses (ZEBs) this Parliament. Across the UK an estimated 3,250 ZEBs have been funded so far.

Between financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23 the Department for Transport has provided funding for 2,594 zero emission buses. The number of buses ordered and delivered may change following the outcome of procurement processes undertaken by local transport authorities or bus operators.

Table 1 below presents the number of zero emission buses funded between financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23.

	NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES	NUMBER OF BATTERY ELECTRIC BUSES	NUMBER OF HYDROGEN FUEL CELL BUSES
2018-19	76	43 33	33 43
2019-20	27	27	0
2020-21	556	556	0
2021-22	1298	1154	144
2022-23	100	100	0
TCF 2018-19 to 2022- 23*	46	46	0
London 2020-21 to 2022-23**	491	491	0
Total	2594	2417	177

*46 zero emission busses were funded through the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) between financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23.

**491 zero emission buses were introduced in London in financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23 as a result of Department for Transport funding to Transport for London.

Table 2 provides information, where available, on the bus manufacturer of these zero emission buses.

BUS MANUFACTURER	NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES	PERCENTAGE OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES
Alexander Dennis Ltd	436	17%
Wrightbus	188	7%

BUS MANUFACTURER	NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES	PERCENTAGE OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES
Switch Mobility	26	1%
Volvo	6	0%
Supplied by Pelican Bus & Coach UK and manufactured by Yutong	221	9%
Supplied by Harris Group and manufactured by Higer	3	0%
Information not held by the Department	491	19%
Bus manufacturer subject to outcome of procurement process by local transport authority or bus operator	1223	47%
Total	2594	

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Progress on the Register of Overseas Entities and new capabilities to tackle abuse of UK corporate structures

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business) (Kevin Hollinrake): [\[HCWS538\]](#)

My noble friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility (Lord Callanan) has today made the following statement:

The Register of Overseas Entities is a vital new information tool for our law enforcement agencies and is part of the Government's comprehensive and ongoing programme to tackle and prevent economic crime and illicit finance.

The Government legislated for it within weeks of the invasion of Ukraine, and with the assistance of Parliament expedited regulations needed to launch the Register, which opened on 1 August 2022.

Yesterday marked the end of the six-month period for overseas companies and other legal entities in scope to register. By 5pm yesterday, about 19,665 overseas entities were successfully registered and there were approximately 5,054 pending registrations that were submitted before the deadline. As such, the UK now has a valuable new database for law enforcement and others to access.

Throughout this period Companies House has been working closely with the three UK land registries to ensure overseas entities are aware of and comply with the new requirements. Companies House sent 57,000 notice letters to all entities in scope in August, including duplicate letters to those that had multiple contact addresses recorded at the land registries. In October 2022, HM Land Registry issued a notice letter to the entities registered in England and Wales to alert them that a restriction notice had been placed on their land. In early January 2023 Companies House issued further reminders to those who hadn't yet registered.

Companies House has endeavoured to ensure it has the best possible information about those that have not yet complied, matching registrations against data from the land registries. Whilst some entities may have changed their name, not updated the land registry records or may no longer exist, Companies House continues to research and to work with company registries in those jurisdictions with the highest number of in-scope entities to determine the status of all unregistered entities.

An estimated 7,000 overseas entities have not yet complied with the provisions of the Register. From today, those entities will find that they cannot freely lease, charge or dispose of their land. This is a significant and effective sanction for non-compliance. Data about unregistered entities may also provide valuable information for law enforcement.

Companies House is now assessing and preparing cases for additional enforcement action. These cases will be prioritised using an intelligence-led approach and Companies House will work with those entities making a genuine attempt to comply. Warning letters will shortly be issued to all unregistered overseas entities. Those wilfully failing to comply may find themselves subject to financial penalties or criminal prosecution.

The Government is also announcing that, through an investment of up to £20m of allocated spending on economic crime, new anti-money laundering intelligence teams will be created to tackle the misuse of UK companies, corporate entities and property. Intelligence analysts and data scientists will be recruited over the coming months. They will play a key role in supporting the prevention, detection and disruption of money laundering, terrorist financing and kleptocracy through identifying, analysing and disseminating intelligence about high level threat actors and enablers of those activities, to a wide variety of law enforcement and regulatory agencies. There will be a strong focus on networks controlled from overseas, for example those operating from former Soviet states. The new functions will be based within Companies House and the Insolvency Service, and will work closely with the National Economic Crime Centre and their private sector partners. The teams will use and support the existing powers of both agencies and new powers being introduced by the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Transfer of NHS Digital into NHS England

Minister of State (Minister for Health and Secondary Care) (Will Quince):

[\[HCWS539\]](#)

My Hon friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for the Lords) (Lord Markham) has made the following Written Statement:

Today, NHS Digital legally becomes part of NHS England, to create a single, central authority responsible for all elements of digital technology, data and transformation for the NHS.

Laura Wade-Gery was commissioned by the Government to lead an independent review of how we can ensure digital technology and the effective use of data is at the heart of transforming the NHS.

Her report *Putting data, digital and tech at the heart of transforming the NHS*, published in November 2021, recommended merging the functions of NHS Digital into NHS England, to provide a single statutory body for data, digital and technology to provide the right leadership and support to Integrated Care Systems.

NHS Digital, since its creation as the Health and Social Care Information Centre, has been a powerful force for change in the NHS and guardian of its key data IT and data systems. These will be transferring to NHS England, together with its expert staff.

All the protections of people's data which existed in NHS Digital will apply in NHS England. Rigorous internal controls will continue to ensure that data is used and shared safely, securely and appropriately to deliver high-quality care, understand and protect the health of the population, effectively plan and improve services, and research and develop innovative treatments, vaccines and diagnostics.

This is an important step in bringing together in a single place, the essential systems and programmes to digitally transform the NHS, and to harness the full potential of data. This will enable health and social care services to use digital and data more effectively to deliver improved patient outcomes and address the key challenges we face.