



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 February 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:37 P.M., 02 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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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Bakeries: Energy

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[133989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to offer financial grants to bakeries for the installation of energy efficiency measures, in the context of the rising energy bills.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government keeps energy efficiency support for businesses, including bakeries and other SMEs, under review. Existing initiatives include an exemption on business rates for green technology, providing small businesses grants under the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, and offering industry £289m for energy efficiency and low carbon technologies.

In addition, the Autumn Statement announced a new national ambition to reduce the UK's final energy consumption from buildings and industry to 15% by 2030 against 2021 levels. To support the delivery of this target, a new Energy Efficiency Taskforce will be established, covering homes, businesses, and public sector buildings, as well as industrial processes. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State will announce further details about the Taskforce in due course.

#### ■ Cars: Energy and Taxation

**John Redwood:**

[\[133533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of (a) energy prices and (b) taxes on cars in the UK on the competitiveness of the car manufacturing sector.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

High energy costs are a concern and we know that the automotive sector is amongst those impacted. This is why we acted through the Energy Bill Relief and Discount Schemes, and we continue to engage with industry on this issue.

The Government keeps all taxes under review and considers a wide range of factors including the competitiveness of the tax regime and its impact on industry and consumers. The Government uses the motoring tax system to incentivise low emission vehicle uptake and balances simplicity and fairness, whilst ensuring the sustainability of the public finances over the long term.

#### ■ Cars: Manufacturing Industries

**John Redwood:**

[\[133531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he will take to increase the level of car manufacturing in the UK.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government is determined to ensure the UK continues to be a highly attractive location for automotive investment and manufacturing.

In the last couple of years alone, we have seen Nissan and Envision invest £1 billion to create an electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing hub in Sunderland, a £2.5 billion investment by Bentley in Crewe, and £380 million by Ford to make Halewood their first European EV components site.

We continue to work through the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) to develop an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain. This includes unlocking private investment in gigafactories, battery material supply chains, motors, power electronics, and fuel cell systems.

**■ Conditions of Employment: Public Bodies****Angela Rayner:**[\[133624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has (a) met or (b) corresponded with the Director of Labour Market Enforcement between 25 October 2022 and 25 January 2023 on the potential introduction of a single enforcement body for employment rights.

**Angela Rayner:**[\[133629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times Ministers from his Department met with the Office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement between 25 October 2022 and 25 January 2023.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

This Government remains committed to workers' rights and enforcement. An important part of this is the ongoing sponsorship of and work with the Director of Labour Market Enforcement. The last meeting between myself and Margaret Beels, the DLME, was on the 24th November 2022. This covered a number of topics, including the proposals around the creation of the Single Enforcement Body. We are next due to meet on 7th February 2023. We have also corresponded by letter.

**■ Construction: Training****Dan Jarvis:**[\[135304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a new scheme to support the training of scaffolders, in addition to the Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme; and if he will publish the eligibility criteria for grants funded by his Department for the training of scaffold instructors.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government supported the 2015 decision of the construction industry to adopt the SKILLCard scheme, following research commissioned by the HSE and Construction Industry Training Board, to ensure those working on construction sites



possess a relevant qualification for their occupation. Whilst the Government is supportive of CSCS, the Government does not have the power to intervene in the operation of the CSCS, as an industry-led scheme. BEIS does not provide grant funding for the training of scaffolding instructors.

#### ■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Equality

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[133727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 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.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

We have made good progress in recent years in diversifying the Civil Service. The percentage of civil servants from an ethnic minority background is at 15.0% and the percentage of those who declare themselves disabled is at 14.0%. Staff who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGBO) is 6.1% and the proportion of female civil servants stands at 54.5%. These rates are all at their highest recorded levels. However, we know there is still progress to be made in ensuring we are representative of the citizens we serve across all our grades.

The new Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 recognises our success and builds on this good work to encourage a broader range of people into the Civil Service to give depth to our understanding of contemporary society in the United Kingdom. It provides the necessary framing for diversity and inclusion activity in the Civil Service as part of our wider workforce strategy, and through that, how the Civil Service delivers for its people, the Government and our citizens. A link to the Civil Service statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-service-statistics>.

BEIS routinely collects a wide variety of data relating to its employees; much of this is published and is publicly available on GOV.UK.

BEIS Human Resources teams use this data to review the impact of our policies and procedures in line with the Civil Service Code, and other our statutory obligations, and make recommendations for improvements, as necessary. Data is shared with Departmental Trades Union Side (DTUS) as necessary and on request.

#### ■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Holiday Leave

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[132460\]](#)

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

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

There is no central policy on buying/selling leave; instead, departments may consider introducing this benefit under their own delegated authority.

The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) recently launched a buy/selling of leave policy for the 2022 annual leave year. The policy was introduced to allow BEIS employees to exercise greater flexibility within their total reward package.

All eligible BEIS staff were informed that they were able to access the benefit portal during a three-week window, to register their request to buy or sell up to 5 days (full time equivalent) annual leave. The three-week window ran from 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

BEIS issued communications via our Intranet platform on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, the 16<sup>th</sup> December and a final reminder on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

#### ■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: South Tyneside

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[135370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2023 to Question 127774, on Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: South Tyneside, where his Department records information on grant money returned from Councils.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

BEIS policy relates to each grant scheme being run by its own Senior Responsible Owner who will manage reconciliations and money returned by local authorities to BEIS.

#### ■ Director of Labour Market Enforcement: Disclosure of Information

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the minutes from meetings between Ministers from his Department and the Office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement between 25 January 2022 and 25 October 2022.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

This Government remains committed to workers' rights and enforcement. An important part of this is the ongoing sponsorship of and work with the Director of Labour Market Enforcement. There is currently no intention to publish the minutes of these meetings.

#### ■ Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Leisure and Swimming Pools

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[135388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 121110 on Energy Bill Relief Scheme: Leisure and Swimming Pools, in what percentile is the (a) swimming pools and (b) leisure centre sector's trade and energy intensity assessment for (i) energy and (ii) trade intensity.

**Graham Stuart:**

While swimming pools consume large amounts of energy, they are not trade intensive based on the best available ONS data.

The firms eligible for the Energy and Trade Intensive Industries scheme are those operating within sectors that fall above the 80th percentile for energy intensity and 60th percentile for trade intensity, and those within sectors eligible for the existing Energy Intensive Industries schemes.

**Energy Bills Discount Scheme: Bakeries****Bill Esterson:**[\[135351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether suppliers of ingredients to the bakery industry are eligible for support under the Energy and Trade Intensive Industries scheme.

**Graham Stuart:**

Following an HMT-led review into the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, the Energy Bills Discount Scheme will provide a discount to eligible non-domestic energy users from April 2023. A higher rate of support will be provided to those operating within an eligible Energy and Trade Intensive sector. Eligibility for this higher rate of support has been determined using Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes and the list of eligible sectors has been published on gov.uk

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1128033/230104\\_ETII\\_List\\_for\\_gov.uk.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128033/230104_ETII_List_for_gov.uk.pdf)

If organisations are unsure of their code, they can find out online through Companies House, by using their company name or registration number. Further information is available from Companies House on SIC code classification.

**Energy Bills Rebate****Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[135137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the statement by the Minister for Energy and Climate of 25 January 2023, Col 1026, what the eligibility criteria for energy support will be for households without a relationship to a domestic supplier; and what steps he is taking to communicate the criteria with relevant households.

**Graham Stuart:**

The GOV.UK page in February 2023 will include an overview of eligibility for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding. This is likely to include care home residents, residents of park homes, tenants in certain private and social rented homes, residents of caravans and houseboats on registered sites, farmers living in domestic farmhouses, and off-grid households. The Government will announce when the new scheme is live and will work closely with stakeholder groups and representative bodies to give them an update on progress, ensuring eligible households are made fully aware of the scheme and encouraged to apply.

**■ Energy Bills Rebate: Glasgow Central****Alison Thewliss:** [\[135332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people have received support through the Energy Bill Support Scheme for (a) prepayment and (b) direct debit in Glasgow Central constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

Delivery data by region, local authority and Westminster parliamentary constituency will be published in the coming weeks.

**■ Energy: Government Assistance****Bill Esterson:** [\[133990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will increase the proportion of energy use that qualifies for relief.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme provides a discount on the wholesale element of gas and electricity bills to ensure that all eligible businesses are protected from high energy costs over winter. Following an HMT-led review, the new Energy Bill Discount Scheme will continue to provide a discount to eligible businesses until March 2024. A substantially higher level of support will be provided to businesses in sectors identified as being the most energy and trade intensive.

The Energy Price Guarantee protects domestic customers from increases in energy costs by limiting the amount suppliers can charge per unit of energy used. All households using dual-fuel gas and electricity qualify for the Energy Price Guarantee.

**■ Energy: Meters****Anne McLaughlin:** [\[133618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether energy firms are required to carry out equality impact assessments before forcibly installing prepayment meters.

**Graham Stuart:**

Equality impact assessments are generally required when a new or revised policy or practice is being considered. The installation of prepayment meters is a long-standing practice dating back several decades and undertaken by privately-owned supply businesses. However, suppliers are required by Ofgem to assess whether installing a prepayment meter, including force-fitting one on customers in arrears as a last resort, is safe and practicable for the customer. This assessment should include identifying any vulnerability.

## ■ Floods: Nuclear Power Stations

**Darren Jones:**

[\[133748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has undertaken a risk assessment of the impact of potential flooding caused by rising sea levels on nuclear power plants.

**Graham Stuart:**

Nuclear site licence holders must meet robust standards, including keeping plants safe against the effects of flooding throughout their lifetime.

Site licensees are required to produce a fit for purpose assessment of flood risk to inform the detailed siting, design, management, and safety case requirements of any new nuclear facility, which is assessed by the UK's independent regulators - the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the environment agencies. This includes an assessment of all possible sources of flooding as well as coastal erosion risks and other climate change impacts.

The ONR and the environment agencies would not allow an installation to be built or to operate if they judged that it was not safe to do so.

## ■ General Product Safety Regulations 2005

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[135342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke (b) retain, or (c) replace the General Product Safety Regulations 2005.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The General Product Safety Regulations 2005 set out the requirements that must be met to ensure that only safe consumer products are placed on the market. The regulations include a general safety requirement that products placed on the market or supplied by producers and distributors must be safe.

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

We will continue to ensure that only safe products are placed on the market in the United Kingdom and that market surveillance authorities have the necessary enforcement powers.

## ■ Government Office for Technology Transfer: Staff

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[135350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2023 to Question 132388 on Government Office for Technology Transfer: Innovation, how many full-time equivalent staff are employed at the Government Office for Technology Transfer.

**George Freeman:**

The Government Office for Technology Transfer (GOTT) is a Directorate of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). As of the end of January 2023, 19.4 full-time equivalent BEIS staff currently work in GOTT.

**Industrial Disputes****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[135158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a comparative assessment of the impact of legislation on the right to strike in (a) the UK and (b) the EU on the prevalence of industrial action.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

While the Government will always respect the freedom of individuals to strike, it is important this is balanced with the right of everyone else to go about their lives safely – and that is exactly what these new laws seek to do.

The new laws we are introducing are reasonable and will bring us in line with countries in the EU like France, Italy and Spain who have had arrangements guaranteeing minimum service levels during strike action in place for many years.

**Innovation and Research****Chi Onwurah:**[\[132389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2023 to Question 122137 on Innovation and Research, if he will set out a timetable for publishing the report and interactive tool on clusters of R&D strength.

**George Freeman:**

BEIS has received bids for the research to identify clusters of firms performing R&D and innovation in the UK, using innovative methods to collect and analyse granular data on the activities and potential of clusters. The work will start in February and BEIS will aim to publish the findings via a report and digital interactive cluster data mapping tool with an initial version in May 2023.

**Medical Equipment: Energy****Dan Jarvis:**[\[135303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to provide financial support to users of at-home medical treatment equipment, in the context of the rising cost of energy.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

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

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**John Penrose:**

[\[132316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to reply to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare's letters of 18 November and 20 December 2022 on behalf of his constituent, Sara Littlewood, regarding Royal Mail.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

I wrote to the hon. Member on 26 January regarding Royal Mail.

#### ■ **Ofgem: Sefton Council**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[135323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the outcome has been of discussions between Ofgem and the Sefton Local Authority on a data sharing agreement.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem is currently developing a register for all local authorities to enable them to notify measures under the Energy Company Obligation. That register will have an in-built digital solution for data sharing. In the meantime, Ofgem is exploring the most efficient manual approach to achieve this with all local authorities in Scotland, England and Wales. This has included discussions with the Local Government Association.

#### ■ **Re-employment**

**Julian Knight:**

[\[133640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to tackle fire and rehire practices.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government is taking action to address the practice of fire and rehire. On 24 January, we launched a twelve-week consultation on a draft Statutory Code of Practice that will deter employers from using controversial tactics and failing to engage in meaningful consultations with employees and their representatives.

#### ■ **Refuges: Energy**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[131225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received from the domestic abuse sector on the level of Government support with energy bills for domestic abuse refuges.



**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 30 January 2023]:* Discussions have taken place with a number of charities regarding increased energy costs and the Government is fully aware of the impact this is having on the voluntary sector. This is why the Energy Bill Relief Scheme has been introduced, shielding eligible businesses and charities from soaring energy prices. Following an HMT-led review, 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 charities.

■ **Small Businesses****Julian Knight:**[\[133646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support small and medium enterprises.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Businesses will have benefitted from the Government's reversal of the National Insurance rise, saving SMEs approximately £4,200 on average, the cut to fuel duty for 12 months and raising the Employment Allowance to £5,000.

The Energy Bill Relief and Energy Bill Discount Schemes will protect SMEs from high energy costs over the winter. The Autumn Statement announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years, reducing the burden of business rates for SMEs.

Support is available to SMEs across the UK through the Recovery Loan Scheme and the Start-Up loan scheme. The latter has provided 100,228 SMEs with Start-Up loans to the value of £941,064,690.

■ **Students: Cost of Living****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[133719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support available to PhD students in the context of the increases in the cost of living.

**George Freeman:**

We have listened to the feedback from PhD students, which is why on 2 September 2022, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) announced an increase to the minimum stipend paid to UKRI-funded doctoral students who commenced or are continuing their UKRI-funded studentship from 1 October 2022 to £17,668 full time equivalent. This is a 10% increase on the previously announced level for the 2022/23 academic year.

The increase forms part of the ongoing work to develop a New Deal for Postgraduate Research, as committed to in the R&D People and Culture Strategy. UKRI has committed to reviewing how the minimum stipend is set, and will communicate the level for the 2023/24 academic year in due course.



**■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access****Stephen Metcalfe:**[\[132375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of a potential link between (a) the rebate in the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access and (b) the accompanying Statutory Scheme on the level of foreign direct investment into UK R&D.

**George Freeman:**

The Government is working to better understand the impacts the operation of the current Voluntary Scheme and the accompanying Statutory Scheme on investments in the UK. We are therefore in direct conversations with companies to understand these impacts. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is in close discussions with the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department responsible for the Voluntary Scheme and Statutory Scheme, about the business environment for life sciences and its impact on investment.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Philip Hollobone:**[\[903422\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which three departments had the lowest proportion of staff attending the office in January 2023.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Data on Civil Service headquarters occupancy is published weekly on Gov.uk. The data is split out by individual departments. The data can be access at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-headquarters-occupancy-data>

The recently published statistics taken from the above source show that the number of civil servants working from offices is increasing across Whitehall. Many departments have seen occupancy rates rise to pre pandemic levels for several months now. The Government believes colleagues learn, develop and collaborate together best in an office setting.

**■ Cabinet Office: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992****Chris Stephens:****[R]** [\[135301\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps their Department takes to comply with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and if they will make a statement.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to PQ 128667

**■ Government Departments: Advertising****Grahame Morris:** [\[135209\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he is taking steps to increase Government advertising spending with domestic based local news media compared to multinational tech companies.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The channels selected for government paid marketing campaigns are driven by the target audience. Local media channels such as print and radio are often used in campaigns to help reach particular audiences in a specific region. No matter the form of communication, we constantly and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of our campaigns, including the role local media plays, to ensure that we reach the right audience in the most efficient way.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[135168\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to the letter of 13 October 2022 from the hon. Member for North Durham on the If U Care Share Foundation.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Cabinet Office has no record of receiving this correspondence. If the hon. Member would like to supply a further copy, a reply will be sent.

**■ Nadhim Zahawi****Dan Carden:** [\[135418\]](#)

To ask the Minister of the Cabinet Office, if the Prime Minister will publish in full the advice he received from the Independent Ethics Adviser on the appointment of the Rt hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon.

**Dan Carden:** [\[135425\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister received formal advice on the Rt hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon before his appointment to the Cabinet.

**Dan Carden:** [\[135426\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the correspondence between HM Revenue and Customs and the Government on the tax affairs of the Rt hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[135470\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Prime Minister first became aware that the Rt hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon had not (a) declared to his permanent secretary and (b) disclosed in his ministerial declaration of interests the investigation by HMRC.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the Hon Member to the Prime Minister's comments to the House on 25 January (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-25/debates/CC1C6066-E0E7-4BF6-84D4-BB5C11BC1EBA/Engagements#contribution-2261E821-4652-4AE6-A3D4-43A2323BE174> )

As the Hon Member will be aware, the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests provided his findings to the Prime Minister in a letter sent on 29 January 2023. The findings detail the relevant facts in relation to the disclosures made by the Rt Hon Member for Stratford-on-Avon. The advice was published in full on GOV.UK on the day it was received by the Prime Minister, and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House. Correspondence relating to the tax affairs of individual taxpayers is subject to statutory requirements on taxpayer confidentiality.

**Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016****Stella Creasy:****[135340]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke (b) retain or (c) replace the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.

**Alex Burghart:**

The Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 (along with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 and the Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations 2011) will be replaced by the new public procurement regime being put in place by the Procurement Bill, currently being debated in Parliament.

The Bill will create simpler, more flexible and less complicated rules, and will open up more government procurement for small businesses and voluntary and community groups. The Bill also takes advantage of post-Brexit opportunities, allowing the UK to shape its own procurement rules, while complying with international obligations.

This is one of the ways we are helping grow the economy, creating better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country - one of the Government's five key priorities.

**DEFENCE****Ajax Lessons Learned Review****Mr Mark Francois:****[133579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the Ajax Lessons Learned Review; and whether he plans to publish the Review unredacted.

**Alex Chalk:**

It is intended to publish the report, subject to redaction of commercially sensitive content and personal information where applicable, as soon as practicable after it is finalised.

**■ Armed Forces: Housing**

**John Healey:** [\[135132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Annex A of the Defence Estates Development Plan 2009, published on 3 July 2009, if he will publish an Estate baseline as of 1 December 2022.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Defence Estates Development Plan has been superseded by the Strategy for Defence Infrastructure, which was published in January 2022. There is no intent to publish a new Estate baseline as this information is available in other formats. The Defence Disposal Database lists all MOD sites that we will sell. Anything not on that list is being retained.

**■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[135165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the Army's operational capability during the upgrade and replacement periods for (a) Warrior and (b) Challenger.

**Alex Chalk:**

Current capabilities, including Warrior and Challenger 2, will remain effective until new concepts and capabilities are introduced into service throughout the decade, ensuring the Army can continue to meet its operational commitments.

**■ Challenger Tanks**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[135164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his plans are for the future of the Challenger 2 tanks in service that will not be upgraded to Challenger 3.

**Alex Chalk:**

A decision on what will happen to the remaining Challenger 2 platforms is currently under review.

**■ Military Bases: Heating**

**John Healey:** [\[135138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2023 to Question 126539 on Military Bases: Heating, how many of the 129 incidents related to heating were resolved within 12 hours.

**Alex Chalk:**

111 of the 129 incidents were resolved within 12 hours.

**■ Military Police: Codes of Practice**

**Stella Creasy:** [\[135343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace the Service Police Codes of Practice.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

We are committed to the regulation of Service Police powers and procedures in the investigation of offences in the Service Justice System. Our current Service Police Codes of Practice will be retained in law. The legislative basis for the Codes will be changed so that they form part of UK, rather than European Union, law.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[135153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's gross expenditure, excluding refunds, using electronic purchasing cards for purchases with a value of (a) more and (b) less than £500, was in each of the categories (i) travel and accommodation, (ii) stationery, and (ii) other goods and services in the calendar year 2021.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[135154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's net expenditure, excluding refunds, using electronic purchasing cards for purchases with a value of (a) more and (b) less than £500, was in each of the categories (i) travel and accommodation, (ii) stationery, and (ii) other goods and services in the calendar year 2021.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[135155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many purchases of (a) travel and accommodation, (b) stationery, and (c) other goods and services, with a value of more than £500, excluding refunds, were made against his Department's budget through an electronic purchasing card in 2021.

**Alex Chalk:**

The information needed to answer the right hon. Member's questions is taking time to collate. I will write to her with answers shortly, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Equality**

**Chris Stephens:** [R] [\[133750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 30 January 2023 to question 128663:

**Attachments:**

1. [Ministry of Defence: Equality](#) [UIN 128663.docx]

**■ Submarine Delivery Agency: Incentives**

**Dave Doogan:** [\[135467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the bonuses paid to the former chief executive of the Submarine Delivery Agency were pensionable.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

No. Performance awards paid to the former Chief Executive Officer of the Submarine Delivery Agency were not pensionable.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Public Opinion**

**Mr David Davis:** [\[135139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which Minister or official authorised the Counter Disinformation Unit to collect data related to public statements, social media and internet activity as part of the unit's work.

**Paul Scully:**

The Counter Disinformation Unit was established in 2019 as part of DCMS's departmental responsibility for counter-disinformation, and as part of the government's manifesto commitment to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online while defending freedom of expression.

The monitoring of harmful disinformation narratives and trends, using publicly available information online, is an essential part of DCMS' role in understanding the information environment and working with partners across government and with social media companies to counter narratives that have the potential to cause real world harm. The CDU reports regularly to ministers who have full oversight of the team's work.

**■ Infant Foods: Advertising**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[133721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of regulations on follow-on formula milk advertising in the UK.

**Paul Scully:**

In the UK, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is responsible for regulating advertising across traditional forms of media (print, radio, TV) through its Broadcast (BCAP) and online advertising through its Non-broadcast (CAP) Codes. Overall responsibility for enforcement of the legislation governing follow-on formula beyond ASA's advertising remit rests with Local Authorities in England.

In line with statutory restrictions, infant formula advertising is prohibited. Follow-on formula may be legitimately advertised but adverts must comply with the general provisions of the Code, which ensure advertising is legal, decent, honest and truthful.

The ASA's rules on formula advertising are backstopped by Trading Standards. This means that the ASA can refer cases if necessary for Trading Standards to take a view on whether there are breaches of the law and apply tougher sanctions as appropriate.

The Government therefore believes that existing rules related to the advertising of follow-on formula are sufficient.

In addition, through the Online Advertising Programme, the Government is examining the regulatory model for online advertising to ensure it protects consumers and minimises harm. The consultation closed last year, and we will be publishing a Government response in due course.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children: Asylum

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[132336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the response to the Urgent Question on 24 January 2023 on Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children, Official Report column 861, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the capacity issues referred to including the lack of (a) foster carers, (b) trained social workers and (c) local authority children's home places; if she will quantify that assessment on a national basis; and if she will make a statement.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is committed to ensuring that all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children accommodated in hotels by the Home Office are transferred through the National Transfer Scheme to the care of a local authority as quickly as possible. The department is also committed to ensuring that capacity challenges in local authorities are addressed, including through our forthcoming response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

The department knows that the right type of foster care may not always be available at the time or in the areas it is needed, and that there is significant variability across regions of England. We also know that it is particularly difficult to find suitable foster homes for some groups of children, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The department recognises the urgency of action in placement sufficiency and will work with local authorities on recruiting more foster carers and on improving the conversion rate from expressions of interest to approval. This will include local recruitment campaigns that build towards a national programme, to help ensure children have access to the right placements at the right time.

It is encouraging to note that the number of children and family social workers in the workforce is increasing every year. This number has increased by more than 14% from 28,500 in 2017, to 32,500 in 2021. The department is working closely with local authorities to recognise and understand workforce pressures. The department is also using central programmes and funding to respond to local authority needs. Over the current spending review period, we will continue to invest more than £50 million every year on recruiting, training, and developing social workers to ensure the workforce has the capacity, skills, and knowledge to support and protect vulnerable children.

The department is supporting local authorities to meet their statutory duties through £259 million of capital funding over the next Parliament. This will help to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure and open residential children's homes, providing high-quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people across England.

### ■ **Cricket: Primary Education**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[135465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to help increase participation in cricket in primary schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

PE and Sport is a compulsory subject within the National Curriculum from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4. It is up to schools to decide which sports to choose for pupils both in PE and Sport and as extracurricular opportunities. The National Curriculum does not specify what schools should provide, but cricket is included as an example of a sport that can provide important elements of the PE and Sport National Curriculum programme of study in Key Stage 2.

Where schools want to provide specific sports, they can draw on support from the relevant national governing body. The England and Wales Cricket Board offer a wide range of resources and age appropriate guidance and advice for delivering cricket to primary age pupils, including the All Stars programme for five to eight year olds.

The PE and Sport premium can be used by primary schools to increase provision of sports, such as cricket, to a higher standard. The Department is providing £326 million in 2022/23 through the primary PE and sport premium. The funding position for 2023/24 and beyond will be announced in due course.

### ■ **Students: Cost of Living**

**Julian Knight:**

[\[133642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to support students from low income families with the cost of living.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department recognises the additional cost of living pressures that have arisen this year which have impacted students. On 11 January 2023, the department



announced a one-off reallocation of funding to add £15 million to this year's student premium to support additional hardship requests. There is now £276 million of student premium funding available this academic year to support disadvantaged students. This extra funding will complement the support universities are providing through their own bursary, scholarship and hardship support schemes. The department works with the Office for Students (OfS) to ensure that universities support students using both hardship funds and the student premium.

The department has continued to increase maximum loans and grants each year, with a 2.3% increase for the current 2022/23 academic year, and a further 2.8% increase for 2023/24. Loans that support with students' living costs are a contribution towards their living costs while attending university, with the highest levels of support targeted at students who need it the most, such as students from low-income families. Students who have been awarded a loan for living costs for the 2022/23 academic year that is lower than the maximum, and whose household income for the tax year 2022/23 has dropped by at least 15% compared to the income provided for their original assessment, can apply for their entitlement to be reassessed.

All households will save on their energy bills through the Energy Price Guarantee and the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme discount. Students who buy their energy from a domestic supplier are eligible for the energy bills discount. The Energy Prices Act 2022, passed on 25 October 2022, includes the provision that requires landlords to pass any benefits they receive from energy price support onto end users, as appropriate. Further details of the requirements under this Act are set out in the legislation.

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme provides a price reduction to ensure that all businesses and other non-domestic customers are protected from high energy bills this winter, including universities and private purpose-built student accommodation providers.

## ■ Teachers: Ethnic Groups

**Andrew Western:**

[\[135483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of offering guaranteed interviews to black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants with relevant qualifications who apply for teaching positions.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department wants teaching to be profession where teachers from all backgrounds are supported throughout their career.

Schools are responsible for their own recruitment and staffing decisions. The Department expects them to adhere to their statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010, and to their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Department has published guidance for schools on how to comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010. This is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>.

Schools and trusts are free to introduce measures into their recruitment processes if those measures comply with the Equality Act 2010.

The Department has also issued guidance for recruiting head teachers, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recruiting-a-headteacher>. The guidance reminds governors and trustees that diverse workforces benefit everyone, and the importance of avoiding discrimination in recruitment.

## ■ Universities: Antisemitism

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[132493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the report of the Independent investigation into allegations of antisemitism within NUS, published on 12 January 2023; and what steps the Government is taking to help counter antisemitism in universities.

**Carla Lockhart:** [\[132533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle antisemitism in UK universities.

**Robert Halfon:**

This report that shows that the National Union of Students (NUS) has, over a number of years, systematically failed to represent the interests of Jewish students, and failed to tackle antisemitic practices within its own organisation. This is not acceptable. The NUS should be an organisation where Jewish students not only feel safe to be themselves, but where their full and equal participation is actively welcomed.

Higher education (HE), more broadly, should do all it can to root out antisemitism. The recent Community Security Trust (CST) report showing a 22% increase in antisemitic incidents on campus over the last two years is deeply concerning.

The department has encouraged HE providers to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, to have absolute clarity of what constitutes antisemitic behaviour. 245 providers in England have adopted the IHRA definition, including the vast majority of universities. We would urge those providers that have not yet adopted to the definition to do so, and for those that have, to ensure that they are fully complying with the definition.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Products: Imports

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[135167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to fulfil the Government's manifesto pledge to ban the import of hunting trophies from endangered species.

**Trudy Harrison:**

HM Government has pledged to ban the imports of hunting trophies from thousands of species. We are committed to a ban that is among the strongest in the world and leads the way in protecting endangered animals. We are supporting the Private Member's Bill led by the hon. Member for Crawley that will deliver this.

**■ Ash Dieback Disease****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[135412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the (a) current and (b) future (i) prevalence and (ii) impact of ash dieback.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Ash dieback is a fungal disease of ash trees that was first detected in Great Britain in 2012. It can be spread by infected planting material but is also capable of spreading naturally up to 75km through airborne spores. The disease is now present in all counties, but levels of infection differ at a local level. The impact of the disease varies by tree age, provenance, climate and site factors such as soil type and the presence of secondary pathogens like honey fungus. The disease progresses more quickly in young or stressed trees in ash dominated woodlands, and mortality rates of up to 85% have been recorded in some plantations. Fewer symptoms are observed on ash trees growing in open spaces.

There are an estimated 125 million ash trees in UK woodlands and up to 60 million ash trees outside of woodlands. 1-5% of these trees will be naturally tolerant to the disease and the Government planted the UK's first archive of 3000 tolerant ash trees in 2020, raising the possibility of a future breeding programme for tolerant ash. Local effects on landscapes will be gradual, and tolerant trees and other tree species are expected to naturally repopulate sites and replace susceptible trees over time. The total cost of ash dieback to the UK has been estimated at £14.6 billion over the next 100 years, based on the cost of dealing with the immediate impacts of the disease, replanting and the future loss of ecosystem services.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[135413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what financial support her Department plans to provide to (a) local authorities and (b) other agencies to help tackle ash dieback.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Occupiers' Liability Act imposes a duty of care on landowners to manage their tree stock. Council budgets for the care and management of trees on their land are determined by individual Local Authorities, but Defra provides grants such as the Local Authority Treescapes Fund, to support the restoration of landscapes degraded by ash dieback. Since 2021, this scheme has provided nearly £8m to 153 Local Authorities to plant trees outside of woodlands across 77 projects in England, and the scheme will be reopening for new applications imminently. For private landowners,

grants are routinely available under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the tree health pilot to help manage dangerous ash alongside roads, carry out ecological surveys and restock with other species.

Government has produced a range of guidance to help landowners manage their ash, including an Ash Dieback Toolkit for Local Authorities which has been downloaded nearly 20,000 times.

## ■ Countryside Stewardship Scheme

**George Eustice:** [\[133986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether new Countryside Stewardship agreements issued in 2023 will be made under the legal powers conferred by Section 1 of the Agriculture Act 2020.

**Mark Spencer:**

Yes, Countryside Stewardship agreements issued in 2023 are made under the legal powers conferred by section 1 of the Agriculture Act 2020.

**George Eustice:** [\[133987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Countryside Stewardship agreements have been made under powers conferred in regulations under Section 98 of the Environmental Protection Act 1995.

**Mark Spencer:**

There are a total 22,671 Countryside Stewardship agreements that have been made under powers conferred in regulations under section 98 of the Environmental Protection Act 1995.

## ■ Countryside Stewardship Scheme: EU Law

**George Eustice:** [\[133988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there are remaining provisions in retained EU law that govern the payment rates permissible under new or existing Countryside Stewardship agreements.

**Mark Spencer:**

There is provision for payment rates applicable to legacy EU agreements (agreements made up to 31 December 2020) under retained EU law. However, pursuant to a domestic modification to retained EU law made by regulation 5 of the Rural Development (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Regulations (SI 2022 No. 1225), changes may now be made to payment rates applicable to legacy EU agreements without, as was previously required, having to specify them in the Rural Development Programme for England programme document.

There are no provisions in retained EU law that govern the payment rates (made from 1 January 2021) in either new Countryside Stewardship agreements or existing Countryside Stewardship agreements made under domestic legislation (the Environment Act 1995 and the Agriculture Act 2020).

## ■ Dangerous Dogs

**Sarah Olney:** [\[132447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to help protect people from dangerous dogs.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The primary purpose of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 is public protection. In addition, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 includes community protection notices to enable the police and local authorities to tackle irresponsible dog ownership.

In December 2021 Defra published research in collaboration with Middlesex University investigating measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible dog ownership across all breeds of dog. In response to this research, we have established a Responsible Dog Ownership working group involving police, local authorities and animal welfare organisations. Conclusions and policy reform recommendations are expected later this year.

This summer Defra has also worked with stakeholders to launch a dog safety communications campaign to promote safe interactions between children and dogs. As part of this we have supported the Canine and Feline Sector Group to disseminate their Dog Safety Code, which incorporates key advice and resources to equip parents and children with the knowledge they need to enjoy spending time with dogs safely.

## ■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: EU Law

**Alex Sobel:** [\[135492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to take steps to increase her Department's resources to deal with legislation effected by Retained EU Law.

**Mark Spencer:**

Defra is in the process of analysing our Retained EU Law stock and determining what should be retained as part of domestic law. The Secretary of State has set out our approach to Parliament. We will remove legislation superfluous to the UK, review the effectiveness of EU regulation in achieving environmental outcomes and we will retain, by default, environmental legislation for the UK to achieve existing environmental outcomes.

The Department is conducting an exercise to establish how we can achieve our plans via secondary legislation and therefore what resources will be required.

## ■ Dogs

**Sarah Olney:** [\[132442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to introduce a limit on the number of dogs that a person can walk at one time that would apply across the UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Anyone walking dogs is required to comply with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which requires individuals in control of animals to protect them from unnecessary suffering and to provide for their welfare needs. The Government does not currently intend to introduce a legal limit on the number of dogs that a person can walk at any one time. The Canine and Feline Sector Group has published guidance to assist dog walkers. This can be found here: [General Guidance Documents – CFSG](#).

■ **Fireworks: Animals****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[133537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made a recent assessment of the potential benefits for vulnerable animals of introducing firework control zones.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra has not made an assessment of the benefits of introducing firework control zones. However, the Government takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously. There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks which aims to strike the right balance for people to enjoy fireworks, while aiming to reduce risks and disturbances to the welfare of animals.

It is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to cause an animal unnecessary suffering - and this includes through the misuse of fireworks. Users of fireworks need to use them responsibly and be aware of animals close by, and those found guilty of causing animals unnecessary suffering can face up to five years' imprisonment.

■ **Flood Control: Bristol****Darren Jones:**[\[133722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of constructing additional flood defences in the city of Bristol due to rising sea levels.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA) has been working in Partnership with Bristol City Council to address the flood risk from the River Avon. The Bristol Avon Flood Strategy identifies the increasing flood risk to the city centre due to river levels and the expected age-related deterioration of existing flood risk assets. Today a severe flood from the River Avon would result in the flooding of approximately 1,100 homes and businesses. By the end of this century the number of properties at risk is expected to increase to approximately 4,500 existing properties.

Bristol City Council and the EA are developing the Outline Business cases (OBCs), which will deliver the first phases of improved flood defences from the late 2020's onward. A phased approach to improving the defences will require £216 million of investment, including £147 million of Partnership Funding over the next 100 years. The Council are working to develop a strategy to identify the sources of this funding.

A strategic approach to managing the risk of flooding in the central area of Bristol will:

- Future proof substantial parts of the city to ensure flood risk to homes and businesses is adequately addressed, taking an adaptive approach to climate change
- Facilitate the development and regeneration of areas currently subject to flood risk
- Provide opportunities for improved walking and cycling links, enhanced green spaces and biodiversity gains
- Provide nearly £1 billion in economic benefit to the UK and unlock over £7 billion benefits to the local economy by enabling growth at sites currently constrained by flood risk

## ■ Food Banks

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[135382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an estimate of the number of food banks that did not have enough food to meet demand on 26 January 2023.

**Mark Spencer:**

No estimate has been made. Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and HM Government does not have any role in their operation.

## ■ Fuels: Regulation

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[133932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she had has with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of including natural gas, petrol or oil used in domestic cooking and heating appliances in UK REACH legislation.

**Rebecca Pow:**

UK REACH aims to ensure companies who put chemicals on the market understand and manage the risks they might pose. Under UK REACH, manufacturers and importers have a duty to register chemicals to access the GB market. We have the freedom to make our own regulatory decisions where we see there is a strong case of a risk to human health and/or the environment that needs addressing, and we have already started using UK REACH to address risks from chemicals, based on the assessment of risk in GB.

## ■ Game: Birds

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[133651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to regulate catching-up activities for gamebirds in winter 2023-24, in the context of increases in High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza.



**Caroline Lucas:**

**[133652]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to impose a moratorium on catching-up activities for gamebirds until her Department publishes the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza risk assessment.

**Mark Spencer:**

Defra's approach to avian influenza control is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#) supported by the [Mitigation Strategy for Avian Influenza in Wild Birds in England and Wales](#).

On the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Defra published the [Highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 rapid risk assessment Catching-up of wild gamebirds in winter 2022 to 2023](#) which sets out the risk levels associated with the spread of this year's strain of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 and the 'catching up' process.

The risk assessment confirms that at present, while avian influenza virus continues to circulate in wild birds across GB at unprecedented levels, the catching up and movement of wild gamebirds could include infected birds.

Following this risk assessment and recognising the conclusions of the assessment, the [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone](#) (AIPZ) was amended to introduce additional controls on the movement of caught up gamebirds. New rules mean that recently caught up birds cannot be moved for 21 days. This will help reduce the risk of the disease spreading and maintain our strict biosecurity standards.

Detailed requirements can be found in the [AIPZ declaration including housing measures in England](#). Equivalent changes have also been made in the [AIPZ in Wales](#) and the [AIPZ in Scotland](#).

We will keep the situation under close review, as well as the effectiveness of any disease control measures taken. Any future decisions on disease control measures for the 2023/2024 season will be based upon the latest scientific, ornithological, and veterinary advice.

## ■ Livestock: Dogs

**Crispin Blunt:**

**[135122]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the finding of the National Police Chiefs' Council Livestock Worrying Working Group that the dog was unaccompanied in most livestock worrying incidents, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of promoting livestock aversion training courses for dogs.

**Mark Spencer:**

The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs includes guidance and reminders for owners about their responsibilities to provide for the welfare needs of their animals and to keep their dogs safe and under control. Natural England have also published a refreshed version of the Countryside Code, which helpfully sets out certain legal requirements and provides advice on controlling dogs around livestock.



Training dogs is important to help them learn to behave appropriately and to make it easier to keep them under control. It is important to seek professional advice to identify/discuss any behaviour problems and the best training options for your dog as an incorrect training regime can negatively affect a dog's welfare. Reward based training which includes the use of things that dogs like or want is widely regarded as the preferred form of training dogs.

#### ■ **National Parks: Camping Sites**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[133630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to legislate to establish locations within national parks where wild camping is permitted.

**Trudy Harrison:**

There are no plans to introduce such legislation.

#### ■ **Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order 2009**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[135341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether she plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace the Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order 2009.

**Mark Spencer:**

Defra is in the process of analysing and assessing its retained EU law stock to determine what should be preserved as part of domestic law, and what should be repealed, or amended. This work will determine how we use the powers in the Bill, including in relation to the Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order 2009.

#### ■ **Sewage: Bournemouth East**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[135166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to reduce sewage discharges in Bournemouth East constituency.

**Rebecca Pow:**

No Government has done more to tackle the issue of storm overflow discharges. Last year this Government launched [The Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan](#). This will require water companies to deliver their largest infrastructure programme in water company history – a £56 billion capital investment over 25 years.

We are taking action now. Between 2020 and 2025 water companies are investing £3.1 billion in storm overflow improvements. Wessex water are investing in a series of programme (2020-2025) for the Bournemouth East constituency. This includes installations of monitoring at 37 intermittent discharges, investment at sewage treatment works to reduce chemical contamination, alongside schemes to increase

storm storage at Sewage Treatment Works and increase the amount of treated flow. There are also investigations to improve quality of surface water overflows and spill reduction schemes – one of which protects bathing waters specifically.

■ **Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Dorset**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[135144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will allow Natural England to extend the Holt and West Moors SSSI to incorporate the adjoining 4.8 acres of Blackfield Farm which Natural England has identified as being of significant importance to flora and fauna.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Defra ministers have no formal role in the notification of terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Notifications are a matter for Natural England and are based on Natural England's opinion on the evidence for special scientific interest on a site. If Natural England is satisfied that the science supports the proposal to notify the site under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is under a duty to do so. Natural England must notify all owners and occupiers and inform the local planning authority, Defra Secretary of State and certain public bodies.

■ **Veterinary Medicine: Northern Ireland**

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[132535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to help protect supply chains between Great Britain and Northern Ireland for veterinary medicines.

**Mark Spencer:**

On 19 December 2022, the European Commission extended the grace period for veterinary medicines for a further three years, until 31 December 2025. This grace period maintains the current status quo regarding the supply chain requirements for moving veterinary medicines into Northern Ireland. The Government continues to work with the European Commission and the UK veterinary medicines industry to find a permanent, durable solution to the issues facing veterinary medicines that are related to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

■ **Afghanistan: Armed Forces**

**Catherine West:**

[\[131281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the number of UK-trained former members of the Afghan National Security and Defence forces who have been killed since the withdrawal of UK forces from Kabul airport in August 2021.

**Leo Docherty:**

We do not have access to records of deaths in Afghanistan and have not made any such assessment. We are not aware of any specific incidents of UK-trained former members of the Afghan National Security and Defence forces being killed since the withdrawal of UK forces from Kabul airport in August 2021.

**■ Afghanistan: Development Aid****Dan Jarvis:**[\[135302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to maintain current levels of funding for Overseas Development Assistance to Afghanistan.

**Leo Docherty:**

Since April 2021 the UK has distributed £514 million in aid to Afghanistan. A decision on the 23/24 allocation has not yet been made. The UK remains committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan. UK aid is continuing to provide vital life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable.

**■ Afghanistan: Females****Dean Russell:**[\[133794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help girls and women access education in Afghanistan.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Government has repeatedly condemned the Taliban's decisions to restrict women and girls' access to education, including through UN Security Council and Human Rights Council resolutions and public statements, most recently on 13 January 2022. The Government continues to support the delivery of education, including through bilateral and multilateral contributions to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN partners, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Education Cannot Wait, and the Global Partnership for Education.

**■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences****John Howell:**[\[135194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the debate entitled Conflict-related sexual violence, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 January 2023.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK Government welcomes the recent Council of Europe debate on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). As highlighted by the November 2022 Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) International Conference, the UK recognises the value in continuing to highlight this agenda at all levels, including at international fora, to help ensure effective international efforts to prevent and respond

to CRSV. Reflecting key themes from the debate, the new PSVI strategy centres the UK's response on four key strategic objectives - strengthening the global response, preventing CRSV, strengthening justice for all survivors and supporting survivors and children born of CRSV.

## ■ Canada: Trials

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[133577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Canadian counterpart on facilitating the requirements for live translation from French to English of the upcoming trial over the murder of a UK citizen for the mother, father and siblings of the victim; and if he will make a statement.

**David Rutley:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) is providing consular support to the family of a British woman murdered in Canada. The FCDO has raised the family's request for live interpretation at the trial with the Canadian authorities, and the Canadian authorities have shared options on the level of interpretation support that could be available. Final decisions on the exact arrangements for interpretation at the trial rest with the presiding judge and will be made closer to the start of the trial.

## ■ Caribbean: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[132292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his G7 counterparts on the engagement of Caribbean countries with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

**David Rutley:**

The OECD has a well-established Regional Programme which includes countries of the Caribbean (the Latin America & Caribbean Regional Programme - LACRP). The UK is co-chair of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Working Group at the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and is in regular contact with G7 members on the breadth of issues that affect the region.

In 2022 the UK, Belize, Fiji and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) launched a new 'Friends of SIDS' group that will also link to wider issues of concern in the Caribbean. That group will work to promote the recommendations of the Call to Action on SIDS Access to Finance.

## ■ China: Christianity

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[133582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Chinese counterpart on reports of the

repression of the country's Christian community through surveillance, censorship and disinformation.

**David Rutley:**

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

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.

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

■ **COE Parliamentary Assembly**

**John Howell:**

[\[135195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the address by Ms Annalena Baerbock, Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 January 2023.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK welcomes Foreign Minister Baerbock's attendance at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the address she held with the delegates. The UK and Germany are the closest of partners. At the UK-Germany Strategic Dialogue on 5 January 2023, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Foreign Minister Baerbock committed to increasing cooperation on a range of joint priorities including our commitment to upholding human rights standards. We look forward to the Council of Europe Summit in May which will be a good opportunity to re-invigorate the Council of Europe.

**John Howell:**

[\[135196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the debate entitled The Reykjavik Summit, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 January 2023.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK looks forward to the upcoming Council of Europe Heads of State Summit in May this year. The Summit is an opportunity to re-affirm the importance the UK places in its work with European Partners, fortifying the Council of Europe to play a stronger role in Europe when strengthening and securing democracy.

**■ Cuba: Politics and Government****Navendu Mishra:** [\[132599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Government (a) agencies and (b) other bodies were (i) operating in Cuba and (b) otherwise working with the Cuban government as of 23 January 2023.

**David Rutley:**

As of 23 January 2023, the UK is represented in Cuba by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office through our Embassy in Havana. UK Visas and Immigration (the division of the Home Office responsible for the United Kingdom's visa system) also operates from the Embassy. The British Council (the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities) has been working in Cuba since 1998 and celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2023.

**■ Ethiopia: Development Aid****Sir Stephen Timms:** [\[135126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make reductions in his Department's budget to fund the recently announced £16.6 million aid package to Ethiopia; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The funding forms part of the £156 million in humanitarian aid that the UK previously committed to East Africa in financial year 2022-2023. The £16.6 million of UK funding is going towards the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and to the World Food Programme.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Disease Control****Daisy Cooper:** [\[131391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

**David Rutley:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) has not purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units for use on its UK Estate. 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 (ultraviolet-C) devices to mitigate aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other airborne pathogens.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:** [\[133964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Department's publication of spending above £500 on government

procurement cards, what goods or services were purchased from Capital Pinball on (a) 18 February 2021, (b) 11 June 2021, (c) 3 December 2021, (d) 16 December 2021, (e) 18 March 2022 and (f) 21-22 July 2022; and for what purposes they were required.

**David Rutley:**

The purchases from Capital Pinball on the dates noted relate to furniture hire for larger scale functions at the British High Commission in Canberra and at Westminster House, the High Commissioner's official Residence in Canberra. These events included: the Queen's Birthday Party reception and UK in Australia's 2021 end of year stakeholder reception, both of which celebrated the UK in Australia to an audience including Ministers, parliamentarians, senior government officials and other key stakeholders; a networking reception for Labor party staffers after the Australian federal election; and a lunch for Chevening scholars.

The exchange of gifts and hospitality has long been an important part of building relations and diplomacy. All expenses undergo rigorous oversight to ensure they are reasonable and adhere to FCDO spending regulations.

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

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[133746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 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.

**David Rutley:**

The FCDO complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management code. We conduct regular diversity data audits which are shared with our trade unions and published internally. Trade unions are also involved in the development of associated actions.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Public Opinion**

**Mr David Davis:**

[\[135141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Minister or official authorised the Government Information Cell to collect data related to public statements, social media and internet activity as part of its work.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Government Information Cell (GIC) was established in February 2022 to support the UK's response to Russian disinformation relating to their invasion of Ukraine. Overall responsibility for the GIC lies with the Foreign Secretary.



**■ North Korea: Christianity****Jessica Morden:** [\[133583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the report by Open Doors entitled World Watch List 2023, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the finding that North Korea is the most dangerous country in the world to be a Christian; and if he will hold discussions with his international counterparts on this.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK remains engaged in addressing the appalling human rights situation in North Korea. The right to freedom of religion or belief for all is an FCDO policy priority and a key strand of our DPRK human rights strategy. We regularly raise this with the North Korean authorities and at the UN, and have discussed North Korea's human rights situation during closed consultations at the UN Security Council on 9 December 2022.

The UK co-sponsored the resolution on DPRK human rights, adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly Third Committee on 16 November 2022. The resolution sends an unequivocal message to the DPRK Government and reiterates long-held demands of the international community for the regime to take concrete action to end the systemic and widespread human rights violations in the country, and to uphold the right to freedom of religion or belief.

**■ Roderick Drummond****Kenny MacAskill:** [\[135397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which honourable Members met Ambassador Roderick Drummond during his visit to the UK in January 2023.

**David Rutley:**

The British Ambassador to Bahrain, Roddy Drummond, met The Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West and The Member for Enfield Southgate, in January 2023 as part of his engagement with Parliamentarians with an interest in Bahrain.

**■ Ukraine: Energy****Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[135429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the announcement on 17 February 2022 of a £100 million three-year energy independence programme in Ukraine, how much of that funding has been disbursed as of 30 January 2023; what the timetable is for disbursement; and whether that funding will be counted (a) as Official Development Assistance and (b) in addition to the 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income target for the relevant financial years.



**Leo Docherty:**

In February 2022, the UK announced up to £100 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) for economic reform and energy independence in Ukraine. £62 million of this was designated for spend on energy security over 3 years, of which £11.1 million has been disbursed to date with a further £5.9 million due to be released this financial year. This programme is funded from the ODA budget, currently set at around 0.5 per cent of gross national income. Allocations for the financial year 2023-2024 have not yet been finalised but will be in line with existing commitments. We will publish details of our ODA spend in the Statistics on International Development report in due course.

■ **UN Population Fund****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[135192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department provided to the UNFPA Supplies Partnership in each year since 2013.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Our funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Supplies is as follows:

CALENDAR YEAR	TOTAL FUNDING
2013	£0
2014	£66,300,000
2015	£48,500,000
2016	£48,500,000
2017	£48,500,000
2018	£63,387,860
2019	£117,537,454
2020	£4,639,835
2021	£26,645,907
2022	£60,000,000

## Sources:

2022 - DevTracker Programme GB-GOV-1-300713 Transactions (fcdo.gov.uk)

2021 to 2017 - Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2021

2016 to 2013 Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2017

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Ambulance Services: Emergency Calls****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[132569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) support NHS Control Room employees and (b) maximise retention of those staff.

**Will Quince:**

It is a priority to support the mental health and wellbeing of all NHS staff as they continue to work in challenging circumstances. The NHS People Plan, published in July 2020, has a strong focus on NHS staff health and wellbeing. This includes providing ongoing physical and mental health support – including, targeting psychological support and treatment for those most affected; retaining staff who have come back into the NHS to help provide additional capacity; and strengthening the role for occupational health to move from a reactive service delivery model to a more integrated, preventative partner.

The NHS Retention Programme is continuously seeking to understand why staff leave, resulting in targeted interventions to support staff to stay whilst keeping them well. A staff retention guide has been updated and includes information on supporting staff in their late and early career with specific focus on induction, reward and recognition and menopause support.

**■ Ambulance Services: Motor Vehicles****John Spellar:**[\[135134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that new ambulances are manufactured in the UK.

**Will Quince:**

No such steps are being taken by the Department. The procurement of ambulances is an operational matter for the National Health Service.

**■ Ambulance Services: Strikes****Rachael Maskell:**[\[125413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken with Cabinet colleagues to monitor national strike derogation arrangements for all ambulance trusts when they are made on a trust-by-trust basis.

**Will Quince:**

Derogations are agreed between unions and individual ambulance trusts. The Government has been working closely with NHS England to respond to strike action and to put contingency plans in place.

The Government believes it is important that there is a legal requirement to ensure minimum service levels for ambulance services during strike action and has brought forward the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill.

## ■ Automated External Defibrillators Fund

**Matt Western:** [\[131333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on the process to appoint a selected partner for the Automated External Defibrillators Fund.

**Matt Western:** [\[131334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department will use to assess whether proposed recipients are eligible to access the Automated External Defibrillators Fund.

**Will Quince:**

The Department is currently in the pre-procurement stage in its process of determining a selected partner for the Automated External Defibrillator Fund. The criteria for assessing whether proposed recipients are eligible to access the Automated External Defibrillators Fund will be part of the procurement process.

The Department will publish in due course a notice informing interested organisations of the upcoming opportunity and invite them to bid for the grant through GOV.UK.

## ■ Cervical Cancer

**Mark Pritchard:** [\[133566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to publish a (a) plan and (b) timetable for the elimination of cervical cancer.

**Peter Gibson:** [\[133668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to eliminate cervical cancer in the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

In England, we are increasing the uptake of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) target of 90% through dedicated immunisation teams in schools where a 100% offer is made to all school aged children eligible for these vaccinations. Annually, HPV vaccines are promoted to university students as they start the Autumn term, and NHS England are planning a further HPV awareness campaign.

The NHS Cervical Cancer Screening Programme already aligns with the WHO's target of 70% of women screened using a high-performance test by 35 and 45 years of age. Work is ongoing to improve this beyond the WHO target, through exploration into screening self-sampling via the YouScreen and HPVvalidate research.

A range of improvements and innovations have been brought in to help improve uptake in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme. For example, in some Primary Care Network areas, appointments can now be made in any Primary Care setting during evenings and on weekends, via integrated sexual health clinics.

There is currently no intention to publish a plan detailing these programmes.

#### ■ **Cervical Cancer: Birmingham**

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[133542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the diagnosis of cervical cancer in Birmingham.

**Helen Whately:**

Primary care in Birmingham and Solihull is working collaboratively to ensure that cervical screening is undertaken for their patient populations. These services have now fully recovered following the pandemic, meaning that all those that required cervical screening have now been invited to attend and there is no backlog.

NHS England ran a Help Us Help You cancer awareness campaign in autumn 2022 focusing on abdominal and urological symptoms, which directly addressed the symptoms of gynaecological cancers.

#### ■ **Clinical Trials: Costs**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[133644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average cost incurred by companies of running (a) phase one, (b) phase two and (c) phase three clinical trials in the UK.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 31 January 2023]:* The Department does not hold information on costs incurred by companies of running clinical trials in the United Kingdom.

#### ■ **Community Care: Autism and Learning Disability**

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[135184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2023 to Question 123900 on Community Care: Autism and Learning Disability, who from his Department attended the four meetings of the funding flows task and finish group that took place since September 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Building the Right Support Funding Flows Task and Finish Group meetings are attended by officials from the Neurodiversity, Disability and Learning Disability team in the Department.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

**John Howell:**

[\[135198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the debate entitled Contact tracing applications, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2023.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government will consider the conclusions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe alongside lessons learnt and relevant findings more generally, including in due course from the COVID-19 public inquiry, in looking at the best options for using technology to respond to any future pandemic.

The National Health Service COVID-19 app is currently available to those aged 16 or over in England and Wales and is an effective and anonymous contact tracing tool. It has been downloaded over 31.5 million times since its launch on 24 September 2020. As of December 2022, the app had 7.7 million users. It also enables users to check their symptoms and enter positive NHS-provided or private test results, as well as signposting to public health and policy advice. The App, which incorporates proportionate and appropriate data protection mechanisms, has been shown to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

**■ Dementia: Diagnosis****Dean Russell:**[\[133796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve dementia diagnosis (a) in Watford and (b) nationally.

**Helen Whately:**

Provision of dementia health care services is the responsibility of local integrated care boards (ICBs). NHS England would expect ICBs, including in Watford, to commission services based on local population needs.

In December 2022, the recovery of the dementia diagnosis rate to the national ambition of 66.7% was included in the National Health Service priorities and operational planning guidance as part of the refined mental health objectives for 2023/24. This reinforces the importance of dementia as a key priority for NHS England and provides a clear direction for ICBs to support delivery of timely diagnoses within systems.

**■ Dementia: Research****Chi Onwurah:**[\[132394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2022 to Question 120107 on Dementia: Research, whether money invested by (a) the Japanese government and (b) private investors in Japan as part of the International Science Partnerships Fund will be counted towards the commitment to double funding for dementia research.

**Will Quince:**

UK funding invested in research into dementia, delivered in partnership with other countries, will be counted towards the commitment to double funding for dementia research when funding UK-based researchers. Funding from other countries will not.

## ■ Dental Services

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[135487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people can access NHS dental care to (a) register with dentists, (b) book emergency appointments and (c) have regular routine check-ups and appointments.

**Neil O'Brien:**

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

Through regulations updates that came into effect on 25 November 2022, NHS dentists are required to update their NHS.uk profiles at least every 90 days to ensure patients have up-to-date information on where they can access care. Patients are only registered with a dental practice for the course of their treatment.

Urgent dental care should be provided as part of NHS dentists' core service offer to patients. In circumstances where a person is unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice, or where parents are unable to access an urgent dental appointment for their child, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

## ■ Dental Services: Refugees

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[135406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that Ukrainian refugees can (a) register at NHS dentists and (b) access necessary dental healthcare.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Asylum seekers and refugees, including those from Ukraine, are able to access National Health Service dental care from any NHS dental practice that is accepting NHS patients.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will increase access to NHS dental services for England, for all patients seeking NHS care. Work to implement the improvements is underway

Patients struggling to find a local dentist can contact NHS England's Customer Contact Centre for assistance or contact NHS 111 if seeking urgent care.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Minimum Wage

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[129896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of employees in their Department are paid at the rate of the National Minimum Wage.

**Will Quince:**

The Department has no employees paid at the rate of the National Minimum Wage. The minimum salary for our national pay range is £21,250. This equates to £11.05 per hour which is above the 2023 national living wage of £10.42 per hour.

**■ Draft Mental Health Bill****Alex Cunningham:**[\[135270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Mental Health Bill will include a statutory duty to provide early intervention strategies to (a) detect and (b) help tackle mental health issues for children and young people within all (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. member for Bootle on 27 January in response to question [129867](#).

**■ Drugs: Licensing****Chris Green:**[\[129961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of health technology appraisals conducted by NICE for follow-on indications have resulted in (a) termination, (b) a negative recommendation, (c) an optimised recommendation, (d) a positive recommendation and (e) a recommendation for use within the (i) Cancer Drugs Fund and (ii) and Innovative Medicines Fund.

**Will Quince:**

Between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2022 31% of appraisals of licence extensions by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) were terminated due to the company not making an evidence submission to NICE. Of the licence extensions appraised by NICE 10% were not recommended, 37% were recommended for routine commissioning, 34% were optimised recommendations and 20% were recommended or optimised for use within the Cancer Drugs Fund. No applications were recommended for the Innovative Medicines fund.

**■ Drugs: Northern Ireland****Carla Lockhart:**[\[132534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all medicines approved for use In Great Britain are also available in Northern Ireland.

**Will Quince:**

Our priority is to safeguard the continued supply of medicines to patients in Northern Ireland and help ensure equity of access for patients across the United Kingdom.

Following negotiations last year, the European Union and UK Government have taken significant practical steps towards resolving outstanding issues with the



regulation and supply of medicines under the Northern Ireland Protocol. This includes the introduction of the NI MHRA Authorised Route (NIMAR) to help ensure patients in Northern Ireland can access prescription-only medicines at the same time as patients in Great Britain.

#### ■ Emergency Calls: Staff

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[132565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS 999 Call Handler posts that are unfilled.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[132566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS 999 Call Handler posts in London are unfilled.

**Will Quince:**

The data requested is not held in the format requested.

#### ■ Food: Labelling

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[133789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to reduce the potential impact of publishing calorific content on menus on people with eating disorders.

**Neil O'Brien:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Coventry South on 25 October 2022 to Question [64353](#).

#### ■ Health Professions: Vetting

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[129857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he make it his policy to waive fees for Disclosure and Barring Service checks for healthcare workers.

**Will Quince:**

The Government introduced a free and fast track Disclosure and Barring Service check service for health and social care employers in March 2020 as part of the pandemic response. This service was brought in to ensure that they were able to safely and rapidly onboard large volumes of workers into COVID-19 related roles. The decision to cease the free arrangements in Spring this year is because the demand to recruit large numbers of staff into COVID-19 related positions has significantly reduced and the vaccine programme is coming to an end. The focus is now on recruiting to support elective care as business as usual which is not the legislated purpose of these arrangements. This is aligned to the government's 'Living with Covid' strategy and ceasing of other temporary arrangements under the Coronavirus Act.

## ■ Health Services: Artificial Intelligence

**Tim Farron:** [\[131179\]](#)

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, Official Report, column 287, what interventions using artificial intelligence his Department is considering for wider implementation.

**Will Quince:**

The Department is funding the Artificial Intelligence in Health and Care Award, which is accelerating the testing and evaluation some of the most promising artificial intelligence (AI) technologies that can support clinicians in diagnosis, monitoring disease and managing health conditions at home.

The Award has provided more than £100 million to 77 AI technologies which are live in 53 hospitals in the United Kingdom.

The Department has also provided £800,000 to Health Data Research UK (HDR UK) to fund 16 data-driven projects, including 'machine-learning', to pin-point and overcome pressures in the health care system.

The HDR UK projects are due to start early this year and will share their findings later in the year.

The Department is also piloting operational efficiency and workforce productivity tools that can help significantly reduce elective care waiting lists, which will also help to relieve some of the pressures caused by winter. The tools have been developed as part of the NHS National Data Platform. During the proof-of-concept stage, they helped Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust achieve a 46% reduction in their inpatient waiting list, improved theatre utilisation by 6% and re-prioritised more than 2,000 patients.

This proof-of-concept has since transitioned to a pilot and the tools are now being tested in 27 trusts. The pilot will report its finding in March 2023.

## ■ Hospitals: Food

**Matt Hancock:** [\[128627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on delivering the recommendations in the Independent Review of NHS hospital food published in October 2020.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[128628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the quality of food in hospitals.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[128629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of food in hospitals.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what metrics he plans to use to measure improvements in food standards in hospitals; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of current food standards in hospitals.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what metrics he plans to use to measure the effectiveness of improvements to training for hospital chefs; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of current training for those chefs.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what metrics he plans to use to measure the effectiveness of improvements to food for hospital staff; and what assessment he has made of the quality of current food offering for hospital staff.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what metrics he plans to use to measure the effectiveness of improvements in the availability of fresh food; and what assessment he has made of current levels of 24 hour availability of fresh food in hospitals.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what metrics he plans to use to measure the effectiveness of improvements in ward kitchens in hospitals; and what assessment he has made of the quality of ward kitchens in hospitals.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on ensuring that every NHS trust has a named board member with responsibility for hospital food.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on ensuring that every NHS trust has a chief dietitian with responsibility for overseeing hospital food.

**Matt Hancock:** [\[129828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what metrics he uses to measure patient satisfaction with hospital food; and what assessment he has made of current levels of satisfaction with hospital food.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We know the importance of quality, nutritious hospital food to aid a patient's recovery. The Independent Review of Hospital Food, published in October 2020, included an assessment of hospital food. This is why a three-year plan named 'Great Food, Good Health', led by NHS England, is underway to implement the recommendations from

the Review with the aim to improve hospital food, as well as picking up on the existing food agenda in the NHS Long Term Plan and the Greener NHS Plan. NHS England has established an Expert Advisory Group, made up of clinicians, dietitians, and caterers to take forward the implementation of recommendations from the Independent Review of Hospital Food. In addition, NHS England now have a National Dietitian and a National Development Chef to support this work.

As part of this work, NHS England published updated NHS Food Standards on the 3 November 2022 and they are considering the best way to measure the effectiveness of improvements as a result of those standards.

### ■ Independent Investigation Into East Kent Maternity Services

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[134040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendations of the independent report entitled Reading the signals: maternity and neonatal services in East Kent, published on 19 October 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government is actively reviewing the recommendations and will respond to them in full.

### ■ Intensive Care: Nurses

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[132432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that more Intensive Therapy Unit nursing staff receive a post-registration qualification in critical care nursing.

**Will Quince:**

It is the responsibility of individual NHS Trusts to invest in post-registration training, ensuring that their staff are trained and competent to carry out their role.

### ■ Liver Cancer: Screening

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[133597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of surveillance measures for liver cancer in the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

Liver surveillance is key to identifying liver cancers earlier and NHS England's National Cancer Programme is providing £6 million to Cancer Alliances in 2023/24 to improve liver surveillance programmes. Cancer Alliances across the country are supporting providers to ensure that patients eligible for liver surveillance under the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance receive it and are supported to attend surveillance appointments where they may find this difficult.

## ■ **Maternity Services at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust Independent Review**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[134039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Final report of the Ockenden review, published on 30 March 2022, what recent progress his Department has made on implementing the accepted recommendations; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Following publication of the report in March 2022, on the 1 April 2022, a letter was sent from the NHS Chief Executive, Chief Nursing Officer and National Medical Director to all National Health Service trusts asking them to consider and act upon the report's findings. The Maternity Safety Support Programme is providing support to Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust to improve maternity services.

An Independent Working Group, chaired by the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, has been established to help guide implementation and next steps of the Immediate and Essential Actions from the Ockenden Report and our consideration of the East Kent report. The Independent Working Group has met five times so far.

NHS England will consider actions from both Ockenden and East Kent reports and map a coherent national single delivery plan for maternity, delivered through the Maternity Transformation Programme. This will bring together the existing commitments of the Maternity Transformation Programme, alongside the actions from the Ockenden and East Kent reports. NHS England are aiming to publish the plan in Spring 2023.

The Government has made significant investment into maternity and neonatal services, with £127 million announced in 2022 to go into the maternity system to help increase the NHS maternity workforce and improve neonatal care.

The Secretary of State will not make a statement at this time.

## ■ **Medical Equipment: Import Controls**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[131226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce regulatory barriers for companies and healthcare providers importing medical devices and equipment from the European Union.

**Will Quince:**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are unable to intervene in issues relating to capacity in the EU system. However, the MHRA recognises that there is a need to increase Approved Body capacity to ensure the continued supply of imported medical devices and equipment to the UK market by reducing regulatory barriers for companies and healthcare providers importing said devices. The MHRA are engaging with, reviewing applications from and auditing a

number of organisations who have applied to be designated as a UK Approved Body. The MHRA is taking a pragmatic approach to the designation of these Approved Bodies, balancing the need to establish an independent UK system against avoiding any unnecessary duplication

On the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the MHRA announced that there will be a 12-month extension to the implementation of new UK Medical Device Regulations to accommodate for any disruption caused by the Great Britain's departure from the European Union. Manufacturers will be able to continue to place CE marked devices on the Great Britain market after 1 July 2023. Following this, from July 2024 the transitional arrangements will apply for CE and UKCA marked devices placed on the Great Britain market. Manufacturers are also able to apply to the MHRA for an Exceptional Use Authorisation (EUA) which permits the supply of a medical device without a valid CE or UKCA mark in certain circumstances.

In addition to building Approved Body capacity and extending the implementation of the revised UK regulations, the MHRA is working, with industry partners and designated Approved Bodies, to assess what further actions can be taken to ensure ongoing supply of medical devices where manufacturers have been unable to secure ongoing certification.

## ■ Medical Treatments

**Chris Green:**

[\[129955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage of health technology appraisals conducted by NICE for therapies in combination have resulted in (a) termination, (b) a negative recommendation, (c) an optimised recommendation, (d) a positive recommendation or (e) a recommendation for use within the Cancer Drugs Fund or Innovative Medicines Fund.

**Will Quince:**

Between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2022, 20% of appraisals of combination therapies undertaken by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) were terminated due to the company not making an evidence submission to NICE.

Of the technologies appraised by NICE, 4% were not recommended, 31% were recommended for routine commissioning, 52% were optimised recommendations and 12% were recommended or optimised for use within the Cancer Drugs Fund.

No applications were recommended for the Innovative Medicines fund.

## ■ Medicine: Research

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[133648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the remit is of the National Institute for Health and Care Research for the commercialisation of early-stage clinical research.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 31 January 2023]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) invests in research, clinical expertise, specialist facilities, workforce and support services across a range of clinical areas. All NIHR research infrastructure actively supports collaboration with the life sciences industry and supports the commercialisation of new research and related technologies to help grow new companies (including SMEs). The NIHR has a dedicated IP Unit that aims to develop the capacity of NIHR to enter into commercial research partnerships with relevant life science or healthcare organisations as well as providing support in the area of commercial processes, IP management and advice in order to maximise return on investment.

**■ Mental Health Services: Hospital Beds****Mick Whitley:**[\[133704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of bed capacity in mental health care; and what steps his Department is taking to increase that capacity.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such specific assessment has been made. It is the responsibility of commissioners to make available appropriate provision to meet the health and care needs of their local population.

We are supporting integrated care boards to expand mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan, which commits to increasing investment into mental health services by at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24. This will see a significant expansion in community and crisis mental health services to help people get quicker access to the care they need and prevent avoidable deterioration and hospital admission, so that beds are available for those who need them.

On 23 January 2023 we set out detail on how £150 million of capital investment, first announced at the 2021 Spending Review, will be used to build mental health urgent and emergency care infrastructure. This includes funding for 150 wider capital schemes to provide and improve crisis cafes, crisis houses, mental health urgent care centres, health-based places of safety and broader improvements to crisis lines and emergency departments. This will mean care can be provided in more appropriate spaces for those in need and will reduce pressure on wider parts of the system.

**■ Neurology****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[133744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the number of qualified neurologists.



**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 31 January 2023]:* The number of doctors who accepted a specialty training post in neurology increased by 20% from 44 in 2021 to 53 in 2022.

In January 2023, Health Education England announced that nearly 900 additional medical specialty training posts have been created for this year, including five additional training posts for neurology.

The Government has funded 1,500 (25%) 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. This expansion will increase the supply pipeline in coming years for qualified doctors, including neurologists.

As of October 2022 there are 1,672 full-time equivalent neurologists working in the National Health Service. This is an increase of 559 (50.3%) from 10 years ago (October 2012).

**■ NHS: Staff****Jim Shannon:**[\[131163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department's NHS Long Term Workforce Plan will help to reduce workforce gaps in cardiology services, in the context of the size of the waiting list for heart care as of January 2023.

**Will Quince:**

To support the workforce as a whole 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 to reduce supply gaps and improve retention. The plan is for the whole of the National Health Service workforce in England, including the cardiology workforce.

**Stephen Morgan:**[\[133766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made on the impact of Brexit on (a) the UK's medical workforce and (b) trends in the level of NHS recruitment.

**Will Quince:**

We have made no specific assessment of the impact of Brexit on the UK's medical workforce or trends in the level of NHS recruitment. In September 2022 there were over 71,700 NHS staff employed who reported an EU/EEA nationality. This is 21% (12,600) more than in June 2016 and includes an increase of over 800 (8%) EU/EEA doctors.



**■ Osteoporosis: Health Services****Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[135136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the capacity of the NHS in England to diagnose and treat osteoporosis.

**Helen Whately:**

Services for those with osteoporosis are commissioned locally by Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). NHS England's Getting it Right First Time Programme has a specific workstream on musculoskeletal health, which includes work to explore how best to support ICBs in the diagnosis and treatment of Osteoporosis.

**■ Quality and Safety of Organs Intended for Transplantation Regulations 2012****Stella Creasy:** [\[135339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, whether he plans to (a) revoke, (b) retain or (c) replace the Quality and Safety of Organs Intended for Transplantation Regulations 2012.

**Neil O'Brien:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 December 2022 to Question [105306](#).

**■ Social Services: Finance****Esther McVey:** [\[133605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to introduce a lifetime cap on individual care costs; and if he will make an estimate of the cost to the public purse of the cap in each of the first five years of its operation.

**Helen Whately:**

The adult social care charging reforms, which include the introduction of a lifetime cap on individual care costs, have been delayed from October 2023 to October 2025. The impact assessment for the consultation on charging reform, published in January 2022, set out our estimate of the projected cost of implementing charging reform in October 2023.

**■ Tobacco****Rachael Maskell:** [\[135285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason he has not published an updated Tobacco Control Plan; and whether it is his policy to introduce an updated Tobacco Control Plan.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We are still considering the recommendations made in 'The Khan review: making smoking obsolete' and further information will be available in due course.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Asylum****Dan Carden:**[\[132602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's correspondence with the Hon. Member for Liverpool Walton, reference MPAM/0465470/22, for what reasons her Department did not reach a decision on the asylum case by 16 November 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases.

There are many factors that can delay and contribute to the length of time to process asylum claims. It is right we take time to work through them carefully.

Our teams are actively working to progress all asylum claims and endeavour to have decisions delivered as quickly as possible.

■ **Asylum: Children****Caroline Lucas:**[\[132331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the response to the Urgent Question on Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children on 24 January 2023, Official Report, column 859, whether all (a) contractors and (b) other staff in contact with children housed in bridging hotels are Disclosure and Barring Service checked.

**Robert Jenrick:**

All individuals working directly with the young people accommodated at the hotels have Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and all those working or operating on the hotel sites have DBS clearance.

**Damien Moore:**[\[135393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of placing asylum-seeking children and families in local authority areas which are rated inadequate for children's services on their human rights.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office, and wider government, work closely with Local Authorities to discuss proposed accommodation sites in their area before any decision being made to use accommodation. We are committed to engaging with Local Authorities and local partners to understand risks, including impact on local services.

**Damien Moore:**[\[135395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of placing asylum-seeking children and families in local authority areas which are rated inadequate for children's services on (a) the standard of their education and (b) their human rights.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office, and wider government, work closely with Local Authorities to discuss proposed accommodation sites in their area before any decision being made to use accommodation. We are committed to engaging with Local Authorities and local partners to understand risks, including impact on local services.

■ **Asylum: Greater London****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[131275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people aged under the age of 18 have been reported as missing from asylum hotels in (a) the London Borough of Hounslow and (b) London.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers in our care is of paramount importance to the Home Office. We expect high standards from all of our providers, and we have a robust governance framework in place to manage service delivery of the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (AASC). Details of the AASC can be found at:

[New asylum accommodation contracts awarded - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-asylum-accommodation-contracts-awarded).

We have no power to detain unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in these hotels and we know some do go missing. Many of those who have gone missing are subsequently traced and located.

Children's movements in and out of hotels are monitored and recorded and they are accompanied by support workers when attending organised activities and social excursions off-site, or where specific vulnerabilities are identified.

When a young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed led by our directly engaged social workers. If a child who has gone missing is returned to the hotel, a follow up Multi Agency Stakeholder Forum (MASF) will be chaired by the LA (of the area the hotel is in) and a Social Worker at the hotel will complete a returns interview. They will then work with the child to understand the reasons for the absence.

The Home Office work around the clock with the police and local authorities to ensure the children in our care are safe and the Police are responsible for locating any missing children.

The Home Office does not hold data for the number of adult and children asylum seekers that were accommodated via the Home Office that are missing in a reportable format and it would require a manual search of records which would incur a disproportionate cost.

**■ Asylum: Sefton**

**Damien Moore:** [\[135391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of (a) planning requirements of the Pontins site in Southport and (b) powers of Sefton Council to refuse change-of-use applications for that site on the housing of asylum-seeking children and families in Southport constituency.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Whenever the Home Office considers using accommodation for housing asylum seekers we examine the planning requirements to ensure compliance.

**Damien Moore:** [\[135394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times her Department has discussed with Sefton Council the potential location of asylum-seeking children and families within that Council's area in the last (a) three months, (b) six months and (c) year.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office has met with Sefton Council on seven occasions, since the first engagement took place in November 2022, to discuss sourcing appropriate accommodation for asylum seekers including asylum seeking families and children.

The Home Office regularly engages with local councils across the UK. We are committed to engaging with local authorities and local partners to support successful delivery.

**■ Asylum: Southport**

**Damien Moore:** [\[135392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with Sefton Council in Multi-Agency Forums on the potential accommodation of asylum-seeking children and families in Southport.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office engages with local authorities across the UK to discuss sourcing appropriate accommodation for asylum seekers. As part of this, the Home Office has held discussions with Sefton Council on opportunities for asylum accommodation located in Sefton Metropolitan area.

**■ Bicycles: Theft**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many bicycle thefts there were in (a) England and Wales and (b) York in the last 12 months for which data is available.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of bicycle thefts in the last five years.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[135276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce bicycle thefts; and what advice her Department provides on the on the most effective types of bicycle lock.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[135277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to encourage police forces to provide (a) postcode marking on bicycles and (b) other forms of owner advice to help protect bicycles from theft.

**Chris Philp:**

To prevent and deter the theft and sale of stolen bicycles the Home Office is working closely with the British Transport Police (BTP), the national lead for tackling cycle theft. BTP have launched the 'double lock it' campaign with police forces and organisations, providing advice to owners to help better protect their bicycles. Further information on the campaign and bicycle locks can be found here:

<https://www.btp.police.uk/police-forces/british-transport-police/areas/campaigns/double-lock-it/>.

The Home Office collects data from police forces on police recorded crime, broken down by Police Force Area and Community Safety Partnership Area, including the City of York. This includes the number of recorded offences of bicycle theft.

The latest data can be found here:

12 MONTHS TO DEC 2019	12 MONTHS TO MAR 2020	12 MONTHS TO SEP 2021	12 MONTHS TO SEP 2022	% CHANGE MAR 20 SEP 2022	% CHANGE DEC 19 TO SEP 2022	% CHANGE SEP 22 TO SEP 2021
Bicycle theft 91,006	88,321	74,660	78,619	-11%	-14%	5%

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

The Government has launched plans to boost cycling and walking. The Cycling and Walking Plan for England, Gear Change, was published in 2020 and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>. Through Theme 4 of the Gear Change Plan, the Department for Transport (DfT) is leading on initiatives to combat cycle theft, including encouraging retailers to number the bikes they sell and offer customers the opportunity to register their bike on a database at the point of sale.

Through the BTP-led National Cycle Crime Group, working with Department for Transport, Cycle Crime Reduction Partnerships have been set up across the country to coordinate regional enforcement activity to disrupt organised cycle theft. Furthermore, to ensure police forces have sufficient resources to respond to the challenges they face, we have committed to recruit an extra 20,000 police officers by March 2023, with over 16,753 already in place at the end of September 2022.

## ■ British Citizenship: Applications

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[135293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many citizenship certificate requests were on hold due to IT issues preventing mandatory checks being completed as of 30 January 2023.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office, and wider government, work closely with Local Authorities to discuss proposed accommodation sites in their area before any decision being made to use accommodation. We are committed to engaging with Local Authorities and local partners to understand risks, including impact on local services.

## ■ Hillsborough Families' Experiences Review

**Maria Eagle:**

[\[135171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether she is taking steps to implement the recommendations of the report of the Right Reverend James Jones The Patronising Disposition of Unaccountable Power, HC 511, published in January 2017, on equality of arms at inquests and the statutory duty of candour; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The points of learning made by Bishop James Jones in his report span a number of departments and organisations and the Home Office is coordinating the Government's overarching response to it.

Whilst the timing of the Government's response has been impacted by the need to avoid risk of prejudice during the Hillsborough criminal proceedings, work has been underway within the relevant departments and organisations to carefully consider and address those points of learning directed at the Government.

As with all of the points of learning in the Bishop's report, the Government will address the points of learning related to equality of arms at inquests and the duty of candour, as part of the full response.

The Home Secretary is committed to engaging with the Hillsborough families prior to publication of the Government's full response in due course.

## ■ HM Passport Office: Compensation

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[135273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much compensation HM Passport Office paid in each calendar year since 2015.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Data relating to compensation payments only is not held in a reportable format.

The table below shows the total amount of reimbursements by HM Passport Office to its customers in each calendar year from 2015.

YEAR	TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT PAID TO CUSTOMERS*
2015	£1,470,537.50
2016	£1,557,986.74
2017	£1,584,210.12
2018	£1,853,748.91
2019	£1,238,101.48
2020	£619,772.41
2021	£1,669,192.64
2022	£4,346,937.29

#### ■ Home Office: Public Opinion

**Mr David Davis:**

[\[135143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which Minister or official authorised the Research, Information and Communication Unit to collect data related to public statements, social media and internet activity as part of that unit's work.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) was established in 2007 under the Prevent strand of HMG's CONTEST strategy. RICU aims to understand and counter terrorist and extremist ideologies to reduce the risk to the UK, its citizens, and its interests overseas.

RICU provides analysis on terrorist use of propaganda and exploitation of the internet to inform the UK's counter-terrorism system. To support this crucial objective RICU undertakes open-source monitoring to better understand the media, online and communications environment as it relates to terrorism and extremism. All RICU data collection and analysis complies with relevant legislation.

The work of RICU is crucial to the delivery of Prevent and has helped to position the UK at the forefront of the battle against terrorist propaganda, particularly online terrorist content. Ministers have authorised RICU's work since it was established in 2007, and through subsequent updates to the CONTEST strategy (in 2011 and 2018) and regularly receive RICU outputs.

#### ■ Home Office: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[135316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps their Department takes to comply with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and if they will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

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

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

As part of the regular engagement process the Home Office proactively provides these unions with human resources information to support constructive engagement.

In terms of compliance with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, the Home Office will constructively consider all requests from its trade unions for information to support collective bargaining. Additionally, the Department has a framework in place for annual pay negotiations with the trade unions which lists standard items of data that will be provided to the unions annually to facilitate the negotiations. The framework also sets out that the Department will consider requests for additional information and aim to respond positively where possible.

**■ Jimmy Lai**

**Sir Stephen Timms:** [\[133540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Mr Jimmy Lai Chee-ying who has been held in Stanley Prison in Hong Kong on charges under the National Security Law is a citizen of the United Kingdom.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases.

**■ Metropolitan Police: Misconduct**

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[133681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many misconduct cases for Metropolitan Police safer schools officers were active as of 26 January 2023.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not hold or collect this data. The responsible body would be the Metropolitan Police Service

The Home Office does however collect and publish broader data on police misconduct. The latest series was published on 12 January 2023 and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-misconduct-statistics>.



**■ Metropolitan Police: Vetting**

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[133682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve due diligence checks on serving Metropolitan Police officers.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[133683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve vetting processes for Metropolitan Police safer schools officers.

**Chris Philp:**

Police forces are expected to carry out their vetting in line with the College of Policing's vetting statutory code of practice and vetting authorised professional practice (APP) guidance.

In light of significant concerns raised around vetting of the police workforce, the Home Secretary has recently asked the College of Policing to strengthen the statutory code of practice for police vetting to make the obligations all forces must legally follow stricter and clearer. The NPCC has also asked police forces to check their officers and staff against the national police database (PND) to help identify any intelligence or allegations that need further investigation.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) report of 2nd November into vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service provided 43 recommendations to help strengthen the integrity of police workforce, including addressing the appropriate level of vetting for specific roles. All of the relevant bodies have committed to addressing the recommendations in full. The Inspectorate will also be carrying out a rapid review of forces' response to the report.

**■ Police**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[135208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate her Department has made of the cumulative number of years of experience held by all police officers in each year since 2010.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office collects and publishes data annually on the length of service of police officers in post, as at 31 March each year, in the ['Police workforce, England and Wales'](#) statistical bulletin.

This data has been published since 2016 and can be found in Table JL5 of the data tables accompanying each publication.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Matt Western:**

[\[131353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to extend eligibility of the Resettlement Scheme for vulnerable people in Afghanistan beyond the Pathway 3 criteria.

**Robert Jenrick:**

There are no plans to expand the criteria under the existing pathways of the the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement to the UK through one of three referral pathways, which is a fair and equitable way to identify those in need.

Under Pathway 3, in the first year, places will be offered to eligible at-risk British Council contractors, GardaWorld contractors, and Chevening alumni in Afghanistan or the region.

Beyond the first year of Pathway 3, we will continue to work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk. Further detail will be set out in due course.

Definitions for these eligibility criteria can be found at: [Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3: eligibility for British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening Alumni - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

[\[135123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January to Question 126514 on Refugees: Afghanistan, how many people have been resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme: Pathway Two since the commencement of that scheme.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office publishes data on resettlement in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on people resettled under Pathway 2 of the ACRS are published in table Asy\_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to September 2022. Data up to December 2022 will be published on 23 February 2023.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan and Ukraine

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[133607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications for family reunion with a refugee or person with humanitarian protection which were submitted by (a) Afghan and (b) Ukrainian nationals in 2022 received a decision within (i) 12 and (ii) 24 weeks.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Our family reunion policy is intended to allow those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK to sponsor their spouse or partner and/or children under the age of 18 to join them, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country of origin.

Information regarding processing times and nationality of applicants is not routinely published and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

We are committed to improving and speeding up processing times for family reunion applications. We are reviewing processes to streamline decision making to enable us to provide a better service to our applicants.

We continue to prioritise applications where there is an evidenced urgent or compelling reason to do so.

**■ Visas: Applications****Mr Virendra Sharma:****[135239]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the most recent year for which data is available, how many visas have been refused for applicants who have subsequently been approved for a visa.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not hold published data on the number of refused applications that have subsequently been approved a visa. The Home Office does publish data relating to those coming to the UK, extending their stay, gaining citizenship, applying for asylum which can be found here: [Immigration statistics, year ending September 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022).

**■ Visas: Married People****Andrew Gwynne:****[135563]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 125286 on Visas: Married People, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of increasing the Minimum Income Requirement on levels of (a) family and (b) spousal separation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) was implemented in July 2012, following advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, reflecting the income at which a British family could no longer access income-related benefits. It was introduced to ensure family migrants are supported at a reasonable level, do not become a burden on the taxpayer and can participate sufficiently in everyday life to facilitate their integration into British society.

The level of the MIR has not increased since it was introduced in 2012.

The Home Office considers the impact on families, particularly children, in the review and implementation of all its policies.

**■ Wind Power: Migrant Workers****Karl Turner:**[\[133971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 120952 on Wind Power: Migrant Workers, when this concession was last reviewed; how many officials were involved in that review; and if she will list the stakeholders her officials have consulted over this concession since it was introduced.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Officials from policy and operational teams across the Home Office were involved in the review of the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession. The Department does not record the number of staff working on individual pieces of work at any one time.

Home Office officials regularly meet various stakeholders to discuss a wide range of matters relating to immigration, including external stakeholders and other government departments, such the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for International Trade, DEFRA, and the Department for Transport.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Department for International Trade: Equality****Chris Stephens:**[\[R\] \[128655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure her Department complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code; and whether that monitoring data gathered is shared with union representatives.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) routinely captures and monitors personal information as specified in section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code from candidates and staff to ensure best practice and legal compliance. DIT uses Equality Impact Assessments to examine the impacts of policies and processes on the Department's workforce and take action to mitigate against any unintended impacts.

The data gathered is shared with trade union representatives where appropriate. Detailed information on the Civil Service workforce is collected and published centrally as part of the Annual Civil Service Employment Statistics and can be found on Gov.uk.

**Chris Stephens:**[\[R\] \[133734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure her Department complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code; and whether that monitoring data gathered is shared with union representatives.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him today, UIN 128655.

■ **Internationalisation Fund****Nick Thomas-Symonds:**[\[126733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much of the Internationalisation Fund has been allocated to exporters in 2022-23.

**Andrew Bowie:**

*[Holding answer 24 January 2023]:* During the 2022-23 financial year, the Internationalisation Fund has paid £7 million to 1,093 exporters in England as of 20 January 2023.

■ **Research: Foreign Investment in UK****Chi Onwurah:**[\[126640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to increase (a) the global profile of and (b) investment in research and development in cities outside the London-Oxford-Cambridge triangle; and what plans she has to use trade delegations to achieve those objectives.

**Andrew Bowie:**

The Government is continuing to drive forward Manifesto commitments on science and technology including increasing both public and private investment in R&D, across all regions of the UK.

Our High Potential Opportunities Programme, which can be found on our [Investment Atlas](#) presents commercially attractive investment opportunities from across the UK to investors. Examples include immersive technology in the Northeast and MedTech health in Wales.

This year we have delivered 18 Trade Missions to advance our trade and investment ambitions, including a mission to the Smart City Expo in Barcelona, November 2022 where a globally renowned digital consultancy firm, with a UK branch in the Hon. Member's constituency, attended.

■ **Trade Promotion****Seema Malhotra:**[\[134004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the results of the Export Client Survey for each of the last five years.

**Andrew Bowie:**

*[Holding answer 1 February 2023]:* The Export Client Survey launched in 2018 and the findings for the 2018-2019 financial year have been published: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-export-client-survey-ecs>.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Administration of Justice: Autism

**Esther McVey:**

[\[133591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people diagnosed with autism requested but were not granted reasonable adjustments as defined within the Equal Treatment Bench Book in the last year.

**Mike Freer:**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) considers each reasonable adjustment request it receives on an individual needs basis. HMCTS does not require that people going through the court or tribunal system tell them if they are diagnosed with autism. It is for the requestor to decide whether they tell HMCTS about a diagnosis of autism. If the requestor tells HMCTS they have autism, the agency does not necessarily document that a diagnosis of autism has been given when recording details of requests for reasonable adjustments. The information requested is not, therefore recorded centrally.

HMCTS will refer any requests from users with disabilities for reasonable adjustments in the hearing to the judge to consider in their independent judicial capacity. The judge will consider such requests in accordance with the Equal Treatment Bench Book.

### ■ Burglary: Trials

**Steve Reed:**

[\[135249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the average time taken between domestic burglary cases being initially reported to being completed in court in each year since 2010.

**Mike Freer:**

This information is not held centrally.

### ■ Child Contact Centres: Finance

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[132311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether funding arrangements for the payment of grants to Child Contact Centres have been finalised.

**Mike Freer:**

In December 2022, the Ministry of Justice appointed the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) as the administrators of the Supported Child Contact Centre Grant for the 2022/23 financial year.

NACCC has now assessed the bids received from centres and is currently in the process of making grant awards to recipients.

Future funding arrangements for child contact centres are being considered by the Department and any decisions will be communicated later in the year.

## ■ Crime and Anti-social Behaviour: Young People

**Julian Knight:**

[133643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to help keep vulnerable young people away from (a) crime and (b) antisocial behaviour.

**Damian Hinds:**

As highlighted in the Beating Crime Plan 2021, it is paramount that we intervene with children before they become involved in crime and antisocial behaviour, which has a detrimental impact on communities. That is why my department has launched two early intervention programmes which provide support to vulnerable children. Turnaround is a targeted programme, funding 153 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) across England and Wales to complete early intervention and diversion work with children on the cusp of the justice system. YOTs are funded to put in place a package of support that addresses children's underlying needs, working with partners such as police and community safety teams, aiming to address the causes of behaviour to stop it escalating. The eligibility criteria include children who have been issued civil orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for antisocial behaviour.

The Department has also recently launched the Youth Justice Sport Fund which funds voluntary and community sector organisations to carry out targeted work supporting children considered to be vulnerable to involvement in crime, using sport as a vehicle to address problem behaviour.

We are also working closely with other Government departments, particularly the Department for Education and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to shape wider social policies to ensure vulnerable children and families are supported.

## ■ Crimes of Violence: Reoffenders

**Steve Reed:**

[132495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of individuals on probation went on to commit a serious further offence in each year since 2010; and in how many and what proportion of those cases was there a subsequent finding that the risk of their causing serious harm had been underestimated.

**Damian Hinds:**

In respect of how many individuals on probation went on to commit a serious further offence in each year since 2010, I refer the honourable Member for Croydon North to the answer I gave on 20 January 2023, to Question UIN 125451: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-17/125451>.

We estimate that a consistent range of less than 0.5% of offenders on probation in any one year go on to commit serious further offence. To provide exact proportions (as opposed to an interval estimate of the proportion) could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Similarly, identifying how many offenders and what proportion of those cases was there a subsequent finding that the risk of their causing serious harm had been underestimated could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

### ■ Domestic Abuse: Trials

**Steve Reed:** [\[135257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the average time taken between domestic violence cases being initially reported to being completed in court in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

This information is not held centrally.

**Steve Reed:** [\[135258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the average time taken for domestic violence cases to be completed in court in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

This information is not held centrally.

### ■ Drugs: Trials

**Steve Reed:** [\[135254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the average time taken for drug possession cases to be completed in court in each year since 2010.

**Mike Freer:**

Average timeliness from first listing/receipt at court to completion for drug possession offences (including intent to supply) has been provided in the attached table. Crown Court data is only available from 2014 onwards.

To increase capacity in the Criminal Justice System, we have removed the limit on sitting days in the Crown Court for the second year in a row, extended Nightingale courtrooms and increased Magistrates' courts sentencing powers. We're also maximising judicial recruitment, recruiting around 1,000 judges across jurisdictions for 2022/23 to enable us to sit at the maximum possible level over the coming years.

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 reduced from around 60,600 cases in June 2021 to 57,500 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.

**Attachments:**

1. [Table](#) [2023-02-02 PQ 135254 v2.xlsx]



## ■ Employment Tribunals Service

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims were made in 2022.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims were made in each year between 2010 and 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

The number of claims submitted to the Employment Tribunal from 2010 to September 2022 are:

CALENDAR YEAR	CLAIMS MADE
January to December 2010	193,584
January to December 2011	221,177
January to December 2012	177,339
January to December 2013	153,323
January to December 2014	52,110
January to December 2015	74,283
January to December 2016	86,867
January to December 2017	115,679
January to December 2018	119,157
January to December 2019	109,432
January to December 2020	118,214
January to March 2021	24,174
June to December 2021	47,183
January to September 2022	57,285

Data to March 2021 extracted from legacy database. Data from June 21 to September 2022 extracted from the reform database in line with published statistics.

A claim may be brought under more than one jurisdiction or subsequently amended or clarified in the course of proceedings but will be counted only once. Data from published statistics.

The data may differ slightly to that of the published stats as this data was run on a different date, specifically for this request.

Data is taken from a live management information system and can change over time.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and is the best data that is available.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims were accepted in 2022.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims were accepted in each year between 2010 and 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

Information regarding the number of claims accepted in Employment Tribunals can be found on the following link: [Tribunals statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/employment-tribunals-statistics).

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what is the current average time between a claimant receiving their employment tribunal claim and their first hearing.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[132484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what is the average time from when a claimant gets confirmation of receipt of their employment tribunal claim to their first hearing in each region of the UK.

**Mike Freer:**

HM Courts and Tribunals Service does not hold the requested information.

**Angela Rayner:** [\[133628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment tribunal claims were disposed of between 1 January and 31 December 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

The number of Employment Tribunal disposals is published and can be found on the following link: [Tribunals statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/employment-tribunals-statistics).

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Dan Carden:** [\[132406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has (a) provided recent guidance to and (b) had recent discussions with the judiciary on the issuing of warrants for the forcible installation of prepayment meters.

**Mike Freer:**

The Lord Chancellor and Ministers regularly discuss a broad range of justice matters with the senior judiciary.

As the Business Secretary announced on 23 January 2023, the Government is working to deliver a five-point plan to protect customers who are struggling with the cost of energy. As part of this plan, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Justice will work with Ofgem, to ensure that the process by which suppliers bring cases to court to seek entry to install prepayment meters is fair, transparent and supports vulnerable customers.

**■ Housing: Young Offenders****Janet Daby:****[R] [135471]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of local authority accommodation for children post-charge who are unable to be bailed.

**Damian Hinds:**

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to make sure that there is sufficient provision in their area to meet the needs of children in their care. Children should not be detained overnight in police custody post-charge, and police forces and local authorities should be working to facilitate this in line with the provisions of the Home Office Concordat on Children in Custody.

The Government is supporting Local Authorities to meet their statutory duty through £259 million of capital funding to maintain capacity and expand provision in both secure and open children's homes. This will provide high quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people and create new places and support provision in secure children's homes in all nine regions of England.

The Government's response to the recommendations in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care also sets out our longer-term plans to improve the commissioning of Local Authority children's social care placements.

**■ Ministry of Justice: Holiday Leave****Chris Stephens:****[R] [132473]**

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

**Mike Freer:**

I can confirm that the Ministry of Justice's buying/selling annual leave policy is available to all employees on the Intranet.

## ■ Museums and Galleries

**Paul Maynard:** [\[132330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Law Commission will commence its review of legislation relating to museum collections.

**Mike Freer:**

The Law Commission proposed a law reform project on museum collections as part of its 13th Programme of Law Reform, published on 13 December 2017. The project has yet to begin, but the Commission remains committed to the work and will commence the project as soon as resources allow.

## ■ Prisoners' Release

**Steve Reed:** [\[132417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prisoners released under the early release scheme as a result of Operation Safeguard.

**Damian Hinds:**

No prisoners will be released as a result of Operation Safeguard.

## ■ Probation Service

**Grahame Morris:** [\[135207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cumulative number of years of experience held by all probation officers in each year since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

The cumulative length of service, in years, held by all probation officers is given in the following table. Most years' figures are given as at 31st December each year, aside from 2022, where the latest published figures are as at 30 September 2022.

It should be noted that Information on probation officers is only available from the creation of National Probation Service (NPS) in June 2014.

Table 1 – Probation Officers in England and Wales cumulative length of service <sup>1,2</sup>, as at 31 December each year from 2014 to 2021 and September 2022 <sup>3,4</sup>

DATE	CUMULATIVE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF ALL PROBATION OFFICERS
31/12/2014	1,969
31/12/2015	5,537
31/12/2016	9,801
31/12/2017	12,727
31/12/2018	15,522

DATE	CUMULATIVE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF ALL PROBATION OFFICERS
31/12/2019	19,195
31/12/2020	22,411
31/12/2021	36,017
30/09/2022	36,053

Notes to tables:

1. The length of service in HMPPS is calculated from most recent hire date. Where staff have transferred in from another Government Department or have transferred in through HMPPS taking over a function, length of service is calculated from entry to HMPPS
2. Figures presented here do not represent the full experience of Probation Officers
3. The dates reflect the Full Time Equivalent and cumulative years of service at that particular point of the year.

#### ■ Probation: Sick Leave

**Beth Winter:** [\[132546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the average working days lost to sickness absence of probation officers in the year ending September 2022.

**Damian Hinds:**

The data is published in the HMPPS Workforce Quarterly publication.

The most recent publication with data to September 2022 is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-september-2022>.

#### ■ Probation: Staff

**Beth Winter:** [\[132547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of when the Probation Service will meet its required staffing level.

**Damian Hinds:**

This is an ever-evolving picture and is based on a variety of factors, including forecast caseload, case mix, recruitment plans, attrition and the Target Staffing level. Staffing level data is regularly monitored, ensuring plans, such as recruitment, are in place where appropriate, as well providing an assessment of affordability against the latest and forecast financial position.

In addition, 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.

## ■ Probation: Termination of Employment

**Beth Winter:** [\[132545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the (a) leaving rate and (b) resignation rate of probation officers in the year ending September 2022.

**Damian Hinds:**

The HM Prison & Probation workforce quarterly publication covers staffing information, including the leaving and resignation rate for Probation Officers, and can be found via the following link: [HM Prison and Probation Service workforce quarterly: September 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-prison-and-probation-workforce-quarterly-september-2022). The latest publication captures data up to the period of 30th September 2022.

## ■ Rape: Trials

**Steve Reed:** [\[132496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of rape trials have been adjourned in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

Information on adjournments is not held.

**Steve Reed:** [\[132497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of rape trials were not (a) started and (b) completed as a result of complainants ceasing to pursue the case in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

Figures for effective, ineffective, cracked and vacated trials are published in Criminal Court Statistics 'trial effectiveness at the criminal courts' tool which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2022>.

We are taking strong action to address victim attrition, including:

- In September, we fully rolled out pre-recorded cross examination (Section 28) for victims of sexual and modern slavery offences in all Crown Court locations across England and Wales. This special measure allows victims to pre-record evidence, spares them the glare of a live courtroom trial and allows them to give evidence in advance of the trial and then move on with their lives more quickly.

- We have more than quadrupled funding for victim support from £41m in 2009/10 to £192m by 2024/25, and are increasing the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Abuse Advisors to over 1,000 by 2024/25.
- In December, we also launched a single source of 24/7 support for victims of rape and sexual abuse meaning every victim can now access free, confidential emotional support whenever and wherever they need it.

### ■ Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation

**Dan Carden:** [\[135427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to curtail the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Protection by Ministers .

**Mike Freer:**

The Government has announced its intention to legislate against Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation when parliamentary time allows. The means of doing so must be balanced, with scope wide enough to protect free speech and encompass the various areas of laws and tactics used, but not so expansive that it risks hindering access to justice by preventing meritorious claims from proceeding and individuals legitimately defending their reputation.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Private Rented Housing

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of service let homes in England which are let on contracts for periods of no longer than twenty-eight days.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that properties let for 28 days for which the contract is rolled over for another period of up to 28 days will be classified as one continuous let.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what effect the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will have on property lettings for 28 days or less which are renewed on a fresh contract.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that property lettings for 28 days or less which are renewed on a fresh contract are classified as a residential use class and subject to Council Tax.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government has committed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to introduce a short-term lets registration scheme which will improve consistency in standards across all types of guest accommodation and deliver much needed evidence and data about the number and location of short-term lets in England.

Further details on how the registration scheme will operate will be explored through a public consultation later this year. We have also committed to consulting on the introduction of a new use class for short term lets through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill .

All domestic properties in England are liable for council tax. From April 2023, where a property can demonstrate 70 days of actual short-term letting activity and that they were available for 140 days in the previous year, they will be liable for business rates.

**■ Vagrancy Act 1824****Layla Moran:**[\[134038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to repeal the Vagrancy Act 1824.

**Felicity Buchan:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [130114](#), on 26 January 2023.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022****Jim Shannon:**[\[135336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he is taking to help ensure the implementation of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

In the absence of Northern Ireland Executive ministers, the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2022 provides Northern Ireland civil servants with the clarity they require to take the limited but necessary decisions to maintain delivery of public services and operate in the public interest. Specifically, in clause 3, subsections (1) and (3) remove the need for Ministers or an Executive Committee to be in place to enable the exercise of departmental functions by senior officers in Northern Ireland departments if they deem it in the public interest.

The accompanying guidance to the Act, published on 19 December 2022, helps NI departments determine whether exercising a function is in the public interest and lists the principles that they should take into account when making such a determination. The Government cannot and should not anticipate the decisions that civil servants will need to take under this Act. Consequently, the Government does not intend to comment on which decisions NI departments should be taking forward.



**■ Cycling and Walking: Northern Ireland****Jim Shannon:**[\[135337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he is taking to support the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure to spend 10 per cent of the transport budget on active travel.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

Responsibility for transport policy is devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive and the Department for Infrastructure.

The UK Government recognises the importance of active travel, and through the “Communities and Place” strand of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), will provide support for active travel enhancement, including proposals to undertake active travel needs assessments and explore active travel links.

All 11 Northern Ireland councils have been invited by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to bid for UKSPF funding to deliver such programmes. These bids are currently undergoing assessment.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992****Chris Stephens:****[R]** [\[135321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps their Department takes to comply with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and if they will make a statement.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

There is a range of HR information which is published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and which is therefore publicly available.

The Northern Ireland Office shares a range of information with their recognised Trade Unions and data where it is appropriate and in line with privacy statements. This helps inform decision-making through formal negotiation and meaningful consultation and engagement.

The Northern Ireland Office is therefore complying with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and we always seek to work constructively with trade unions to reach fair and reasonable settlements.

**PRIME MINISTER****■ Prime Minister: Taxation****Dan Carden:**[\[135428\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to publish his tax return.

**Rishi Sunak:**

I have committed to do so, and the information will be published in due course on gov.uk once the accompanying documentation has been compiled and completed.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Chiltern Line****Julian Knight:**[\[135346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Chiltern mainline contract is due for renewal.

**Huw Merriman:**

The core term of the Chiltern National Rail Contract ends on 31 March 2025. The Secretary of State can call an extension of the National Rail Contract for any period up to 31 December 2027.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Julian Knight:**[\[133647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase access to electric vehicle charging points.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government's electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy, published last year, sets out the vision and commitments to make electric vehicle charging cheaper and more convenient than refuelling at a petrol station.

Going forward, the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund will support local authorities to work with industry and transform the availability of charging for drivers without off-street parking.

Alongside this, the Government has committed to support new electrical capacity, with the aim of at least 6,000 ultra-rapid chargepoints along motorways and major A-roads by 2035.

The Government also intends to lay legislation in the coming months to improve the consumer experience when using public chargepoints in the UK. This includes ensuring there is a 99% reliability rate at all rapid chargepoints and mandating open data so that they are easy to find using maps and apps.

■ **High Speed 2 Line****Louise Haigh:**[\[135495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 30 January 2022 to Question 129881, on High Speed 2 Line, if he will publish the full economic assessment of different NPR network configurations, including the TfN preferred network, referred to in that Answer.

**Huw Merriman:**

Once the NPR Strategic Outline Business Case has been finalised and reviewed by Ministers, a decision will be made on timelines for next steps and publication

■ **Official Cars****John Redwood:**[\[133530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the Government Car Service's policy is on the (a) type of fuel used and (b) country of origin when procuring new cars for its fleet.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has raised its ambition for its own vehicle fleet, and committed for 100% of its car and van fleet to be zero emission by 31 December 2027.

GCS is working towards this aim, and as vehicles become due for replacement GCS are procured zero emission or compliant ULEV vehicles with a balance between battery electric and petrol hybrid vehicles.

Working within Procurement rules, GCS endeavours to support UK based manufacturers subject to operational requirements. It now operates a fleet of which 71% are zero emission, ultra-low emission or low emission vehicles. This is achieved through a blend of battery electric and petrol hybrids.

■ **Official Cars: Electric Vehicles****John Redwood:**[\[133529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the the adequacy of the (a) range, (b) security and (c) comfort of electric vehicles procured by the Government Car Service for Government use.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government Car Service (GCS) now operates 38 battery electric cars.

(a) The range of these cars is more than adequate for most journeys, whilst other vehicles are available if needed for longer journeys.

(b) The security of GCS vehicles and their passengers is a priority. Various modifications are made to these vehicles prior to entering service.

(c) All vehicles procured by GCS are evaluated for fitness for purpose to enable Ministers to work in reasonable comfort while travelling.

■ **Offshore Industry: Missing People****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[135415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which agency is investigating the worker missing from the Valeris 121 rig.

**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 while 98 miles east of Aberdeen. Valaris 121 was under tow at the time, so this constitutes a marine accident in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation's Casualty Investigation Code. As the accident occurred outside UK territorial waters, the Liberian Registry has commenced a marine safety investigation as the Flag State for Valaris 121 in accordance with Casualty Investigation Code. The MAIB has registered the UK as a Substantially Interested State in the Liberian investigation and has offered support.

## TREASURY

### ■ Arts: Tax Allowances

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[135187\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the estimated Exchequer impact of the two-year tapered rate increase of Theatre, Orchestra and Museums and Galleries Exhibitions Tax Reliefs, published in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021: Policy costings on 27 October 2021, what was the Exchequer impact of the uplifted rate for 2021-22.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government recognises the value of the UK's world leading creative industries and arts sectors.

At Autumn Budget 2021, the Government temporarily increased the headline rates of theatre tax relief (TTR), orchestra tax relief (OTR), and museums and galleries exhibition tax relief (MGETR) in recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on these sectors.

The headline rates of relief for the TTR and the MGETR were temporarily increased from 20 per cent (for non-touring productions) and 25 per cent (for touring productions) to 45 per cent and 50 per cent. From 1 April 2023, the rates will be reduced to 30 per cent and 35 per cent and will return to 20 per cent and 25 per cent on 1 April 2024. OTR rates temporarily increased from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, reducing to 35 per cent from 1 April 2023 and returning to 25 per cent on 1 April 2024.

In the year 2021-2022, £38 million of TTR was paid in response to 620 claims, representing 2,055 productions. £10 million of OTR was paid in response to 100 claims, representing 510 productions. £9 million of MGETR was paid in response to 145 claims, representing 1,060 exhibitions.

### ■ Bakeries: Business Rates

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[134057\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which type of bakeries fall within the higher (a) discount and (b) relief rate for business rates.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[135262\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, whether bakeries will receive the higher rate of Business Rates Relief in addition to the basic rate of relief.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[135352\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor for the Exchequer, whether (a) bakeries which also run cafés, (b) wholesale producers of baked goods and (c) retail outlets for baked good produced offsite qualify for the higher relief rate.

**Victoria Atkins:**

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 an increased 75 per cent relief for retail, hospitality and leisure (RHL) properties, up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business for 2023-24.

This is a tax cut worth over £2 billion for around 230,000 RHL businesses, to support the high street and protect small shops. This support builds on the previous temporary 50 per cent RHL scheme announced at Autumn Budget 2021, as well as the unprecedented £16 billion of relief provided to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors throughout the pandemic.

Local Authorities determine eligibility for the 2023-24 scheme with regard to Government guidance which can be found

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-relief-202324-retail-hospitality-and-leisure-scheme-local-authority-guidance>

## ■ Banks: West Midlands

**Matt Western:** [\[135399\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many physical bank branches there were in the West Midlands in each year since 2010.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Government believes that all customers, wherever they live, should have appropriate access to banking services. Nonetheless, decisions on opening and closing branches are a commercial issue for banks and building societies. The Government does not intervene in these decisions or make direct assessments of these branch networks.

Guidance from the Financial Conduct Authority sets out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to close their branches. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of planned branch closures on the everyday banking and cash access needs of their customers and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This ensures that the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly.

Alternative options for access can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows 99% of personal banking and 95% of business banking customers

to deposit cheques, check their balance and withdraw and deposit cash at 11,500 Post Office branches in the UK. New shared bank hubs are also being piloted, providing basic banking services and dedicated space where community bankers from major banks can meet customers of that bank.

## ■ Capital Gains Tax

**Liam Byrne:** [\[133546\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he make an estimate of the total sum of capital gains by UK resident tax payers in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC does not routinely produce estimates of capital gains split by customers' residence status. To provide a reliable estimate would only be possible at disproportionate cost

Annual statistics on Capital Gains Tax including gains are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/capital-gains-tax-statistics> The statistics in this publication are for all customers liable to UK Capital Gains Tax including chargeable gains realised by both UK residents and non-residents.

## ■ Child Benefit

**Emma Hardy:** [\[132425\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of parents with 16-19 year olds in full-time further education at school and college were in receipt of child benefit in (a) England and (b) the UK in each of the last three years.

**Emma Hardy:** [\[132426\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much money from the public purse was spent on child benefit payments to parents of 16-19 year olds in full-time further education at (a) school and (b) college in (i) the UK and (ii) England.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This information is only available at disproportionate cost as the available Child Benefit data does not distinguish between young persons who are 16 and not in further education and those who are. Information on the educational setting (school or college) attended by young people aged 16 or over is not held. Child Benefit statistics are published using August data from each year, detailing the number of children receiving Child Benefit payments by age and region. Figures from 2019-2021 for children aged 16-19 are summarised in the table below:

**Number of children in (i) the UK and (ii) England receiving Child Benefit payments as of August of each year**

	2019		2020		2021	
Age	UK	England	UK	England	UK	England

	2019		2020		2021	
16 <sup>1</sup>	643,915	542,490	656,640	554,150	660,420	557,185
17	500,560	423,980	517,110	439,520	528,280	450,065
18	418,565	361,175	422,505	366,560	440,745	383,845
19	95,830	80,305	90,610	75,490	84,015	70,080

Note 1: not all 16 year olds will remain in further education from the following September

The Child Benefit annual statistics are published on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/child-benefit-geographical-statistics>

## ■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation

**Darren Jones:**

**[133723]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of regulation of crypto-currencies.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The government believes that having robust and effective regulation will boost innovation - by giving people and businesses the confidence they need to use new technologies safely

A consultation on the future financial services regulatory regime for cryptoasset activities was published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-financial-services-regulatory-regime-for-cryptoassets> on Wednesday 1 February.

In addition to this, the Financial Services and Markets Bill ensures that the Treasury can establish the legislative framework for regulating cryptoassets and stablecoins.

The government has already taken steps to bring certain cryptoasset activities into the scope of UK regulation. Since January 2020, cryptoasset firms operating in the UK have been subject to the Money Laundering Regulations. To protect consumers, on 18 January 2022, the Government set out its intention to legislate to bring certain cryptoassets into financial promotion regulation and published a further policy statement here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cryptoasset-promotions> on Wednesday 1 February.

## ■ Financial Services: Children

**Steve McCabe:**

**[133538]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to help improve financial inclusion for people under 18.

**Stephen Hammond:**[\[133572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to improve financial inclusion of under-18s.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Government wants to ensure that people, regardless of their background or income, have access to useful and affordable financial products and services and is committed to ensuring that people build financial capability. This means they are able to use, and maximise their use of, products and services made available by the financial services industry.

To promote financial inclusion and capability, the Government works closely together with regulators and stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors. For people under the age of 18, economic and financial education are important parts of a broad and balanced curriculum that provide the essential knowledge to ensure that young people are prepared to manage money well and make sound financial decisions.

Financial education is a statutory part of the national citizenship curriculum for 11- to 16-year-olds in England and primary schools can choose to teach citizenship, using non-statutory programmes of study.

To further support schools to deliver high quality financial education, the Money and Pensions Service published financial education guidance for schools in England in 2021. This guidance supports school leaders and education decision makers to enhance the financial education currently delivered in their schools.

**Members: Correspondence****John McNally:**[\[132509\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the email correspondence of 25 January 2023 from the hon. Member for Falkirk, if he will take steps to help respond to his constituent, Hazel Fullard, regarding a decision on a tax credit payments.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The email has been passed to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). HMRC aim to reply as quickly as possible.

**Revenue and Customs: Equality****Chris Stephens:**[\[R\] \[135296\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of HMRC's compliance with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code; and whether monitoring data is shared with trade unions.

**Victoria Atkins:**

In line with the requirements of section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management Code and in order to enable HMRC to monitor the effectiveness of policies and action plans, as required, HMRC collects aggregated and anonymised data on core characteristics of its workforce in line with the requirements of section 2.1.6 of the



Civil Service Management Code including additional requirements for workforce in Northern Ireland.

HMRC uses this data to monitor its workforce and produce Equality Impact Assessments that supporting the department to understand the effect of its core employment policies and decisions. This is in line with the requirements under 'Monitoring' in that section of the Civil Service Management Code.

Monitoring data is shared with Trade Unions in line with the statutory requirements.

HMRC Employee Relations Agreement, that was co-created with their recognised trade unions, states the following *"HMRC, ARC and PCS will always aim to share information at the earliest opportunity to support effective engagement. HMRC, ARC and PCS may also need to ask for additional information to support discussions"*

## ■ Taxation: Fines

**James Murray:**

[\[135480\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many penalties issued by HMRC for unpaid tax amounted to (a) less than £1,000, (b) £1,000 to £9,999, (c) £10,000 to £99,999, (d) £100,000 to £999,999 and (e) £1,000,000 or above in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This data cannot be provided as not all penalties are required to be recorded on the National Penalty Processing System (NPPS) system and so it does not provide a complete HMRC picture.

## ■ Taxation: Repayments

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[133979\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the average time HM Revenue and Customs takes to issue tax refunds.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC covers a wide range of taxes where refunds may be made. These include, for example, Income Tax (both Pay As You Earn and Self Assessment), Corporation Tax, Stamp Duty Land Tax, Value Added Tax (with a number of different regimes in use), Inheritance Tax and Capital Gains Tax, amongst others.

The speed of repayment, and our service level agreements (SLAs) for speed of repayment, will vary across these different areas, making it impossible to provide an estimate covering all tax refunds.

For example, HMRC has an SLA of 15 days to issue the majority of Self Assessment repayments, and for Corporation Tax repayments due to loss carry back the SLA is 40 working days. HMRC is currently meeting both those SLAs. HMRC publish how they are performing against their service level agreements

here: <https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/guidance/HMRC-service-dashboard/HMRC-service-dashboard-start>

Some repayments do take longer than the published SLAs due to additional security and compliance checks.

■ **Treasury: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992**

**Chris Stephens:** [R] [[135315](#)]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps their Department takes to comply with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and if they will make a statement.

**James Cartlidge:**

There is a range of HR information which is published on GOV.UK and which is therefore publicly available.

In addition, HMT meets regularly with its recognised Trade Unions and presents and shares a range of information and data where it is appropriate and in line with privacy statements. This helps inform decision making through formal negotiation and meaningful consultation and engagement.

HMT is therefore complying with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, and it always seek to work constructively with trade unions to reach fair and reasonable settlements.

■ **VAT: Business**

**John McNally:** [[132499](#)]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of instances where online (a) Government and (b) HMRC forms do not recognise valid business VAT numbers.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC is not aware of any significant issues regarding the recognition of VAT numbers in Government or HMRC forms. If an IT issue does cause a VAT number not to be recognised, HMRC works with its IT delivery partners to support impacted customers and resolve the issue as soon as possible.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ **Conversion Therapy**

**Anneliese Dodds:** [[132618](#)]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will set out a timetable for the pre-legislative scrutiny of the proposed Conversion Therapy Bill.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government will publish a draft Bill setting out our approach to banning conversion practices (also known as 'conversion therapy'). This will go for pre-legislative scrutiny by joint committee in this parliamentary session.

## ■ Foreign Investment in UK: India

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[126641\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of racial and accent prejudices towards Indian nationals and people of Indian heritage on the (a) investment of Indian tech firms into the UK and (b) ability of Indian tech firms to locate their businesses in the UK.

**Maria Caulfield:**

India remains the UK's second largest foreign direct investment (FDI) market of origin, second after only the US. In 2021/22, the Department for International Trade supported 98 FDI investments originating from India, creating almost 8,300 jobs across the UK. In the 3 years to March 2021, on average households in the Indian ethnic group were the most likely to have a weekly income of £2,000 or more.

The Government is committed to making Britain a fairer place for all, and for delivering equality of opportunity for everyone. This includes tackling all types of discrimination, including on grounds of race, wherever it arises.

It is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise a person because of their race, ethnicity, nationality or colour. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provides legal protection for the protected characteristic of race, which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins. This means the Act provides protection against unlawful racial or ethnic discrimination in employment and in other areas covered by the Act such as services, transport, education and housing.

A person's voice/accents can sometimes be an indicator of a protected characteristic (in particular race). So although accent is not a protected characteristic, it is possible that discriminating against a person because of their accent will amount to unlawful discrimination under the Act, depending on the circumstances.

## ■ Gender Recognition: Scotland

**David Linden:**

[\[132491\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the cost was to the public purse of (a) polling and (b) focus groups on public attitudes towards the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The UK Government has not conducted any polling or focus groups on public attitudes towards the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill. We have not received information from the Scottish Government on the costs of any public consultation, insight and engagement activity that was undertaken by the Scottish Government.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Carer's Allowance

**Peter Grant:**

[\[135322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of enabling the Carer's Allowance to be treated as earnings for the work allowance element of the calculation of Universal Credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

There are no plans to change the way that Carer's Allowance is treated in Universal Credit.

In recognition of the support provided by carers for relatives, partners and friends who may be ill, frail or disabled, there is an additional amount of benefit payable in Universal Credit to support carers who provide care of 35 hours or more each week for a severely disabled person. For claimants who meets these requirements an additional amount for caring, £168.81 per month, is included in their Universal Credit entitlement.

Carer's Allowance is a benefit paid by the State and so is classed as unearned income.

### ■ Child Maintenance Service

**Angela Crawley:**

[\[134029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to improve Child Maintenance Service's enforcement action towards self-employed parents.

**Mims Davies:**

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) has made improvements to enforcement processes to increase effective use of powers. This includes simplifying deductions from earnings, increasing efficiency by reducing the manual intervention required, making better use of deductions from bank accounts therefore increasing the volume of deductions leading to more money being collected quicker for children and working in partnership with HMCT to reduce Court processing times by introducing Virtual Court presenting and electronic exchange of documentation. There is also a Private Members bill sponsored by the Honourable Member for Stroud that removes the requirement to make court applications for liability orders which enable CMS to progress with enforcement action faster and improve efficiency, whilst protecting appeal rights.

The CMS FIU considers all allegations relating to income, either that received from HMRC or from declarations from paying parents, where the information and intelligence indicates that the income used in a CMS assessment has been underdeclared, the FIU carry out a full and thorough investigation and where additional income is found cases are re-assessed and any fraudulent activity considered for referral to the Crown Prosecution Service.

**■ Child Maintenance Service: Disclosure of Information**

**Angela Crawley:** [\[134031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to improve the sharing of information across Government departments to aid the Child Maintenance Service.

**Mims Davies:**

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) constantly strives to both maintain and improve contacts and appropriate data sharing agreements with all relevant government departments.

The CMS does this through engaging in a collaborative and positive manner to reinforce existing agreements and establish new channels of communication and contacts within relevant departments and areas.

**■ Child Maintenance Service: Staff**

**Angela Crawley:** [\[134030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are employed in the Child Maintenance Service; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of increasing staffing capacity on timescales for enforcement action.

**Mims Davies:**

The Child Maintenance Service, at the end of December 2022 employed 4,747 people, equivalent to 4,046 FTE. This includes colleagues in GB and Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.

Our resourcing levels are regularly reviewed against forecast intake and performance v actuals to ensure a timely and consistent service. Following our most recent Winter forecasting review our request to increase resources directly into our Enforcement segment was approved. An exercise to recruit around 70 staff is currently underway.

**■ Children: Maintenance**

**Angela Crawley:** [\[134032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Child Maintenance payments for people in contract work are calculated fairly.

**Mims Davies:**

The child maintenance calculation is initially based on paying parent's historic income information received directly from HM Revenue & Customs for the latest complete tax year.

If historic income is not available, or a paying parent's actual income is at least 25% different from the historic income figure then current income can be used. This is based on evidence from a wide range of credible sources which ensures liabilities

remain fair and based on accurate income information. The liability is reviewed annually or at either parents' request if the income changes by at least 25%.

#### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

**Chris Stephens:** [R] [[135312](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps their Department takes to comply with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and if they will make a statement.

**Mims Davies:**

There is a range of HR information which is publicly available on GOV.UK.

In addition, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) meets regularly with recognised Trade Unions to present and share information and data where it is appropriate and in line with privacy statements. This helps inform decision making through formal negotiation and meaningful consultation and engagement.

DWP is therefore complying with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and we always seek to work constructively with trade unions to reach fair and reasonable settlements.

#### ■ Food Banks

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:** [[135378](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of households that received a food bank parcel in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:** [[135380](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department is taking steps to support food banks with increases in the cost of utilities.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:** [[135381](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department is taking steps to support food banks, in the context of increases in demand for their resources.

**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 foodbank 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 shows how seriously we take this issue; the data is vital to ensure we understand the full picture.

This Government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes and we will spend £245bn through the welfare system in 2022/23.

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.

All benefit rates and State Pensions will increase in line with the Consumer Prices Index for the year to September 2022. This will mean that, subject to parliamentary approval, they will increase by 10.1% in April. In order to increase the number of households who can benefit from these uprating decisions the benefit cap will also be increased by 10.1% subject to parliamentary approval.

In addition, for 2023/24, households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to £900 in Cost of Living Payments. This will be split into three payments of around £300 each across the 2023/24 financial year. A separate £300 payment will be made to over eight million pensioner households on top of their Winter Fuel Payments and individuals in receipt of eligible disability benefits will receive a £150 payment. Further to this, the amended Energy Price Guarantee will save the average UK household £500 in 2023/24.

To further support those who are in work, from 1 April 2023 subject to parliamentary approval, the National Living Wage (NLW) will increase by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over - the largest ever cash increase for the NLW.

For those who require additional support the current Household Support Fund, running in England from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, is providing £421 million of funding. The devolved administrations have been allocated £79 million through the Barnett formula. The Household Support Fund will continue until March 2024. This year long extension allows Local Authorities in England to continue to provide discretionary support to those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. The Devolved Administrations will receive consequential funding as usual to spend at their discretion.

## ■ Health and Safety Executive: Recruitment

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [[135243](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which body is the legal employer of staff at the Health and Safety Executive.

**Mims Davies:**

The Crown is the legal employer of employees at the Health and Safety Executive.



## ■ Jobcentres: Closures

**David Linden:**

[\[135491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2023 to Question 132435 on Jobcentres: Closures, whether any Jobcentre staff have been advised of the closure of the temporary centre at which they are employed.

**Mims Davies:**

Further to question [132435](#) answered in the House of Commons on 30 January 2023 and question [127881](#) answered in the House of Commons on 24 January 2023, the Department has not made any formal announcements to staff regarding decommissioning temporary Jobcentres as part of its ongoing review of the Jobcentre estate.

The review is in progress and the Department will communicate outcomes with Jobcentre staff when a decision has been made on any sites that may impact them. MPs will be contacted should a decision regarding a Jobcentre estate be made that could affect their constituents.

A full list of the temporary Jobcentre sites can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

## ■ Jobcentres: Older Workers

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[135298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January to Question 127768 on Department for Work and Pensions: Older Workers, how many 50Plus Champions are employed in each of the Jobcentre Plus districts.

**Guy Opperman:**

I refer the Hon. member to my response to his question on 24<sup>th</sup> January. [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

## ■ Offshore Industry: Missing People

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[135414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which agency is responsible for the investigation of missing persons aboard offshore rigs in (a) UK territorial waters, (b) the UK exclusive economic zone and (c) the UK continental shelf.

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[135416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what agency is responsible for the safety of individuals on offshore installations in international waters.

**Mims Davies:**

When an offshore rig meets the definition of an installation in The Health and Safety at Work etc. 1974 (Application outside Great Britain) Order 2013, the agency responsible for the investigation of missing persons aboard offshore rigs in: UK territorial waters; the UK exclusive economic zone; and the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) is the Health and Safety Executive.



There is no legal definition of “international waters”. HSE is responsible for regulating the safety of individuals on offshore installations on the UKCS. In circumstances where the legislation does not apply to the activity of an offshore installation on the UKCS, then the responsibility lies with the flag state, i.e. with the country under whose laws the installation is registered.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Children and Young people

**Emma Hardy:** [\[132427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of parents in (a) England and (b) the UK were claiming both (i) Universal Credit and (ii) child allowances because a 16-19 year-old was in full-time further education in each of the last three years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Children and Young People

**Emma Hardy:** [\[132428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost has been of child allowances within Universal Credit paid to parents with 16-19 year-olds in full-time further education in (a) England and (b) the UK in each of the last three years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

#### ■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[133768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department is taking steps to provide support to women who have been affected by changes in the state pension age.

**Laura Trott:**

The Government decided over 25 years ago that it was going to make the State Pension age the same for men and women. Had the State Pension age not been equalised, women who would be retiring today upon reaching the age of 60, would be expected to spend (on average) over 40% of their adult lives in receipt of State Pension.

The Government is providing over £20m for a new enhanced offer through our 50+ Choices programme to support people aged 50 and over to remain in and return to work.

We are also committed to providing a financial safety net for those who need it, including when they near or reach retirement through the welfare benefits system

In addition, the Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and is taking action to help. To ensure stability and certainty for households, in the Autumn Statement the Government has announced £26bn in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable households, an additional £1 billion, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million and the amended Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

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.

Pensioners who are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2022 to 2023, have received an extra payment of £300 per household paid with their normal payment. We estimate around 8.7 million pensioner households across the UK have received an increased Winter Fuel Payment. Households with someone of State Pension age received £500 and households with someone aged 80 or over received £600.

This increased Winter Fuel Payment has been paid on top of any other one-off support a pensioner household is entitled to, for example where they are on Pension Credit or receive eligible disability benefits. The Government committed at the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022 to a further pensioner cost of living payment of £300 per household to be paid in winter 2023/24.

## ■ Universal Credit

**David Linden:**

[\[135444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of the Universal Credit (Administrative Earnings Threshold) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 on affected Universal Credit claimants since coming into effect.

**Guy Opperman:**

We are closely monitoring the implementation of the September change. The majority of claimants impacted by the change of regulations now have a tailored Claimant Commitment agreed with their work coach.

## ■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Pension Credit

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[133755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy on taking steps to assess whether people who qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme are also eligible for Pension Credit.

**Laura Trott:**

In winter 2022/23, the Warm Home Discount Scheme has been extended to provide a £150 rebate on energy bills to around 3 million households in Great Britain. Around one million households on Pension Credit guarantee credit nationwide will receive a rebate each winter, and the majority will receive their rebate automatically, without the need to claim.

Pensioners not in receipt of the guarantee credit element of Pension Credit but potentially eligible for it would only receive the Warm Home Discount if they are already in receipt of the savings credit element of Pension Credit or another means-tested benefit and meet the respective eligibility criteria in England and Wales or in Scotland.

A key message of DWP's Pension Credit awareness campaign, which has been running since last April is that claiming and receiving even a small amount of Pension Credit can act as a gateway to a wide range of other help including access to the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ Update on Myanmar

**Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (Anne-Marie Trevelyan):** [\[HCWS540\]](#)

Yesterday marked two years since the military seized power from the democratically elected government in Myanmar. The military continues to instigate violence across the country and inflict acute suffering against the people of Myanmar.

The consequences for domestic and regional stability are clear; over 17 million people are now in need of humanitarian assistance - a staggering increase of 16 million in just two years; over 1.5 million people are displaced within Myanmar, with a million more in neighbouring Bangladesh, Thailand and India; illicit economies are thriving; and democratic gains have been reversed. Recent figures indicated Myanmar suffered some of the most intense violence in the world in 2022, with conflict-related deaths second only to Ukraine. There is a clear trajectory of increasing violence, human rights violations and abuses, to which the UK has responded with a range of tools.

Since the coup, we have provided around £100m to support those in need of humanitarian assistance, deliver healthcare and education for the most vulnerable, and protect civic space. We are proud to work with civil society organisations in Myanmar who have access to vulnerable communities in the most remote and hard to reach places, even where others have been unable to do so.

We have led a strong, coordinated international response to the coup, through our G7 Presidency and our leadership role on Myanmar at the UN Security Council (UNSC). On 21 December 2022, the UNSC passed the first ever resolution on the situation in Myanmar, led by the UK. The Resolution demands an end to violence and urges immediate action by the military regime to fully implement the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Five Point Consensus and release all those arbitrarily detained. We have also used our role at the UN Human Rights Council to highlight violations, including gender-based violence.

The UK condemns the brutal actions of the military regime. The military continues to use indiscriminate air attacks on schools, hospitals and places of worship, to suppress, intimidate and demoralise the civilian population. In Myanmar, the security forces are committing atrocities with impunity, including reports of sexual violence, torture and village burnings bearing many of the hallmarks of the atrocities against the Rohingya in 2016 and 2017. In response to this violence, the UK has announced its fourteenth tranche of targeted sanctions, to target companies and individuals who are responsible for supplying aviation fuel to the Myanmar Air Force. We will continue to use all possible measures to target those who seek to facilitate and profit from the military's human rights violations.

We support all those working peacefully to restore democracy in Myanmar. The military must engage in inclusive and meaningful dialogue with the full range of opposition voices, including the National Unity Government (NUG), and respect the democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar. In 2022, UK Ministers spoke regularly with counterparts in the NUG. We call on the military to immediately end its campaign of violence and release the thousands of people it has detained arbitrarily, including Aung San Suu Kyi. The military must engage in inclusive and meaningful dialogue with the full range of opposition voices in order to respect the federal, democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar.

The Rohingya in Myanmar continue to suffer systemic discrimination. Sadly, this is leading to desperate attempts to reach third country destinations, often ending in tragedy. We will support all efforts to seek accountability for the atrocities they suffered in 2017. This is why, in August, we announced our intention to intervene in the International Court of Justice case brought by The Gambia.

We remain committed to supporting efforts to hold perpetrators of violence to account. We have provided funding to the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar and established the Myanmar Witness Programme to collect and preserve evidence of serious human rights violations and abuses, including those against women, girls and LGBT+ people.

I reiterate my steadfast support for the people of Myanmar, and my desire to work towards a peaceful, inclusive and democratic future for the country.