



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 February 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:49 P.M., 07 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

Chris Stephens:

[R] [[135300](#)]

To ask the Attorney General, 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.

Michael Tomlinson:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE (AGO) HAS A SHARED HR SERVICE WITH THE GOVERNMENT LEGAL DEPARTMENT (GLD). GLD MEETS REGULARLY WITH THEIR 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. GLD ARE THEREFORE COMPLYING WITH SECTION 181 OF THE TRADE UNION AND LABOUR RELATIONS (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1992, AND ALWAYS SEEK TO WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH TRADE UNIONS TO REACH FAIR AND REASONABLE SETTLEMENTS. THERE IS A RANGE OF HR INFORMATION WHICH IS PUBLISHED ON GOV.UK AND THEREFORE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Conditions of Employment

Chris Stephens:

[R] [[136649](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if they will take steps to (a) publish an equality impact assessment and (b) consult with trade unions when proposing new HR policies for their Department; and if they will make a statement.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The BEIS HR Directorate carries out equality impact assessments in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty when developing new internal departmental HR policies. BEIS does not routinely publish the equality impact assessments for new internal departmental HR policies, however, they are shared with the departmental trade unions, staff networks, and employees more broadly, upon request.

The BEIS HR Directorate consults with the departmental trade unions when proposing new internal HR policies for the Department.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Contracts**Seema Malhotra:** [\[137895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average number of months' notice given for new tender opportunities through the BEIS Commercial Pipeline was in each calendar year since 2019.

Kevin Hollinrake:

This information is not held centrally and can only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, BEIS has published a Bi-Annual copy of its pipeline on Gov.uk for the past two years, which provides at least an 18 month forward look of potential procurements.

Seema Malhotra: [\[137902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of his Department's tenders were awarded by direct award in the financial year 2021-2022.

Kevin Hollinrake:

BEIS awarded 17 direct award contracts in financial year 2021/2022, which equates to 5% of contracts awarded by the Department.

Seema Malhotra: [\[137904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the policy paper entitled BEIS small and medium enterprises (SME) action plan: 2022 to 2025, published on 26 January 2023, what recent estimate his Department has made of when the facility to capture feedback from suppliers at the end of a competitive tender process will be introduced.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The current planned timeline would be to implement the feedback mechanism in quarter one of financial year 2023/2024.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992**Chris Stephens:** [R] [\[135305\]](#)

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

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) provides specific Human Resources data/information to Departmental Trades Union Side (DTUS), on request, in line with our obligations under section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Furthermore, BEIS publishes a range of information about the operation of the Department, which is available on GOV.UK and so is publicly accessible.

In addition, BEIS meets regularly with the DTUS, presenting and sharing a range of management information as part of normal engagement on a spectrum of issues. Information and data are supplied where it is appropriate and in line with privacy statements. This helps inform decision making through formal negotiation and meaningful consultation and engagement. BEIS always seeks to work constructively with trade unions to reach fair and reasonable settlements.

■ **Drugs: Manufacturing Industries**

Priti Patel:

[\[136593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support he is providing to businesses in the pharmaceutical sector to (a) expand their premises and (b) manufacture more products.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

In 2021, the Government published the Life Sciences Vision, which set out an ambition to create a globally competitive environment for Life Science manufacturing investments. To help meet these ambitions and incentivise globally mobile manufacturing investments in the UK, the Office for Life Sciences launched the £60 million Life Sciences Innovative Manufacturing Fund (LSIMF) in March 2022. The LSIMF will provide capital grants for investment in the manufacture of human medicines (drug substance and drug product), medical diagnostics and medical technology products. The fund has received a large number of high-quality applications and we expect to announce the successful grant awards from spring 2023.

■ **Minerals: Foreign Relations**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[135236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the publication of the Critical Mineral Strategy, what steps is his Department taking to engage with mineral-rich countries.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We work collaboratively with mineral producing countries, putting environmental, social and governance considerations at the heart of our engagement. In recent months the UK has signed a Partnership on Minerals for Future Clean Energy Technologies with South Africa and agreed to deepen collaboration on critical minerals with Saudi Arabia. To support this work, I will be travelling to the Mining Indaba in South Africa, where I will meet with my ministerial counterparts to strengthen UK ties with key producer countries, attend the Minerals Security Partnership Ministerial, and promote the UK's key role in global critical mineral supply chains

■ Postage Stamps

Damien Moore: [\[137974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Department has made of the (a) feasibility and (b) contribution to the national heritage of continuing the use of stamps without barcodes after 31 July 2023.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The development of stamp products is an operational matter for Royal Mail. The Government is not involved in the operational decisions of Royal Mail, a private business.

Royal Mail is not barcoding special stamp issues, which are printed to commemorate a person or event.

■ Procurement

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[135233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has a policy on the stockpiling of critical materials.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Critical Minerals Strategy sets out the Government's plans to make critical mineral supply chains more resilient. The Department of International Trade's Supply Chains Resilience framework highlighted stockpiling as one of five possible areas to explore when building resilience in supply chains. We are analysing the pros and cons of stockpiling, including engagement of stakeholders and international partners, before making commitments.

■ Products: Safety

Seema Malhotra: [\[136706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many enforcement actions the Office for Product Safety and Standards took against (a) Amazon, (b) Ebay, (c) AliExpress and (d) Wish in 2022.

Kevin Hollinrake:

During 2022 the Office for Product Safety and Standards has undertaken a programme of enforcement activity relating to the availability of unsafe and non-compliant products from online platforms including Amazon, eBay, AliExpress and Wish. This includes safety alerts and withdrawal notices as well as activity at the Border to prevent unsafe products being placed on the UK market, test purchasing and assessment of high-risk products such as small electrical goods, toys containing magnets and button batteries and personal protective equipment.

This has resulted in 308 notifications on the Product Safety Recalls and Alert system and specific Product Safety Alerts on angle grinder chainsaws, hot hairbrushes and baby self-feeding devices.

■ Satellites: Manufacturing Industries

Alun Cairns:

[\[136555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to help support the (a) establishment and (b) growth of the small satellite manufacturing sector.

George Freeman:

The Government has a long record of supporting the UK satellite manufacturing sector, and the UK space sector now excels in satellite manufacture, which includes some of world's leading small satellite companies such as SSTL and AAC ClydeSpace.

Through our £1.8 billion investment in ESA programmes and £1 billion via UK agency this CSR, the Government continues to support R&D work with these and many other companies such as OpenCosmos, Alba Orbital, InSpace Missions, Orbital Astronautics and Space Forge which are developing innovative nano and microsats. The Government further supports the sector through regulatory leadership in small satellite insurance, finance and licensing as part of our aim to become the leading provider of commercial small satellite launch in Europe by 2030. Significant commercial opportunities such as the OneWeb second generation constellation offer potential to further strengthen the UK's small satellite sector.

■ Small Businesses: Bexley

Sir David Evennett:

[\[135174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many SMEs in (a) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency and (b) Bexley Borough received Government financial support in 2022.

Kevin Hollinrake:

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

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

The Government is providing financial support – 128 SMEs in Bexleyheath and Crayford have received Start Up loans to the value of £1,377,883 and 331 SMEs in Bexley Borough to the value of £3,423,737.

■ Space Technology: Wales

Alun Cairns: [\[136553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help support the space industry in Wales.

George Freeman:

The Government is committed to growing and levelling up the UK space ecosystem. Since 2014, the UK Space Agency has invested over £7 million through its national and European Space Agency programmes to support space companies in Wales develop new and innovative technologies, including Space Forge who have built Wales's first satellite. In addition, the Agency also invests significantly in academic R&D institutions in Wales, which stimulate and enable industry spin-out companies and applications in other sectors. This includes the £16.5 million investment in the Cardiff University-led SPIRE instrument aboard the ESA science observatory mission [Herschel](#) and up to £2.5 million planned funding in the Ariel mission, as part of the [£30 million package](#) announced last year.

■ Spaceflight

Alun Cairns: [\[136554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to support future UK spaceflight launches.

George Freeman:

The Government remains committed to making the UK the leading provider of commercial small satellite launch in Europe by 2030, with all the necessary infrastructure and regulations now in place to support this. £50 million has been provided to grow new UK markets for small satellite launch and sub-orbital spaceflight, with £31.5 million helping to establish vertical launch services in Scotland. This includes supporting Orbex to launch from Sutherland and Lockheed Martin to launch from the Shetland Islands. Both launches are expected to take place in 2024, with other spaceports in development across Scotland and in Wales.

The UK Space Agency is now developing the next phase of the UK Spaceflight Programme, subject to HM Treasury approval. In addition, the UK invested £12 million into the next phase of the European Space Agency's Boost programme at the ESA Council of Ministers 2022, aimed at providing tailored support to national launch companies and related infrastructure.

■ Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill 2022-23: Canterbury

Rosie Duffield: [\[135390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill on public workers in Canterbury.

Kevin Hollinrake:

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

CABINET OFFICE■ **Cabinet Manual****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[138457\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Prime Minister next plans to update the Cabinet Manual.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government is committed to producing an update to the manual before the end of this Parliament. As the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster indicated to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the 26th January, the Government is also committed to sharing a draft with PACAC shortly.

DEFENCE■ **Aircraft Carriers****Damien Moore:**[\[138083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of (a) developing and (b) constructing additional Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers for the Royal Navy.

Alex Chalk:

The Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers provide the backbone of the UK's carrier strike capability and are intended to do so for decades to come.

The exact capabilities and technology hosted on the QECs will evolve over time but having two is assessed as sufficient to assure continuous carrier capability.

Therefore, at the current time, there are no plans to build additional QEC carriers, but the Royal Navy continually assesses its current and planned force structures to ensure they are optimised to best deliver the tasks His Majesty's Government asks of it, now and in the future.

■ **Challenger Tanks****Damien Moore:**[\[136785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure the effective (a) development and (b) roll out of the Challenger 3 fourth-generation main battle tank.

Alex Chalk:

The approved schedule of work for Challenger 3 remains on track. Prototypes enter manufacture this year, with Initial Operating Capability in 2027. Recent successful design reviews further strengthen our confidence in delivering Challenger 3.

■ **Defence**

John Healey: [\[138263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the updates to the (a) Integrated Review and (b) Defence Command Paper.

Mr Ben Wallace:

On 21 September 2022, the Government announced its intention to refresh the Integrated Review. The IR Refresh is the responsibility of the Cabinet Office and the Defence Command Paper Refresh will be conducted by the Ministry of Defence after it has concluded.

■ **Kenya: Military Exercises**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[137762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK will participate in the US Africa Command Justified Accord 23 military exercise in Kenya in February 2023.

James Heapey:

The UK will not be participating in the US Africa Command Exercise Justified Accord 23 in Kenya. The British Army normally participates in this exercise series but this year the US has canceled the elements of the exercise that were due to involve the UK. We will engage with US Africa Command on planning for the next exercise in 2024.

■ **Ministry of Defence Police**

Dave Doogan: [\[138383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of reducing the budget of the Ministry of Defence Police and the number of officers it employs on the security of Ministry of Defence sites and assets.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not comment on our security arrangements on national security grounds. We take the security of our people, assets and sites extremely seriously and have robust measures in place to ensure the integrity of the Defence Estate.

These measures are kept under constant review and adjusted according to the threat, including the size and deployment of the Ministry of Defence Police who are just one of several organisations that are utilised to provide security to MOD sites.

■ Ministry of Defence Police: Finance

Dave Doogan: [\[138384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of reductions in the Ministry of Defence Police budget on the number (a) of armed police and (b) available to deploy in the event of a national emergency.

Dave Doogan: [\[138385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the impact on the number of armed police of reductions to the Ministry of Defence Police budget over the last ten years.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) continues to utilise the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) where specialist policing services and capabilities can add to the overall security effect at Defence sites and at the other locations where MDP officers are deployed. The size and deployment of the MDP are adjusted according to Ministry of Defence requirements.

MDP takes the security of Defence people, assets and sites extremely seriously. The MDP work with Defence Security and Resilience and other organisations to ensure measures utilised to provide security to MOD sites are kept under constant review and adjusted according to the threats.

■ Ministry of Defence Police: Powers

Dave Doogan: [\[138382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what statutory powers the (a) Ministry of Defence Police and (b) other parts of the armed forces have to (i) detain suspects and (ii) police protests.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) statutory powers are conferred by the Ministry of Defence Police Act 1987. MDP officers have full powers and privileges of constables in any place in the UK, when exercising these powers within the places and circumstances described in Section 2 of the Act.

Service Police statutory powers are conferred by the Armed Forces Act 2006. Service Police have jurisdiction over any person subject to Service Law and any civilian subject to Service Discipline, committing an offence within England and Wales.

■ Ministry of Defence: Conditions of Employment

Chris Stephens: [R] [\[136662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if they will take steps to (a) publish an equality impact assessment and (b) consult with trade unions when proposing new HR policies for their Department; and if they will make a statement.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 26 January 2023 to Question 127799 and the answer I gave on 30 January 2023 to Question 128663.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence: Equality [128663 - Ministry of Defence Equality.docx]
2. Ministry of Defence: Trade Unions [127799 - Ministry of Defence Trade Unions.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Land**John Healey:**[\[138262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the document entitled Map of lands owned by the MOD UK establishments South Region, published on 17 December 2014, if he will publish a Defence Infrastructure Organisation map of his Department's establishments in the South Region as of 1 December 2022.

Alex Chalk:

I can confirm that an updated map of Ministry of Defence establishments in the South Region will be placed in Library of the House.

Attachments:

1. Map of MOD UK establishments South Region [20230207_00224_MOD_UK_Establishments_South_Region_UPDATED.pdf]

■ Ministry of Defence: Recruitment**Christine Jardine:**[\[138349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on headhunters in each of the last three years.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The requested information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Ukraine: Military Aid**Jim Shannon:**[\[136614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to increase the production of arms in the UK to help provide greater support to Ukraine.

James Heapey:

UK equipment has played a vital role in the defence of Ukraine and we are working intensively with UK manufacturers to ensure they factor Ukraine's future requirements into their planning.

Matt Western:[\[137886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the value of the (a) non-military and (b) non-lethal aid provided by the Government to the Ukrainian government.

James Heappey:

The UK has committed £220 million of non-military humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and the region. A review of humanitarian spend will be published in late 2023.

The government has committed £2.3 billion in military aid to support Ukraine and wider operational activity in the region. This includes £1.9 billion of rapid procurement which is a combination of both lethal and non-lethal aid. It would not be appropriate to provide a breakdown of spending for live operational activity at this time.

■ Veterans: Identity Cards**John Healey:**[\[138281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 9 December 2022 to Question 104132 on Veterans: Identity Cards, how many Veterans ID cards have been distributed by local authority as of 1 February 2023.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

It is taking time to collate the required information to answer the right hon. Members Question. I will write to him when the information is available, and a copy of this letter will be placed in the Library of The House.

John Healey:[\[138282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the roll-out of Veterans ID cards to all UK veterans will be completed.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Veterans' Recognition Scheme, also referred to as the Veterans' ID card, has a two-phase rollout. Phase one is complete, with Service leavers from 2018 onwards receiving a recognition card as part of the discharge process. Phase two aims to extend the scheme to existing veterans. Work on determining how best to achieve this, working with veterans and other stakeholders, is underway at pace and has included the testing of secure, digital verification of veterans' status. We remain on track to deliver phase two during this Parliament.

The pace of the phase one roll-out is set by the number of personnel leaving the services each month. The pace of the phase two roll-out, once launched, will be determined by the number of applications received from veterans who have already left service.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadcasting: Disability Aids****Chloe Smith:**[\[136542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, (a) whether she is taking steps to make (i) scheduled and (ii) on-demand broadcast content more accessible via high quality and reliable subtitling; (b) if she will take steps to increase the number of

broadcast services which are required to provide subtitling; (c) what progress she has made in working to encourage broadcasters voluntarily to improve subtitling; and (d) what plans she has to bring forward relevant regulations under the Digital Economy Act 2017 following Ofsted's Further Statement: Making on-demand services accessible published in July 2021.

Julia Lopez:

The Government recognises the importance of subtitling and supports television being accessible to all. Under the Communications Act 2003 and Broadcasting Acts of 1990 and 1996, broadcasters are already required to meet targets for access services - including subtitling. Statutory targets are set by Ofcom which include five and ten year targets for licensed television services. Ofcom's [Code on Television Access Services](#) sets out these obligations and provides guidance and best practice on subtitling for broadcasters.

The regulator Ofcom assesses which broadcasters - including new channels - have a requirement to provide access services and publishes a list on their website annually, according to principles set out in their Code. Some broadcasters already provide television access services such as subtitling on a voluntary basis, and we would encourage broadcasters to continue to do so where possible.

The Government is committed to legislate to bring in minimum levels of subtitling, audio description, and signing on video-on-demand services and is currently working with Ofcom to develop a legislative framework for these requirements that is clear and fit for purpose. We intend to legislate when time allows and will set out a timetable for this in due course.

■ **Commonwealth Games 2022**

Julian Knight:

[\[135335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has made an assessment of the economic benefits of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Stuart Andrew:

DCMS has recently published an independent [interim evaluation report](#) on the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games on gov.uk. This report estimates that the short-term impact of the Games contributed £870.7 million GVA (gross) to the UK economy, with even more positive impact to follow.

The report focuses on short-term economic impacts for Birmingham, the West Midlands and wider UK economy generated through the planning and delivery of the Games, as well as through visitor spend.

Findings show over half of the estimated gross GVA (£453.7 million) was generated in the West Midlands, with at least £214.6 million (gross) of this within Birmingham itself.

This is the second of three reports measuring the short- and medium-term benefits of hosting the Games. The first was published in November 2021, and the final report - which will include the full impact of the Games - will be published in early 2024.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Conditions of Employment

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[136651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if they will take steps to (a) publish an equality impact assessment and (b) consult with trade unions when proposing new HR policies for their Department; and if they will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

Whilst there is no legal requirement to publish equality impact assessments, DCMS fulfils its duty as an employer to consider how our policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. The Department conducts equality impact assessments when introducing new HR policy or making significant changes to existing policy. As part of our policy development process, DCMS engages with its Trade Unions and other stakeholders (such as employee networks) when developing new HR policies or making significant changes to existing policies.

■ Football: Visas

Daisy Cooper:

[\[135442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the (a) the Secretary of State for the Home Department and (b) professional footballing bodies on the eligibility of talented footballers on dependent visas to access professional sporting contracts.

Stuart Andrew:

I meet regularly with cabinet colleagues on areas of mutual interest. Access to professional sports person visas has been established following extensive consultation between the Home Office and over 60 Home Office approved Sports Governing Bodies (SGBs), including the four home nations' football associations.

■ Music Venues: Finance

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[135177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will hold discussions with representatives of large (a) arenas, (b) stadiums and (c) festivals on providing financial support to grassroots music venues.

Julia Lopez:

Government is committed to supporting our grassroots music venues, which are the lifeblood and research and development centres of our world-leading music sector.

DCMS is in regular discussions with all parts of the music industry, including live venues at every level. We work with industry and across Government to improve the sector's economic resilience to future economic shocks, as we did through the

pandemic, and we continue to engage with the sector on the impact of current pressures. We are also supporting the sector through the Energy Bills Support Scheme and will continue to do so through the Energy Bills Discount Scheme until Spring 2024.

We will shortly be publishing a Creative Industries Sector Vision that will set out this Government's ambitions, shared with industry, to support all parts of the creative sector to 2030. We look forward to working with the music industry to deliver on these objectives.

■ Social Media: Disinformation

Julian Knight:

[\[137893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to support social media companies in tackling fake news on their platforms.

Paul Scully:

The DCMS Counter Disinformation Unit (CDU) works to understand the scope, scale and reach of disinformation in the UK and works with social media platforms to tackle it.

The Government regularly meets with a range of social media platforms to aid our understanding of the spread of misinformation and disinformation on their services, including new and emerging narratives, and the range of steps they are taking to address this. This work includes encouraging platforms to ensure that their Terms of Service (ToS), policies and enforcement are fit for purpose, whilst still respecting freedom of expression. The primary purpose of the team is not to spot every instance of disinformation across all social media platforms. However, when the team does identify particular pieces of harmful content which may violate platforms' Terms of Service, these are referred to the relevant platform for consideration, who in turn decide what action to take.

Under the Online Safety Bill, all social media companies subject to the safety duties will be required to take measures to remove illegal misinformation and disinformation once they become aware of it. The Foreign Interference Offence, brought forward in the National Security Bill, will also be designated a priority offence requiring companies to take proactive action against state-sponsored disinformation that is of most concern.

■ Sports: Infrastructure

Julian Knight:

[\[135338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of inflation on sporting infrastructure projects.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government remains committed to ensuring that communities across the UK have the sporting facilities they need. We are investing over £300 million between

2022 and 2025 on multi-sport facilities, as well as an additional £22 million on tennis courts in local parks between 2022 and 2024.

Planning for these programmes factors in the impact of inflation - including the increases in energy costs, construction costs, and the cost of certain materials, such as steel and imported wood. We work closely with delivery partners to understand and assess these impacts in order to ensure these programmes - and similar non-government investment into elite and grassroots sporting infrastructure - continue to deliver for local communities.

■ Telephone Systems: Rural Areas

Julian Knight:

[\[135333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to telecommunication providers transitioning from analogue to digital landlines, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of that transition on rural communities.

Julia Lopez:

The analogue landline network, also known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) is privately owned and the decision to upgrade it has been taken by the telecoms industry. That said, DCMS is working closely with industry to ensure nobody is adversely affected by the upgrade, including the small number of rural areas which have limited digital connectivity. I chaired an industry roundtable in January to discuss how best to raise public awareness for the migration.

The replacement Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services require a minimum stable connection speed of just 0.5Mbps in order to function correctly. As a result, rural communities with limited digital connectivity can also be upgraded to digital telephony services. For current landline-only customers, it will be possible to order a VoIP landline without purchasing a general internet connection. Moreover, the migration from analogue landlines does not affect the universal service obligations set in the Electronic Communications (Universal Service) Order 2003 which require the designated providers, BT and KCOM, to offer telephony services throughout the UK.

Ofcom is responsible for ensuring telecoms providers adhere to their regulatory obligations throughout the migration process. Ofcom has published [guidance](#) which states that providers must take steps to identify and protect at-risk consumers, including consumers in rural communities who are dependent on their landline. This guidance states that providers should have at least one solution available that enables access to emergency organisations for a minimum of one hour in the event of a power outage. The solution should be suitable for customers needs and should be offered free of charge.

DCMS is also working hard to improve rural connectivity through the £5 billion Project Gigabit programme and the £1 billion Shared Rural Network.

■ Television Licences: Solihull**Julian Knight:****[135334]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many black and white television licenses were issued in the Solihull constituency in 2022.

Julia Lopez:

Under the Communications Act 2003 a fee for a television licence is payable to the BBC. The BBC is responsible for the collection and enforcement of the licence fee, not the Government. The Government is therefore not involved in TV Licensing operations and therefore does not hold the data requested.

The BBC's Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22 states that 4,000 black and white (monochrome) licences were in force as of 31 March 2022. The report does not break down this figure on a regional basis, so I recommend that you raise your query directly with the BBC if you wish to request further information about black and white television licences.

TV Licensing can be contacted by telephone on 0300 790 0368 or in writing at TV Licensing, Darlington, DL98 1TL. Other methods of contacting TV Licensing are set out on its website: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/cs/contact-us/index.app>.

■ Tourism: India**Navendu Mishra:****[135457]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2023 To Question 124155 on Tourism: India, whether her Department has a strategy to promote Greater Manchester as a destination to Indian tourists.

Stuart Andrew:

The government promotes Britain as a holiday destination to tourists from India through VisitBritain, the national tourist board. India is one of VisitBritain's core markets and has staff based in Mumbai and New Delhi.

VisitBritain (India) works closely with UK inbound tourism businesses, with a particular focus on the North of England, including Greater Manchester, to inform them of the potential of the Indian market. This is done by encouraging UK inbound tourism businesses to tailor their offers and products to the Indian market, as well as educating them on the nuances of working with the local industry and how to provide a quality service to Indian visitors.

In January, VisitBritain hosted the 'Showcase Britain' event where they welcomed more than 120 international travel trade buyers for a series of educational visits across Britain including Greater Manchester.

As part of the wider Business and Tourism Programme (BATP), VisitBritain (India) has been utilising Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games to encourage longer stays across the UK.

VisitBritain has been building on the work delivered in 2019 during the Cricket World Cup to promote the north of England, positioning Manchester as the Gateway of the North. The exciting events of 2023 such as the King's Coronation and Eurovision in Liverpool will further help to attract international visitors, including to Manchester as the UK's third most visited city.

■ Vacancies

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[136592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an estimate of the (a) number of vacancies and (b) level of skill shortages in (i) broadcast and print media, (ii) theatres, (iii) graphic design, (iv) tourism and (v) sport and leisure.

Julia Lopez:

While DCMS does not have any estimates on the number of vacancies, the Department has published Experimental Official Statistics for skills shortages (%) in DCMS sectors and sub-sectors. These are for the year 2019, using data from the Employer Skills Survey, carried out by the Department for Education that covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The ESS is a biennial survey, which was delayed by a further year during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with 2022-23 data expected to be published later this year (also currently scheduled to include Scotland).

Skills shortage vacancies are defined as vacancies unfilled because applicants did not have the necessary skills. Two measures for skills shortages are published:

- Percentage of vacancies that are unfilled due to skills shortages
- Percentage of businesses with at least one skills shortage vacancy

The "Percentage of businesses with at least one skills shortage vacancy" estimates are impacted by the fact that some businesses will not have had a vacancy. Therefore the "% of businesses with at least one vacancy" figure was also published to help provide context.

SECTOR/SUBSECTOR	% OF VACANCIES UNFILLED DUE TO SKILLS SHORTAGES	% OF BUSINESSES WITH AT LEAST ONE SKILLS SHORTAGE VACANCY	% OF BUSINESSES WITH AT LEAST ONE VACANCY
Audio Visual (i - Broadcast Media)	19.2	2.1	12.0
Publishing (excluding translation & interpretation activities) (i - Print Media)	10.9	3.2	11.4
Arts (ii)	10.1	2.3	12.7

SECTOR/SUBSECTOR	% OF VACANCIES UNFILLED DUE TO SKILLS SHORTAGES	% OF BUSINESSES WITH AT LEAST ONE SKILLS SHORTAGE VACANCY	% OF BUSINESSES WITH AT LEAST ONE VACANCY
Design and designer fashion (iii)	36.8	2.9	11.4
Tourism Industries (iv)	21.2	6.0	21.9
Sport (v)	30.1	4.4	17.2

Table 1 - Skills shortages in selected sectors. Estimates are not available directly measuring the areas requested. The sectors presented here have been provided as the closest to the requested sectors, for which DCMS have skills shortages data.

Source: [DCMS Sectors Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2019](#)

■ Voluntary Work: Age

Rachael Maskell:

[135259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of trends in the age profile of volunteers with civil society organisations in the period between 2019 and 2023.

Stuart Andrew:

Data on volunteering is available through the Community Life Survey, up to 2020-21.

Comparing data from 2019-20 to 2020-21 shows no change in the age profile of those who formally volunteer at least once a month. For both 2019-20 and 2020-21 respondents aged 65-74 were most likely to participate in formal volunteering at least once a month (31% in 2019-20, 22% in 2020-21), while respondents in the age group 25-34 showed lower participation compared to respondents in every other age group. Rates of participation in formal volunteering once a month were lower in 2020/21 than in 2019/20 for every age group, except respondents aged 50-64, for which there was no statistically significant difference. Rates of participation in volunteering during 2020/21 will have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further information on volunteering trends by age can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202021-volunteering-and-charitable-giving/volunteering-and-charitable-giving-community-life-survey-202021>

Latest Community Life Survey data for 2021-22, which will provide an update to these figures, is due to be published on 28th February 2023 at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey--2>

Attachments:

1. WPQ 135259 - Age profile of volunteers [Attachment_ WPQ 135259 - age profile of volunteers.pdf]

Rachael Maskell:

[\[135260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of increasing the state pension age on the number of older people who are able to volunteer with civil society organisations.

Stuart Andrew:

The government recognises the impactful contributions that the many volunteers over the state pension age make, bringing their wealth of skills and experience developed in the workplace. According to the latest Community Life Survey results in 2021, respondents aged 65-74 were most likely to participate in formal volunteering at least once a month compared with other age groups.

Since the pandemic, there have been changes in volunteering rates. Rates of participation in formal volunteering were lower in 2020/21 than in 2019/20 for every age group, although the largest drop was in the 65 to 74 bracket (which reduced from 31% to 22% during this time period). There are many factors that may impact on the numbers of people volunteering and we will continue to monitor changes in the rate of volunteering for all age groups. However, the government currently has no plans to make an assessment of the impact of raising the state pension age.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Greater London

Sir David Evennett:

[\[135172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people began an apprenticeship in 2022 in (a) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency, (b) Bexley Borough and (c) Greater London.

Robert Halfon:

Apprenticeship starts for the requested geographical areas in the 2021/22 academic year, and 2022/23 from August to October, reported to date, are shown in the table below.

Further information on apprenticeship starts can be found in the apprenticeships and traineeships statistics publication, which can be accessed here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>.

Geographical area	APPRENTICESHIP STARTS	
	2021/22	2022/23 (August to October, reported to date)
Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency	590	190
Bexley Borough	1,530	510

	APPRENTICESHIP STARTS	
London	37,790	12,540
England	349,190	122,290

Notes:

- (1) Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
- (2) Data source is the Individualised Learner Record.
- (3) Geography is based upon the home postcode of the learner.
- (4) Starts are the count of apprenticeships started at any point during the stated academic period. Learners starting more than one Apprenticeship will appear more than once.

■ Children: Social Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[138368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the impact of permanently removing a child from the care of their birth parents on the mental health and wellbeing of the parents.

Claire Coutinho:

The impact on birth parents of having their child removed permanently will be different depending on their individual circumstances. Birth parents of adopted children may grieve over the loss of their child and may need support to process what has happened. Some may have substance addictions, mental health problems, or have experienced abuse.

Local authorities are required to make a range of services available to birth relatives, including counselling, advice and information and assistance in relation to ongoing contact with the child who was adopted. Many provide support to birth families through arrangements with charities such as Coram, PAC UK and Barnardo's.

The department recognises the importance of adoption agencies supporting birth parents throughout the adoption process. Support for birth parents that is respectful and empathic is beneficial to birth parents, children and adoptive families.

■ Children's Commissioner for England: Finance

Liz Kendall:

[\[135231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding was allocated to the Office of the Children's Commissioner in each of the last five years.

Claire Coutinho:

The Office of the Children's Commissioner's total funding allocation for the last five financial years is set out below:

- 2017/18 - £2,562,000
- 2018/19 - £2,484,000
- 2019/20 - £2,764,000
- 2020/21 - £2,526,000
- 2021/22 - £2,677,000

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: COE Parliamentary Assembly**

John Howell: [\[135206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe debate entitled Building the Open Council of Europe Academic Networks, held on 27 January 2023, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her Department's policies.

Robert Halfon:

The department actively participates in the Council of Europe education programme through a seat on the Council of Europe Education Steering Committee. The aim of this committee is to help develop a culture of democracy through quality education. The department has not undertaken such an assessment.

■ **Department for Education: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992**

Chris Stephens: [R] [\[135307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

Nick Gibb:

The Department meets with its recognised Trade Unions, PCS, Prospect and FDA, on a monthly basis. The Department shares a range of information and data, where appropriate and in line with privacy statements. This is in addition to any information published on GOV.UK. This approach helps to inform decision making through formal negotiation, meaningful consultation, and engagement. This also ensures the Department is fully compliant with Section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

■ **Financial Services: Education**

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[135434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help improve the financial literacy of school children in Coventry North West constituency.

Nick Gibb:

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that pupils are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed.

Financial education forms part of the citizenship curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4, but can be taught at all Key Stages. More information on the National Curriculum can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>. The subject covers the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and managing financial risk. At secondary school, pupils are taught content on income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings, pensions, financial products and services and how public money is raised and spent.

The mathematics curriculum includes an emphasis on the essential arithmetic that primary pupils should be taught. A strong grasp of mathematics will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money. The secondary mathematics curriculum develops pupils' understanding in relation to more complex personal finance issues such as calculating loan repayments, interest rates and compound interest.

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) has published guidance to support head teachers to enhance their financial education provision. This is available here: <https://maps.org.uk/2021/11/11/financial-education-guidance-for-primary-and-secondary-schools-in-england/>.

The Department and MaPS are planning a series of joint financial education webinars during this academic year, aimed at promoting the importance of financial education, improving pupils' knowledge and teachers' confidence.

■ Financial Services: Primary Education**Stephen Hammond:****[135186]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the implications for her policies of the finding in the Centre for Financial Capacity's report entitled 1 Year On July 2021 – July 2022, published in July 2022, that one-fifth of children have access to financial education at primary school.

Nick Gibb:

The Government wants all young people to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed.

The Department works closely with the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) and HM Treasury to consider the wide range of evidence for financial education, including reports from the Centre for Financial Capability, and to explore the opportunities to improve access for all pupils to high quality financial education.

MaPS has a statutory duty to develop and co-ordinate a national strategy to improve people's financial capabilities and their ten-year strategy, published in 2020, set out their national goal that two million more children and young people will receive a meaningful financial education by 2030. The strategy is supported by Delivery Plans

for each nation of the UK, which are available here: <https://www.maps.org.uk/uk-strategy-for-financial-wellbeing/>.

The Department has introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum which provides young people with the arithmetic that pupils should be taught to make important financial decisions. In the primary mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic that pupils should be taught. This is vital, as a strong grasp of mathematics will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, using percentages. There is also some specific content on financial education, such as calculations with money. Primary schools can also choose to teach financial education content within their citizenship curriculum, using the non-statutory citizenship curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/citizenship-programmes-of-study-for-key-stages-1-and-2>.

MaPS published guidance for primary and secondary schools in England, to support headteachers to enhance the financial education currently delivered in their schools. The guidance can be found here: <https://maps.org.uk/2021/11/11/financial-education-guidance-for-primary-and-secondary-schools-in-england/>.

The Department and MaPS will deliver a series of joint financial education webinars this academic year, aimed at promoting the importance of financial education for all pupils and improving teacher confidence and knowledge, as well as providing a launchpad for further engagement with training and resources to support continuous improvement.

■ Higher Education: Admissions

Emma Hardy:

[135430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applications there have been to date for places on the Higher Education Short Courses trial; how many and what proportion of those applications were accepted; and how many and what proportion of those that were accepted applied for (a) fee and (b) maintenance loans.

Robert Halfon:

The Higher Education Short Courses trial, which will be rolling out over the course of the 2022/23 academic year, has seen 22 providers develop over 100 short courses. The department will be monitoring the overall number of students and number of applications for loans as part of the trial, which is due to run for three years in total.

The department is developing bespoke engagement activity to further engage trial providers. We are keen to explore how they can maximise their relationships with employers to ensure steady uptake of the new short courses opening throughout the year and beyond. We will continue to work closely with those providers to maximise the number of applications.

We are only offering tuition fee loans for the courses within this trial. This is the first time that a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company has been available to students applying for Higher Education short courses. Those who need additional

support may be eligible for a study-costs bursary which can be used towards study-related costs, such as childcare, books, and travel, and is distributed directly by their provider.

The department is gathering and evaluating data throughout the trial alongside the Student Loan Company, Office for Students and providers, and will use this to inform the development of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement. We currently have no plans to publish any specific data.

■ Mature Students: Finance

Duncan Baker:

[136771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of removing the age restriction of 60 for Student Finance England funding for Undergraduate and Masters Degrees in (a) all and (b) STEM subjects.

Robert Halfon:

All eligible undergraduate students qualify for non-means tested tuition fee loans regardless of their age. In addition, eligible undergraduate students under the age of 60 on the first day of the first academic year of their course qualify for partially means-tested loans for living costs. This applies to all subjects.

The government has a duty to consider the value for money for the public purse of offering a loan product where there is a low expectation of repayment. The department recognises that some older students on lower incomes may need help with their living costs. That is why full-time undergraduate students aged 60 or over on the first day of the first academic year of their course can apply for a fully means-tested loan for living costs, known as a 'special support loan', of up to £4,106 in the 2022/23 academic year, increasing to £4,221 in 2023/24.

The upper age limit of 60 years old for postgraduate master's loans was put in place to ensure that the overall scheme remains affordable to the taxpayer and offers value for money. The age limit is applicable to all subjects and is designed to restrict eligibility to those statistically most likely to continue in long-term employment and be able to repay the loan.

In settling on the current postgraduate master's loan eligibility criteria, the department consulted widely on the proposed terms of the new loan and considered its duty under the Equality Act 2010. A copy of that analysis can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526274/bis-16-289-postgraduate-masters-loans-equality-analysis.pdf.

■ Office for Students

Bridget Phillipson:

[135189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has issued directions to the Office for Students on provider engagement in the period since 25 October 2022.

Robert Halfon:

Since 25 October 2022, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has not issued any directions to the Office for Students on provider engagement.

Private Education: Taxation**Julian Knight:**[\[135345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department has carried out an economic assessment of the impact of changing the tax status of private and independent schools on the state education sector.

Nick Gibb:

Independent schools are an important part of the school system in England. The diversity of the sector gives parents valuable choice in how to educate their children. The independent school sector also provides specialised education supporting vulnerable children with complex needs, or children with skills in areas such as art or music. It is a source of international investment in the UK.

The introduction of additional tax on school fees, or otherwise changing their tax status, may make independent education less affordable and create place pressures on state-funded schools which have limited capacity.

The Government has no plans to change the tax status of independent schools and has not made an assessment of the impact of such a change on both the independent school sector, and the state education system.

Schools: Bolton**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[138292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools had at least one construction element in condition grade (a) C and (b) D in (i) Bolton South East, (ii) Bolton West and (iii) Bolton North East constituencies when that data was collated; and which of those schools (A) have received and (B) expect to receive in the next two years funding from the School Rebuilding Programme.

Lilian Greenwood:[\[138352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Nottingham South constituency had at least one construction element in condition grade (a) C and (b) D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have received funding and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Mary Kelly Foy:[\[138409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in the City of Durham constituency had at least one construction element in conditional grade (a) C and (b) D, when that data

was collated; and which of those schools (i) have received and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Nick Gibb:

The Condition Data Collection (CDC) is one of the largest and most comprehensive data collection programmes in the UK's public sector. It collected data on the building condition of government funded schools in England. It provides a robust evidence base to enable the Department to target capital funding for maintaining and rebuilding school buildings.

The key, high level findings of the CDC programme were published in May 2021 in the 'Condition of School Buildings Survey: Key Findings' report. This is available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf.

Individual CDC reports have been shared with every school and their responsible body to use alongside their existing condition surveys to plan maintenance schedules and investment plans. The Department plans to publish detailed school level CDC data. The Department is still preparing the data and will publish it as soon as possible.

Well maintained, safe school buildings are a priority for the Department. Our funding is directed both to maintaining the condition of the school estate and rebuilding schools. The Department has allocated over £13 billion for improving the condition of schools since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed this financial year.

The ten year School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) is condition led. 400 of the 500 available places on the programme have been provisionally allocated. A list of these schools and the methodology used to select them is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-schools-in-the-programme>.

The following table shows the constituencies specified that have schools or colleges selected for the SRP:

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR SRP
Bolton West	St James CofE Primary School, Daisy Hill (announced December 2022) Rowan Tree Primary School (announced December 2022)
City of Durham	Framwellgate School Durham (announced July 2022) St Leonard's Catholic School (announced July 2022) Browney Primary Academy (announced December 2022) Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise (announced December 2022) Our Lady Queen of Martyrs

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY**SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR SRP**

Catholic Primary School, Esh Winning
(announced December 2022)

The 239 schools announced in December 2022 will enter delivery at a rate of approximately 50 per year, over a five year period from 2023. The Department is currently undertaking due diligence on these schools prior to scheduling them, with schools prioritised according to the condition of their buildings, readiness to proceed, and efficiency of delivery. The scope and funding for each project will be confirmed following detailed feasibility studies and condition surveys of buildings.

Where a school identifies significant safety issues with a building, that cannot be managed within local resources, the Department considers additional support on a case-by-case basis. This includes applications for Urgent Capital Support (UCS) from eligible institutions. Schools eligible for Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) can apply for UCS where there are urgent health and safety issues that threaten school closure and cannot wait until the next CIF bidding round.

■ Schools: Houghton and Sunderland South**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[135240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614, on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson:[\[135241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Basingstoke constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson:[\[135242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Bassetlaw constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Birmingham, Northfield constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Bishop Auckland constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Bournemouth East constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Burnley constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Bury North constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Camborne and Redruth constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have

already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Chingford and Woodford Green constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Chipping Barnet constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Cities of London and Westminster constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Colchester constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[135366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Colne Valley constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson:

[135367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Croydon South constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson:

[135368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Darlington constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Bridget Phillipson:

[135369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Derby North constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C, and (b) condition grade D, when that data was collated; and which of those schools (i) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (ii) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Nick Gibb:

The Condition Data Collection (CDC) is one of the largest and most comprehensive data collection programmes in the UK's public sector. It collected data on the building condition of government funded schools in England. It provides a robust evidence base to enable the Department to target capital funding for maintaining and rebuilding school buildings.

The key, high level findings of the CDC programme were published in May 2021 in the 'Condition of School Buildings Survey: Key Findings' report. This is available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf.

Individual CDC reports have been shared with every school and their responsible body to use alongside their existing condition surveys to plan maintenance schedules and investment plans. The Department plans to publish detailed school level CDC data. The Department is still preparing the data and will publish it as soon as possible.

Well maintained, safe school buildings are a priority for the Department. Our funding is directed both to maintaining the condition of the school estate and rebuilding schools. The Department has allocated over £13 billion for improving the condition of schools since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed this financial year.

The ten year School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) is condition led. 400 of the 500 available places on the programme have been provisionally allocated. A list of these schools and the methodology used to select them is available at:

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

The following table shows the constituencies specified that have schools or colleges selected for the SRP:

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR SRP
Houghton and Sunderland South	Farrington Community Academy (announced February 2021)
Basingstoke	Cranbourne (announced December 2022)
Birmingham, Northfield	Green Meadow Primary School (announced December 2022), King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy (announced December 2022)
Chingford and Woodford Green	Burnside Secondary PRU (announced July 2021), Highams Park School (announced July 2021), Chingford Foundation School (announced July 2022)
Croydon South	Thomas More Catholic School (announced July 2022), The Minster Junior School (announced December 2022), The Minster Nursery and Infants Church of England Academy (announced December 2022)
Darlington	Polam Hall School (announced July 2022)
Derby North	Becket Primary School (announced July 2022), Mickleover Primary School (announced December 2022), Saint Benedict, A Catholic Voluntary Academy (announced December 2022)

The 239 schools announced in December 2022 will enter delivery at a rate of approximately 50 per year, over a five year period from 2023. The Department is currently undertaking due diligence on these schools prior to scheduling them, with schools prioritised according to the condition of their buildings, readiness to proceed, and efficiency of delivery. The scope and funding for each project will be confirmed following detailed feasibility studies and condition surveys of buildings.

Where a school identifies significant safety issues with a building, that cannot be managed within local resources, the Department considers additional support on a

case-by-case basis. This includes applications for Urgent Capital Support (UCS) from eligible institutions. Schools eligible for Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) can apply for UCS where there are urgent health and safety issues that threaten school closure and cannot wait until the next CIF bidding round.

■ Schools: Industrial Disputes

Matt Vickers:

[\[135476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to help pupils affected by industrial action in schools catch up with missed learning and development that has been delayed as a result of that action.

Nick Gibb:

It is disappointing that the National Education Union (NEU) proceeded with strike action on 1 February 2023. Many parents and pupils will have faced disruption, but the Department is hugely grateful to head teachers, teachers and support staff who continued to work, ensuring over 90% of schools remained open to some or all pupils.

The Department knows that the best place for pupils to be for their education, physical and mental health is in schools with their friends and teachers.

The Department is engaged in ongoing, constructive talks with unions on a range of issues, including those around pay, workload, recruitment and retention.

In addition to engaging with unions, the Department has taken steps to mitigate the effects of any disruptive strike action on pupils' education and wellbeing. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to every school in early January setting out the additional funding each school in England would receive following the £2 billion of additional funding announced for schools, both this year and next, in the Autumn Statement. This additional funding will support schools with increased costs and was a request from unions, which the Government delivered. The Secretary of State also wrote to union leaders on 27 January, asking the NEU to encourage their members to inform their head teachers if they intended to strike, in order to support schools in ensuring as many pupils are in school on strike days. The Department is clear that schools should remain open for as many pupils as possible.

In the Department's guidance on handling strike action in schools, the Department has confirmed that if a head teacher needed to restrict attendance as a last resort, they should prioritise school places for vulnerable children, children of critical workers and pupils who are due to take public examinations and other formal assessments. Head teachers have also been asked to do all they can to ensure children continue to have access to education on strike days, including through online teaching. The Department has also provided advice to schools through bulletins, and to parents through the Department's Education Hub.

The Department has made almost £5 billion available to support pupils' education recovery from the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department is funding

what it knows works, such as teacher training and evidence-based support, including tutoring and extra education opportunities.

■ Schools: Kingston upon Hull East

Karl Turner:

[\[137783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37614 on Schools: Buildings, which schools in Kingston upon Hull East constituency had at least one construction element in (a) condition grade C and (b) condition grade D when that data was collated; and which of those schools (a) have already received funding from the School Rebuilding Programme and (b) are expected to receive funding from the School Rebuilding Programme in the next two years.

Nick Gibb:

The Condition Data Collection (CDC) is one of the largest and most comprehensive data collection programmes in the UK's public sector. It collected data on the building condition of government funded schools in England. It provides a robust evidence base to enable the Department to target capital funding for maintaining and rebuilding school buildings.

The key, high level findings of the CDC programme were published in May 2021 in the 'Condition of School Buildings Survey: Key Findings' report. This is available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf.

Individual CDC reports have been shared with every school and their responsible body to use alongside their existing condition surveys to plan maintenance schedules and investment plans. The Department plans to publish detailed school level CDC data. The Department is still preparing the data and will publish it as soon as possible.

Well maintained, safe school buildings are a priority for the Department. Our funding is directed both to maintaining the condition of the school estate and rebuilding schools. The Department has allocated over £13 billion for improving the condition of schools since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed this financial year.

The ten year School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) is condition led. 400 of the 500 available places on the programme have been provisionally allocated. A list of these schools and the methodology used to select them is available at:

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

Of the 400 so far selected, none are in Kingston upon Hull East constituency. There is one school in City of Kingston upon Hull Local Authority.

The 239 schools announced in December 2022 will enter delivery at a rate of approximately 50 per year, over a five year period from 2023. The Department is currently undertaking due diligence on these schools prior to scheduling them, with

schools prioritised according to the condition of their buildings, readiness to proceed, and efficiency of delivery. The scope and funding for each project will be confirmed following detailed feasibility studies and condition surveys of buildings.

Where a school identifies significant safety issues with a building, that cannot be managed within local resources, the Department considers additional support on a case-by-case basis. This includes applications for Urgent Capital Support (UCS) from eligible institutions. Schools eligible for Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) can apply for UCS where there are urgent health and safety issues that threaten school closure and cannot wait until the next CIF bidding round.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Hearing Impairment**

Navendu Mishra: **[135464]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers of the deaf are employed in (a) England, (b) Greater Manchester and (c) Stockport.

Claire Coutinho:

Information on the number of qualified teachers of the deaf is not collected by the department.

Information on the school workforce in England is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. Information is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication. This can be accessed here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

■ **Students: Loans**

Emma Hardy: **[135436]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has provided additional funding to (a) further and (b) higher education providers to help them prepare for the introduction of the lifelong loan entitlement in the period since that policy was announced; whether her Department plans to provide additional funding for this purpose in future financial years; and what recent estimate she had made of whether the lifelong loan entitlement will be available from 2025.

Robert Halfon:

Additional funding has been provided to Further and Higher Education providers as part of the Higher Education Short Course trial in the period since the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) was announced. The Government is considering other activities required to ensure providers are ready to respond to the LLE for launch in 2025, a timeline which the Government remains committed to and is on track to deliver.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover and Recruitment

Sir David Evennett:

[\[135173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers.

Nick Gibb:

The number of teachers remains high, with over 465,500 full time equivalent teachers working in state funded schools across the country. That is over 24,000 more than in 2010.

The Department's reforms are aimed at increasing teacher recruitment and at ensuring teachers across England stay and thrive in the profession.

The Department announced a £181 million financial incentives package for those starting initial teacher training in the 2023/24 academic year. The Department is providing bursaries worth up to £27,000 and scholarships worth up to £29,000 to encourage trainees to apply to train in key secondary subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing.

The Department provides a Levelling Up Premium worth up to £3,000 annually for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who work in disadvantaged schools nationally, including within Education Investment Areas. The eligibility criteria and list of eligible schools is on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/levelling-up-premium-payments-for-teachers>.

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

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

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

The Department has published a range of resources to help address staff workload and wellbeing. This includes the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which the Department is encouraging schools to sign up to as a shared commitment to promote staff wellbeing. The Department has also published the workload reduction toolkit, developed alongside school leadership staff to help reduce workload, and resources to support schools to implement effective flexible working practices.

Helen Morgan:

[\[136791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve teacher recruitment and retention rates in subjects including (a) Physics, (b) Maths, (c) Design and Technology, (d) Chemistry and (e) Computing.

Helen Morgan:

[136792]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle teacher shortages in rural areas.

Nick Gibb:

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

The Department recognises there is more to do to ensure teaching remains an attractive, high status profession, and to recruit and retain teachers in key subjects. Reforms are aimed not only at increasing teacher recruitment through an attractive pay offer and financial incentives such as bursaries, but also at ensuring teachers stay and succeed in the profession.

The Department is making £181 million available in bursaries and scholarships to attract trainee teachers in high priority subjects for academic year 2023/24. This is a £52 million increase on the current academic year. As graduates in science technology, engineering, and mathematics attract the highest salaries outside teaching, the Department is offering a £27,000 tax-free bursary or a £29,000 tax-free scholarship in chemistry, computing, mathematics, and physics. The Department is also offering a £20,000 tax-free bursary in design and technology.

The Department also offers a Levelling Up Premium worth up to £3,000 annually for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who work in disadvantaged schools across England, including in rural areas and Education Investment Areas (EIAs). This will support recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in the subjects and in the schools and areas that need them most.

To make teaching here even more attractive to the best teachers from around the world, the Department plans to introduce a new relocation premium for overseas nationals coming here to train or teach languages and physics. This will help with visas and other expenses. The Department will also extend bursary and scholarship eligibility to international trainees in physics and languages.

The Department launched its new digital service, 'Apply for teacher training', in autumn 2021 to make it easier for people across the country to train to become teachers, particularly in shortage subjects.

In autumn 2022, the Department expanded the 'Engineers Teach Physics' initial teacher training programme with a national rollout. This course has been designed to support more engineers and material scientists to train to become physics teachers. The Department is working closely with sector experts, representative bodies and academic institutions such as the Institute of Physics, Engineering UK, University of Birmingham and the Gatsby Institute to ensure that the course reflects best practice and includes the most up to date industry knowledge.

These initiatives all support the work of the Department in creating a world-class teacher development system by transforming the support teachers and school leaders receive at every stage of their career. This begins with initial teacher training through to an Early Careers Framework based induction for early career teachers, and specialist and leadership National Professional Qualifications for more experienced teachers.

■ Teachers: Sick Leave

Matt Western:

[135398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teaching staff in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools were signed off with stress-related illnesses in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

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

The number of teacher working days recorded as sickness absence as a result of stress-related illnesses is not available. The Department collects information on teacher sickness absence from all state funded schools in England via the School Workforce Census, held in November each year since 2010. This does not include the reason for the sickness absence.

The number and rates of teacher sickness absence is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication. This is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/b73b4302-b89f-4295-8b34-08dafb06f66e>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Government Assistance

Alex Sobel:

[136775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to support restorative and regenerative farming and agriculture across the UK.

Mark Spencer:

We are speeding up and refining the rollout of our Environmental Land Management schemes, so they work for farmers, support resilient and sustainable food production and contribute to our ambitious targets including water quality, biodiversity, habitat creation and net zero.

The Countryside Stewardship scheme includes actions that can form part of a regenerative or restorative farming approach; to improve soil quality, enhance biodiversity, decrease water pollution and restore, create and manage habitats. We are expanding the Countryside Stewardship scheme to make around 30 additional actions available to farmers by the end of 2024, as well as targeting our funding

towards actions in places where they can have the biggest impacts, in ways that are joined up across larger areas.

Later this year, we will open the next round of Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Wildlife Offers for farmers and land managers wanting to start their agreements in January 2024.

Organic farmers will continue to have access to the Countryside Stewardship organic options, and other actions that may be relevant such as those relating to grassland, arable land, permanent crops, boundaries, waterbodies, and woodland and trees.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme was launched in June 2022. Farmers and land managers can apply for the scheme at any time, through a simple application process. People with a Sustainable Farming Incentive agreement can also have a Countryside or Environmental Stewardship agreement, so long as we are not paying for the same actions twice on the same piece of land, and the actions for which we are paying are compatible.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme contains standards that can support a regenerative approach and are designed so that there are options available for all types of farmer. The three standards available now are:

- arable and horticultural soils
- improved grassland soils
- moorland (introductory level)

The six new standards being rolled out in 2023 are:

- hedgerows standard
- integrated pest management standard
- nutrient management standard
- arable and horticultural land standard
- improved grassland standard
- low input grassland standard

■ Birds: Conservation

Matt Western:

[\[137892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an estimate of the number of (a) sparrows, (b) robins, (c) blue tits, (d) gold finches and (e) green finches in the UK (i) as of 1 February 2023 and (ii) in 2012.

Trudy Harrison:

Annual population estimates do not exist for most UK bird species. The Avian Population Estimates Panel estimates of the for these species in 2020 and 2013 are as follows:

SPECIES	UK POPULATION ESTIMATE IN 2020(NUMBER OF BREEDING PAIRS)	UK POPULATION ESTIMATE IN 2013(NUMBER OF BREEDING PAIRS)
House sparrow	5,300,000	5,100,000
Tree sparrow	245,000	200,000
Robin	7,350,000	6,700,000
Blue tit	3,400,000	3,600,000
Goldfinch	1,650,000	1,200,000
Greenfinch	785,000	1,700,000

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Disease Control

Daisy Cooper:

[\[131399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether their Department has purchased mobile UV virus irradiation units.

Mark Spencer:

After searching our records, Defra do not hold any contracts for this type of equipment.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Written Questions

Emily Thornberry:

[\[133569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to answer Questions 118879 and 118881 on Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, and 119016 on Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Waste, tabled on 9 January 2023.

Rebecca Pow:

A response for PQ 118879 was published on 30th January. Responses for PQs 118881 and 119016 were published on 1st February.

■ Environment Protection

Dean Russell:

[\[136845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress her Department has made on delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan; and whether her Department plans to take additional steps to help restore nature.

Trudy Harrison:

The Environment Act 2021 designated the 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP), published in 2018, as the first Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). As committed

to in the Environment Act, on the 31st January the Government published its revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23) which continues to use the 25YEP's ten goals as a basis.

EIP23 sets out the progress made against all ten goals, the specific targets and commitments made in relation to each goal, and our plan to continue to deliver existing targets and the overarching goals.

Under the Environment Act 2021, Defra must report annually on the implementation of the EIP and review it every five years, so will continue to publish an Annual Progress Report setting out progress over the previous 12 months, alongside the 25 YEP Outcome Indicator Framework. Our annual progress reports can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan-progress-reports

This Government is committed to halting and reversing nature's decline, and the UK has been leading international efforts in developing an ambitious and transformative framework of global targets under the Convention of Biological Diversity. EIP23 sets out how the Government plans to restore nature by improving the quality of our environment.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Tim Farron:

[\[137764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of inflation on £5.2 billion for flood defence measures announced in 2020 on what that funding will cover.

Rebecca Pow:

The government is currently investing a record £5.2 billion on building new and improving existing flood defences, double the value of the previous programme. Higher than expected inflation is causing challenges to the delivery of all infrastructure programmes. Defra and the Environment Agency are currently undertaking an assessment of the potential impact of the inflation on the flood defences programme.

■ Game: Birds

Caroline Lucas:

[\[135496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the report by her Department entitled Risk Assessment on the spread of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 to wild birds from released, formerly captive gamebirds in Great Britain

Mark Spencer:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has assessed the impact gamebird releases have on the likelihood of transmission of avian influenza to wild birds, and between wild birds and kept birds to ensure our approach reflects any risk activities associated with gamebirds. ([Risk Assessment on the spread of High Pathogenicity](#)

[Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) H5N1 to wild birds from released, formerly captive gamebirds in Great Britain Pheasants \(publishing.service.gov.uk\).](#)

The release of gamebirds is not permitted in any avian influenza disease control zone, nor are gamebird releases permitted while an avian influenza prevention zone including mandatory housing measures is in force.

We are continuing to monitor the current situation including through surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds together with the effectiveness of any disease control measures taken. Any future decisions on disease control measures will be based upon the latest scientific, ornithological, and veterinary advice.

■ Neonicotinoids

Tracey Crouch:

[\[137811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she made an assessment of the potential impact of the authorisation of the emergency use of neonicotinoids for a third year on global pesticide reduction targets.

Mark Spencer:

We remain absolutely committed to the targets agreed in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. UK diplomatic leadership was critical to agreeing the framework and we will continue to champion the framework's implementation

We welcome target 7, which talks about "reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods". IPM lies at the heart of the UK's approach to minimise the environmental impact of pesticides, both domestically and internationally and this is set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

We have strict restrictions that do not permit the general use of neonicotinoids to protect crops. The decision to allow use on sugar beet crops was based on an assessment and balancing of environmental risks and benefits to food production and livelihoods. The emergency authorisation we have issued is subject to strict conditions to mitigate risks to pollinators and the wider environment.

We expect the steps needed to achieve Target 7 to vary by country, according to their current usage levels, and the agricultural and regulatory context. The pesticide specific indicator for Target 7 will be developed further over the coming year, informed by a group of independent global specialists.

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[138362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the implications of the relevant advice from the Expert Committee on Pesticides for her decision to provide temporary emergency authorisation to the pesticide Cruiser SB containing neonicotinoid thiamethoxam.

Mark Spencer:

The decision to grant an emergency authorisation for the use of Cruiser SB on the 2023 sugarbeet crop has not been taken lightly. In making this decision, I considered the evidence and the advice provided by the Health and Safety Executive and Expert Committee on Pesticides, as well as Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser and economists.

This emergency authorisation allows a single use of a neonicotinoid on a single crop under very strict conditions to mitigate risks to pollinators and other insects, as well as mammals and birds.

■ **Pesticides****Alex Norris:**[\[137991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will set targets to end the use of hazardous pesticides and protect pollinators.

Mark Spencer:

Pollinators are a priority for this Government. The National Pollinator Strategy Action Plan was published in May 2022, which sets out how we are restoring and creating habitat to help pollinators thrive, and addressing pressures on their populations. Our Healthy Bees Plan 2030 outlines our work to improve honeybee health, and we are supporting monitoring and research through the Pollinator Monitoring Scheme.

A pesticide may only be placed on the market in Great Britain if the product has been authorised by our expert regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), following a thorough scientific risk assessment, that concludes all safety standards are met. Pesticides that pose unacceptable risks are not authorised.

We are assessing the potential role of targets to support our policy ambitions, and further details will be outlined in our National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (NAP), to be published in the first half of this year.

■ **Rhinoceros: Poaching****Ruth Jones:**[\[136829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has discussed the poaching of rhinos in Namibia with her Namibian counterpart.

Trudy Harrison:

The Secretary of State has not discussed the poaching of rhinos in Namibia with her Namibian counterpart. However, her Ministerial team recently met with their counterparts in Namibia in advance of CBD CoP15 and discussed a range of biodiversity issues, including protected areas and species targets.

The UK is fully committed to protecting endangered animals and plants from poaching and illegal trade to benefit wildlife, local communities and the economy, and protect global security. At the recent Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES COP19) held in Panama, the UK engaged proactively in discussions with Namibia and other countries on the

continued poaching and illegal trade in rhinos, fully supporting the reconvening of the Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force which we consider to be a key instrument for addressing this issue. The illegal harvesting of wildlife has also been identified as a priority issue in Namibia and the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) under our new Biodiverse Landscapes Fund. Through this we aim to strengthen policy, legal and judicial procedure by improving the capacity of investigators and prosecutors, facilitating intelligence analysis and information sharing, supporting legislative reform, and revising sentencing guidelines for wildlife crimes.

■ Shellfish: North East

Caroline Lucas:

[\[136544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the independent report entitled Assessment of unusual crustacean mortality in the north-east of England in 2021 and 2022, published on 20 January 2023, whether her Department is taking steps to identify the novel pathogen cited as the cause of the level of mortality; and if she will make a statement.

Mark Spencer:

The independent panel considered a wide range of possible causes for the deaths. The panel considered a novel pathogen to be the most likely cause of mortality, despite no direct evidence for such a pathogen. I am now considering carefully if further analysis by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) can ascertain conclusively the cause of this unusual mortality.

■ Water Charges

Catherine West:

[\[138338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of increases to water bills in 2023 on household finances.

Rebecca Pow:

Water bills will increase by an average of 7.5% or £31 due to the rate of inflation. I am very mindful that consumers are concerned about their bills. Government expects all water companies to make sure customers are aware of the schemes that are available if they need support to pay their bills. This includes bill discount schemes, payment holidays, adjusting payment plans and getting support for customers on managing their personal finances.

I encourage customers to access the Consumer Council for Water's Advice Hub, which has information and useful tools to help customers reduce their bills or access financial support.

To support people with the cost of living, Government have put in place a substantial package of support. Further information can be found here: [Cost of living support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE■ **Alaa Abdel Fattah****Mr David Lammy:**[\[135129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policies of the government of Egypt's compliance with its diplomatic obligations in providing consular access by UK officials to Alaa Abd-El Fattah; and if he will make a statement.

David Rutley:

Any consular assistance we can provide remains, at all times, dependent on the cooperation of the detaining State. The Egyptian Government does not recognise Mr El-Fattah as a British national. We are continuing to seek consular access and to call for his release at the highest levels of the Egyptian Government.

■ **COE Parliamentary Assembly****John Howell:**[\[135199\]](#)

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 Recent tensions between Pristina and Belgrade, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK is committed to supporting Kosovo's international integration, including to institutions such as the Council of Europe. Membership will bring clear benefits to the Kosovan people, including minority communities. We continue to work closely with international partners to support the long-term goal of normalisation of the Serbia-Kosovo relationship, including through the EU-facilitated Dialogue. The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly plays a crucial role on human rights and rule of law issues, and in pressing states to maintain democratic standards. We welcome this debate and your role in it.

John Howell:[\[135201\]](#)

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 Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 26 January 2023.

Leo Docherty:

The UK is committed to holding Russia to account for its actions in Ukraine, including by supporting the International Criminal Court and Ukrainian domestic investigations into allegations of war crimes committed in Ukraine. As the Foreign Secretary announced on 20 January, the UK has accepted Ukraine's invitation to join a 'core group' to consider options for ensuring criminal accountability for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including through a special tribunal.

The UK stands ready to work with Ukraine on establishing a register of damages.

John Howell:

[\[135202\]](#)

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 the Prime Minister of Iceland to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 26 January 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK is appalled by Russia's attacks against civilian infrastructure, civilians and cities across Ukraine, which may constitute war crimes. We and our international partners stand united in condemning Russian Government's reprehensible actions in Ukraine, which are an egregious violation of international law and the UN Charter. We will continue to work together to make sure that Russia cannot further undermine European stability, ensuring the security and defence of all our Allies. The upcoming Council of Europe Summit will be an opportunity to show this.

John Howell:

[\[135203\]](#)

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 honouring of obligations and commitments by the Republic of Moldova, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 26 January 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Despite the unprecedented scale of challenges and difficulties Moldova is facing, President Sandu's Government is relentlessly pursuing a policy of reform and fighting corruption, as highlighted by the report. The UK stands resolutely with Moldova in its endeavours and we will continue to encourage and provide support to help build a stronger, more resilient Moldova, including through our ongoing humanitarian assistance and £12 million Good Governance Fund programming over three years.

John Howell:

[\[135204\]](#)

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 Addressing the humanitarian consequences of the blockade of the Lachin corridor, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 26 January 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK Government has been clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor risks severe humanitarian consequences, particularly during winter. Officials are in contact with humanitarian agencies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross most recently on 18 January, about their assessment of the impact of the closure and the Government is a significant donor to agencies providing assistance on the ground. START FUND, to which the UK is a significant donor, has allocated £350,000 to support those affected by the closure of the Lachin Corridor.

■ Colombia: Coal**Dan Carden:** [\[138446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on the impact on (a) the environment and (b) local communities of the Cerrejón coal mine in La Guajira.

Leo Docherty:

During his recent visit to Colombia, Minister Rutley met with President Petro and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss shared priorities, including security issues and environment and sustainable development. The UK was the first country to create a National Action Plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This plan sets out what is expected of the conduct of UK businesses, including compliance with relevant laws and respect for human rights; treating the risk of causing human rights abuses as a legal compliance issue; adopting appropriate due diligence policies; and consulting those who could potentially be affected. We will continue to ensure that large UK companies are held to account on these issues through regulation, including the Companies Act, which requires corporate transparency over potential human rights issues, and due diligence measures taken.

Dan Carden: [\[138452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will have discussions with his Colombian counterpart on making an assessment of UK-based company BHP and London-listed Anglo American and Glencore's compliance with Colombia court rulings in relation to the Cerrejón coal mine.

Leo Docherty:

During his recent visit to Colombia, [Minister Rutley] met with President Petro and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss shared priorities, including security issues and environment and sustainable development. The UK was the first country to create a National Action Plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This plan sets out what is expected of the conduct of UK businesses, including compliance with relevant laws and respect for human rights; treating the risk of causing human rights abuses as a legal compliance issue; adopting appropriate due diligence policies; and consulting those who could potentially be affected. We will continue to ensure that large UK companies are held to account on these issues through regulation, including the Companies Act, which requires corporate transparency over potential human rights issues, and due diligence measures taken.

■ Colombia: Politics and Government**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[138277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the consequences for his policies of reports that the Colombian government has pledged to pay reparations to victims after the inter-American court of human rights concluded that that country allowed the systematic extermination of the Patriotic Union party in the 1980s and 90s.

Leo Docherty:

Colombia is a UK Human Rights Priority Country and supporting the Colombian Government in its commitment to secure a broad and lasting peace will remain an important priority of this Government. To date, we have spent over £74 million through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) to support the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia and improve stability and security. We will continue to work with Colombia, including through the United Nations Security Council, and encourage the Colombian Government to strengthen the institutions that can improve the security of all its citizens and investigate and prosecute the criminal actors responsible for violence.

■ Conflict, Stability and Security Fund**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[136725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department will provide to the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund in 2023.

Leo Docherty:

The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund is a cross-government mechanism, overseen by the Cabinet Office. It contributes to the delivery of National Security Council (NSC) priorities, as set out in the Integrated Review 2021. The Spending Review 2021, agreed by the Treasury, allocated the Fund a total settlement of £2.65 billion over three years. The agile nature of the Fund will ensure that it continues to respond to NSC priorities stemming from the anticipated refresh of the Integrated Review this year.

■ Development Aid: Health Services**Dan Carden:**[\[135443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government's commitment to restore aid funding for women and girls includes the restoration of the commitment of four per cent of Official Development Assistance to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is central to achieving FCDO commitments in the International Development Strategy, our approach to end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children by 2030 and the forthcoming International Women and Girls Strategy.

The FCDO ensures the aid budget is directed towards our priorities, delivers value for the taxpayer, and meets the government's commitment to spend 0.5 per cent of GNI on ODA until the fiscal situation allows a return to 0.7 per cent. The International Development Strategy, which includes comprehensive SRHR, will guide aid prioritisation decisions. We will update on planned allocations for this spending review period in due course.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Conditions of Employment**Chris Stephens:** [R] [[136659](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if they will take steps to (a) publish an equality impact assessment and (b) consult with trade unions when proposing new HR policies for their Department; and if they will make a statement.

David Rutley:

The FCDO complies with section 2.1.6 of the Civil Service Management code.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/566900/CSMC_November_2016.docx

We conduct regular diversity data analysis and share key findings with our trade unions and staff. Trade unions are also involved in the development of associated actions.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992**Chris Stephens:** [R] [[135314](#)]

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

David Rutley:

There is a range of HR information which is published on GOV.UK and which is therefore publicly available. In addition, the FCDO meets regularly with our 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.

The FCDO 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.

■ Jamaica: Cervical Cancer**Fabian Hamilton:** [[138276](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is providing support to Jamaica for its scheme to vaccinate schoolgirls against cervical cancer.

David Rutley:

The UK does not provide bilateral funding for the prevention of cervical cancer in Jamaica.

We have provided support for tackling non-communicable diseases in Jamaica through our core funding to the Inter-American Development Bank.

■ Jovenel Moïse**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[138278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the transfer to the United States of four suspects in the killing of the Haitian president Jovenel Moïse.

David Rutley:

The UK has not discussed with the US Government the transfer to Florida of four individuals from Haiti which forms part of ongoing US legal proceedings against those suspected of criminal activities undertaken in the USA, linked to the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. We maintain a broad dialogue with the US Government on developments in Haiti at all levels and welcome efforts to bring those suspected of involvement in the assassination of President Moïse to justice, both in Haiti and internationally. This abhorrent act undermined the Haitian people's right to determine their own future democratically.

■ Occupied Territories: War Crimes**Nadia Whittome:**[\[136788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK supports the International Criminal Court's inquiry into allegations of war crimes in the West Bank and Gaza.

Leo Docherty:

The UK is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and we respect the independence of the Court. We do not consider that the ICC has jurisdiction in this instance as the UK does not currently recognise Palestinian statehood.

■ Pakistan: Ahmadiyya**Matt Western:**[\[135401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Pakistani counterpart on the alleged persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in that country.

Leo Docherty:

Protecting freedom of religion or belief for minority communities is central to the UK Government's human rights engagement in Pakistan. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, raised the treatment of Ahmadi Muslims with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, on 30 January. On 9 January, Minister of State for Development Andrew Mitchell raised this issue with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Lord Ahmad also raised the matter with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on 14 December 2022, and with Ministry of Interior officials on 8 December 2022.

■ UK-Egypt Association Council**Mr David Lammy:** [\[135128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to hold a meeting of the UK-Egyptian Association Council in 2023.

David Rutley:

The UK and Egypt have agreed to hold the UK-Egypt Association Council on a regular basis at ministerial level on a mutually suitable date. No date has yet been confirmed for 2023.

■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict**Jim Shannon:** [\[136613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of attacks on Kherson in January 2023.

Leo Docherty:

We are supporting Ukraine to respond to ongoing Russian attacks on civilian targets, including in Kherson. The UK has provided air defence systems and missiles to protect critical infrastructure and we are supporting repairs to damaged energy infrastructure. We are providing humanitarian support to Kherson residents facing ongoing shelling through our funding to the UN and Red Cross Movement. This includes support to the World Food Programme and International Organisation for Migration, to provide rations, shelter kits and safe water in Kherson. The UK routinely calls for compliance with International Humanitarian Law, including humanitarian access to ensure safe delivery of lifesaving assistance.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Antenatal Care****Rachael Maskell:** [\[137882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to help ensure that every parent has access to free ante natal classes.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 6 February 2023]: Decisions on provision and access to antenatal classes should be decided locally, considering the needs of the local population. The National Health Service has published guidance for parents which can be found at the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/preparing-for-the-birth/antenatal-classes/>.

■ Better Care Fund: Carers

Liz Kendall: [\[135221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the Better Care Fund will be spent on supporting unpaid family carers.

Helen Whately:

In 2022/23, £291.7 million of the Better Care Fund (BCF) has been earmarked to provide short breaks and respite services for carers, as well as additional advice and support.

We cannot provide the exact proportion of BCF spend on supporting unpaid carers for 2023/24 because the overall size of the BCF (including voluntary contributions) will not be known until the end of the year.

■ Breast Cancer: Chemotherapy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[137921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 119098, on Breast Cancer: Chemotherapy, when NICE will publish its decision on whether the guidance on tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer will be updated following the 2021 review.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[137922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2023 to Question 119098 on Breast Cancer: Chemotherapy, whether appropriate data has been collected to reduce uncertainties in the evidence base for recommended technologies for tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer.

Helen Whately:

Following a review of its diagnostics guidance on tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer [DG34], the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has confirmed that an update of its guidance on tumour profiling tests to guide adjuvant chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer [DG34] is in the very early stages of development.

Further information will be made available on NICE's website as development of the updated guidance progresses.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Dean Russell: [\[136849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage uptake of breast cancer screening.

Helen Whately:

The Department and NHS England are committed to the recovery and improvement of screening uptake for breast screening nationally. A number of measures have

been taken to improve uptake of breast screening, including £10 million investment to deliver 29 new breast cancer screening units, 58 remote access upgrades and nearly 70 life-saving service upgrades. Breast Screening Offices are running extra screening sessions and fully optimising available appointments to clear the mammogram backlog.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis

Daisy Cooper: [\[138055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the NHS Long Term Plan target to diagnose 75 per cent of cancers at stage 1 or 2 by 2028 will be met for gastric cancer.

Daisy Cooper: [\[138057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the disproportionately high number of gastric cancers diagnosed at stage 4.

Helen Whately:

Improving early diagnosis of cancer, including gastric cancers, is a priority, as reflected in the NHS Long Term Plan ambition. A Best Practice Timed Pathway for oesophago-gastric cancer has been produced and sets out how timely and effective care can be provided to patients presenting with oesophago-gastric cancer symptoms. This aims to diagnose patients within 28-days following an urgent suspected cancer referral by their general practices.

NHS England has commissioned a clinical audit into oesophago-gastric cancer. The clinical audit provides regular and timely evidence for cancer service providers to understand where patterns of care in England vary and help guide quality improvement initiatives. The National Cancer Programme is working with Cancer Alliances to implement recommendations from the audit.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Rachael Maskell: [\[136633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he expects the NHS to meet the 2 week wait cancer target of 93%.

Helen Whately:

NHS England published, with the support of the Department, the delivery plan for tackling COVID-19 backlogs in elective care in February 2022. As the plan made clear, tackling the COVID-19 elective care backlog, alongside addressing additional demand, is going to be a multi-year challenge.

To support this multi-year elective recovery programme, the Government plans to spend more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to help drive up and protect elective activity. NHS England will continue to monitor performance against the two week wait target and publishes cancer performance statistics monthly. These show

that over 2.8 million people were seen on a two week wait urgent cancer pathway in the 12 months to November 2022, up by almost a fifth versus the same period pre-pandemic.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Greg Smith:

[\[138439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to reduce the 62-day cancer waiting times from urgent referral to treatment.

Helen Whately:

The Department is taking steps with NHS England to support local systems to address the waiting list for cancer services. November 2022 saw the highest number of urgent general practitioner referrals for cancer with nearly 265,000 patients referred compared to the pandemic low of 80,000 in April 2020.

Cancer treatment is also at record levels. The National Health Service has treated a record number of people for cancer in the last year with over 321,000 people receiving their first cancer treatment over the last year, between December 2021 to November 2022.

To support elective recovery the government plans to spend more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25. NHS England has also developed an intervention model through which challenged trusts are receiving additional national and or regional support to maximise and expand their cancer diagnostic and treatment capacity.

■ Cancer: Tomography

Navendu Mishra:

[\[137980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of the tracer dye used in PSMA PET scans; and if he will make an assessment of the impact of the level of availability of the tracer dye on cancer patients in (a) Greater Manchester, (b) the North West and (c) England.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 6 February 2023]: Medicine supply problems can occur for a number of reasons and occasionally the National Health Service experiences temporary and localised shortages of specific medicines.

We are not aware of any supply issues with tracer dyes used in PSMA PET scans.

■ Care Homes and Hospitals: Visits

Wes Streeting:

[\[127843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS trusts in England have continued restrictions on visitation rights for patients' families since the covid-19 outbreak.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 26 January 2023]: The information requested is not collected centrally.

The Government encourages every provider to ensure visits can take place recognising the crucial role of visiting in the wellbeing and care of patients.

In May 2022, Amanda Pritchard wrote to all NHS Trusts instructing them to return to pre-COVID-19 visitation policies. NHS England's guidance states that providers are expected to facilitate visits "for at least one hour a day and ideally longer" and to do so in a risk-managed way.

■ Care Homes: Costs

Liz Kendall: [\[135213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average hourly cost of (a) local authority-funded and (b) self-funded home care was in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall: [\[135214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average weekly cost of (a) local authority funded and (b) self-funded residential care in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall: [\[135215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average annual cost of (a) local authority funded and (b) self-funded residential care in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall: [\[135216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average hourly cost of (a) local authority funded and (b) self-funded nursing care in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall: [\[135217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average weekly cost of (a) local authority funded and (b) self-funded nursing care in each of the last 13 years.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold data for the average annual, weekly or hourly cost of local authority or self-funded domiciliary care, residential or residential with nursing care. NHS Digital publishes the Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, England, starting from 2017 and is available via the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report>

■ Care Homes: Respiratory Syncytial Virus

Wes Streeting: [\[136682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients with known respiratory infections were discharged from hospital to care homes in (a) November 2022, (b) December 2022 and (c) January 2023.

Helen Whately:

The data requested is not held centrally.

■ Care Homes: Standards

Jim Shannon: [\[136609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the (a) condition of and (b) quality of care in care homes.

Helen Whately:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. Its remit is to monitor, inspect, assess and regulate service providers to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and publish what it finds, including performance ratings to help people choose care. Where CQC find poor care, they will use their enforcement powers.

While CQC's remit does not extend to directly supporting providers to improve, CQC has developed a new strategy to accelerate improvement for health and social care services. CQC will use their unique position to spotlight priority areas that need to improve and enable access to support where it is needed most. CQC do this by strengthening relationships with services, people who use them, and their partners across health and care.

■ Care Quality Commission: Finance

Liz Kendall: [\[135230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated to the Care Quality Commission in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

The funding the Department allocated to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) over the last five years is shown in the following table:

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
CQC funding (million)	43.1	39.5	36.4	31.7	32.2

■ Carers: Health Services

Dan Carden:

[\[136784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will conduct an urgent review into carer's assessments.

Helen Whately:

The Department has no plans to carry out a review into carer's assessments.

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to undertake a Carer's Assessment for any unpaid carer who appears to have a need for support and to meet their eligible needs on request from the carer.

The Health and Care Act 2022 includes provisions for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to assess the performance of local authorities' delivery of their adult social care duties, as set out under part one of the Care Act 2014. The CQC have been engaging with local government, the care sector and, people with care and support needs to develop a framework for these assessments, including how to consider local authorities' responsibilities to unpaid carers. We expect CQC assessment of Local Authorities to roll out from April 2023.

■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Royston

Sir Oliver Heald:

[\[135118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2023 to Question 126505 on Community Diagnosis Centres: Royston, whether the Cambridge and Peterborough Integrated Care Board will make decisions on primary care facilities in Royston.

Neil O'Brien:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board is responsible for making commissioning decisions on primary care facilities in Royston.

All integrated care boards (ICBs) have been responsible for commissioning primary medical services since they were established on 1 July 2022. NHS England plans to delegate additional responsibility for ICBs to commission dentistry, eyecare and pharmacy services from April 2023.

■ Dental Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[136638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a dental and oral health strategy.

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. These will increase access to National Health Service dentistry whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices.

We have taken action to implement these changes, including through regulations that came into effect on 25th November 2022. Further reforms are planned for this year.

■ Dental Services: Elmet and Rothwell

Alec Shelbrooke:

[\[138329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dental practices in the Elmet and Rothwell constituency have (a) become wholly private and (b) reduced their NHS commitment since March 2020; and what urgent steps his Department is taking to ensure that residents living in the Elmet and Rothwell constituency have access to an NHS dentist.

Neil O'Brien:

We do not hold data at the requested level or on private dental practices.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients', which outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to dental care. This plan will help increase access to NHS dentistry whilst making the NHS dental contract more attractive to dental practices, including in Elmet and Rothwell. We have taken action to implement these changes, including through regulations that came into effect on 25th November 2022.

In circumstances where patients are unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance. Further reforms are planned for this year.

■ Dentistry

Wes Streeting:

[\[135477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS dentists there were in England in each of the last five years.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 2 February 2023]: NHS Dental Statistics for England, published by NHS Digital, includes information on the number of dentists undertaking National Health Service activity. The number of NHS dentists in each of the last five years is summarised in the table below.

YEAR	DENTISTS WITH NHS ACTIVITY
2017/18	24,308
2018/19	24,545
2019/20	24,684
2020/21	23,733
2021/22	24,272

The latest Dental Statistics annual report for 2021-22 can be accessed at the following link (see Annex 1, Table 8a):

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

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Recruitment

Christine Jardine: [\[138348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent on head-hunters in each of the last three years.

Will Quince:

The information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Redundancy Pay

Wes Streeting: [\[134026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost was of severance packages paid to Ministers in his Department since June 2022; and to which Ministers payments were made.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 2 February 2023]: The provision of severance payments for Ministers is set out in legislation. Details of the severance payments made to ministers when leaving office are published in the Department's annual reports and accounts.

■ Elective Recovery Taskforce

Dan Carden: [\[137972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 31 January 2023 to Question 128703 on Elective Recovery Taskforce, for what reason his Department does not plan to publish agendas and minutes of the meetings of the Elective Recovery Taskforce.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 6 February 2023]: It is not usual departmental process to publish the agenda and minutes of meetings.

The taskforce will meet regularly to inform our understanding of how we can increase the volume of elective consultations and procedures as far as possible via the independent sector to tackle the backlog. The key output of the taskforce is a short set of practical recommendations, with supporting evidence, that will be published following the conclusion of the taskforce.

The Department has already published the purpose, membership and terms of reference for the Elective Recovery Taskforce which can be accessed through the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/groups/elective-recovery-taskforce.

■ Eyesight: Surgery

Ms Lyn Brown:

[137761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the (a) effectiveness and (b) potential impact on patient safety of (i) regulations and (ii) the governance structure for refractive eye surgery.

Neil O'Brien:

The Secretary of State has no plans to assess the regulations and governance structure for refractive eye surgery.

Doctors performing refractive eye surgery in the United Kingdom must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), the independent regulator of all medical doctors practising in the UK.

Providers who carry out refractive eye surgery must also be registered by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. All refractive eye surgery locations are monitored and, where necessary, inspected by CQC.

If CQC become aware of any concerns regarding an individual medical practitioner, then CQC will notify the GMC.

■ Fertility: Medical Treatments

Feryal Clark:

[138035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to standardise access to fertility treatments in the next two years.

Maria Caulfield:

The Women's Health Strategy was published on 20 July 2022. It contained a number of important changes and future ambitions to improve the variations in access to National Health Service-funded fertility services.

Over the next two years, we will improve access to in vitro fertilisation (IVF) services by removing the additional financial burden on female same-sex couples accessing treatment. We will also begin a programme of work to assess fertility provision across Integrated Care Boards, which have responsibility for commissioning fertility services, with a view to removing non-clinical access criteria. We will also work with stakeholders to improve information provision on fertility and fertility treatments, including on the NHS website, and introduce greater transparency of the local provision of IVF.

■ General Practitioners: Labour Turnover

Colleen Fletcher: [\[136700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the level of retention was for GPs in the NHS in the latest period for which data is available; and if he will make an assessment of the reasons for this level.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 3 February 2023]: Between December 2021 and December 2022, 2,404 FTE fully-qualified GPs left general practice.

We remain committed to growing the GP workforce and number of doctors in general practice - the Government is determined to deliver this as soon as possible. There were 2,167 more full time equivalent (FTE) doctors working in general practice in December 2022 compared to December 2019. We are working with NHSE and HEE to increase the general practice workforce in England. This includes measures to boost recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession, and encourage them to return to practice.

■ Health Education

Dean Russell: [\[136858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Help Us, Help You campaign at tackling the barriers that deter patients from seeking NHS advice.

Helen Whately:

The most recent campaign phase aiming to tackle the barriers that deter patients from seeking National Health Service advice focused on encouraging earlier diagnosis of cancer.

In November 2022, our tracking survey of the target audience showed a 15-percentage point increase in intention to act on possible signs of cancer vs May 2022. As of November 2022, urgent cancer referrals were also at an all-time high.

■ Health Services

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[138415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which health and care services will be included in the Primary Care Recovery Plan.

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[138416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential level of additional funding for health and care services required to enable those groups to deliver the Primary Care Recovery Plan effectively.

Neil O'Brien:

The Primary Care Recovery Plan is currently being drafted and will be published in the coming weeks.

■ Health Services: Females

Feryal Clark:

[\[138026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Integrated Care Systems have women's health hubs as of 31 January 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally.

There is no fixed definition of what a hub is. The National Institute for Health and Care Research-funded Birmingham, RAND and Cambridge Evaluation Centre have been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of women's health hubs. The final report is due to be published in April 2023, however, the interim evaluation report was published in October 2022. The interim evaluation report can be found at the following link:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/brace/whh-interim-summary-paper-final.pdf>

The study is looking at what and where Women's Health Hubs are; their characteristics; and how hubs are working for the women who use them, and the staff working in them.

■ Health Services: Males

Lee Anderson:

[\[137961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to develop a men's health strategy.

Neil O'Brien:

I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln on 20 January to question [125326](#).

■ Health Services: Pharmacy

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[138413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the use of community pharmacies will be incorporated into implementation of the Delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services, published on 30 January 2023.

Neil O'Brien:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 five-year deal sets out how community pharmacy will become more integrated into the NHS, deliver more clinical services and become the first port of call for minor illnesses.

Through the deal, we introduced the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS), whereby NHS111 can refer patients to community pharmacies for urgent medicines supply and advice and treatment for minor illnesses. General practitioners can also refer patients for advice and treatment for minor illnesses.

In September 2022 we announced the agreement for the remaining two years of the deal. As part of this, the CPCS will be expanded this spring to enable urgent and emergency care settings to refer patients to a community pharmacist for minor illness consultation or for urgent medicine supply.

■ Health Visitors

Rachael Maskell: [\[137877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of changes in the number of health visitors since 2010.

Helen Whately:

Local authority commissioners, working with their service provider, determine health visitor numbers based on needs of the local population.

Rachael Maskell: [\[137883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure (a) every parent has adequate access to a health visitor and (b) a safe ratio of health visitors to parents.

Helen Whately:

It is the responsibility of local authority commissioners to determine health visitor numbers based upon local needs. To support local authorities fulfil their responsibility, we have published employer guidance, which includes information on securing sufficient numbers of health visitors, workload management and safe workload levels.

■ Health: Disadvantaged

Rachael Maskell: [\[137871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle health disparities.

Neil O'Brien:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Blaydon on 1 February to question [130051](#).

■ HIV Infection: Health Education

David Mundell: [\[135148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has provided for public health campaigns on HIV for women in each year since 2018.

David Mundell: [\[135149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has provided for public health campaigns on HIV aimed at the black community in each year since 2018.

David Mundell:

[\[135150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has provided for public health campaigns on HIV for heterosexual (a) women and (b) men in each year since 2018.

Neil O'Brien:

HIV Prevention England (HPE) is the national HIV prevention programme for England and is funded by the Department. The programme aims to support communities who are disproportionately affected by HIV, including gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men and Black African heterosexual men and women. The Department has appointed Terrence Higgins Trust, a national charity who provide services related to sexual health and HIV, to deliver the programme from 2021/2024. HPE delivers a nationally co-ordinated programme of HIV prevention work, including public campaigns such as National HIV Testing Week, that is designed to complement locally commissioned prevention activities in areas of high HIV prevalence.

The table below shows the funding that has been provided specifically for HIV public health campaigns within the HPE contract:

2018-19	£484,800
2019-20	£442,000
2020-21	£524,000
2021-22	£500,000
2022-23	£500,000

The Department does not provide funding for separate national HIV public health campaigns specifically targeted at women or the black community or heterosexual women and men.

■ HIV Infection: Screening

Hilary Benn:

[\[137722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to extend opt-out HIV testing.

Neil O'Brien:

As part of the Government's HIV Action Plan, NHS England has expanded opt-out HIV testing in accident and emergency departments in areas of extremely high diagnosed HIV prevalence, over five cases per 1,000 people, a proven effective way to identify new HIV cases. NHS England is investing £20 million over three years, 2022/25, to support this activity.

We will be considering the full evidence from the first year of opt-out testing, alongside the data on progress towards our ambition of ending new HIV

transmissions in England by 2030, to decide whether we further expand this programme to areas with high HIV prevalence that is two to five cases per 1,000 people. We will also share the findings from the opt-out testing programme with local health systems to inform local decisions on expansion.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Liz Kendall: [\[135227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS patients were in hospital waiting to be discharged in the first week of January 2023 in each NHS Trust in England.

Helen Whately:

The daily average number of patients who no longer meet the criteria to reside, for each individual NHS trust in England, is publicly available at the following link:

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

Liz Kendall: [\[135228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average length of stay in hospital for patients who no longer met the criteria to reside in hospital and were waiting to be discharged in the last 12 months.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold data on the average length of stay for patients who no longer meet the criteria to reside in hospital and are waiting to be discharged. The Department publishes data on those patients who have a length of stay greater than 21 days and no longer meet the criteria to reside. This is publicly available at the following link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/uec-sitrep/urgent-and-emergency-care-daily-situation-reports-2022-23/>.

■ IVF: Eligibility

Sarah Green: [\[138381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ensure the age at which women cease to be eligible for IVF on the NHS and the number of cycles before they reach that age does not vary between Integrated Care Boards.

Maria Caulfield:

Funding decisions for health services in England are made by integrated care boards and are based on the clinical needs of their local population. We expect these organisations to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, ensuring equal access to fertility treatment across England.

The Women's Health Strategy was published on 20 July 2022 and contained a number of important changes and future ambitions to improve the variations in access to National Health Service-funded fertility services.

In addition, NICE is currently reviewing its fertility guidelines and will consider whether the current recommendations for access to NHS-funded treatment and preservation are still appropriate. We expect that this review will be published in 2024.

■ **Learning Disability: Finance**

Helen Morgan: [\[136808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the long-term viability of learning disability support providers who only receive funding from local authorities.

Helen Whately:

Local authorities are best placed to understand and plan the care and support needs of their local population and to secure services to meet them. We expect local authorities to take a variety of factors into account in doing so, including the viability of care providers.

■ **Life Insurance: Huntington's Disease**

Hilary Benn: [\[138269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the insurance industry on the premia for life insurance offered to people who have a family history of Huntington's disease but have a confirmed negative predictive test.

Hilary Benn: [\[138270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make a comparative assessment of the (a) terms and (b) prices offered to individuals who (i) had and (ii) did not have a family history of Huntington's disease by insurance companies for life insurance in each of the last three years.

Hilary Benn: [\[138272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will have discussions with representatives of the insurance industry on the prices for life insurance offered to people who have a family history of Huntington's disease and also have a confirmed negative predictive test.

Helen Whately:

The Secretary of State has not had discussions with the insurance industry on prices for life insurance for people with a family history of Huntington's with a negative predictive test and, has no plans to have such discussions. However the Department works closely with the Association of British Insurers on the Code on Genetic Testing and Insurance to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This has included discussions with the Huntington's Disease Association during the recent three yearly review of the Code, which was published in December 2022.

While there are no plans to make a formal comparative assessment, we are aware of stakeholders raising concerns regarding access to life insurance for people with a family history of Huntington's while having a negative predictive test and we will be working with ABI to understand this further.

■ Liver Diseases: Death

Margaret Ferrier: [\[126689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in the debate on Liver Disease and Liver Cancer: Diagnosis on 11 October 2022, Official Report, column 71WH, what his planned timetable is for concluding the review of adult liver services.

Helen Whately:

During the debate on Liver Disease and Liver Cancer: Diagnosis held on 11 October 2022, an error was made on the NHS England Review of Adult Liver Services, in which it was said that such a review "is taking place in 2022-23, and there should be a report after that". NHS England have since confirmed that there is currently no review of adult Liver Services being undertaken by NHS England.

NHS England Clinical Reference Group has only recently concluded and discussions about future work programmes are currently in progress.

■ Members: Correspondence

John Penrose: [\[136511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 30 November and 28 December 2022 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of his constituent Jacqui Hampson on NHS pay and pensions.

Will Quince:

I replied to the hon. Member on 1 February 2023.

■ Miscarriage

Feryal Clark: [\[138031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on the introduction of a pregnancy loss certificate.

Maria Caulfield:

The Women's Health Strategy included a commitment to introduce a Certificate of Pregnancy Loss. This will provide a non-statutory, voluntary scheme to enable parents who have experienced a pre-24 weeks pregnancy loss to record and receive a certificate to provide recognition of their baby's potential life. The purpose of recording and issuing a certificate is to provide comfort and support by validating a

loss. The certificate will not be a legal document but will be an important acknowledgement of a life lost.

The Department is working with NHS Business Services Authority to ensure that the pregnancy loss certificates will be introduced in 2023.

■ Neurogenic Bowel Dysfunction: Medical Treatments

Andy McDonald:

[\[129838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which NHS Trusts have a formal written policy on (a) digital rectal examination, (b) digital rectal stimulation and (c) the digital removal of faeces for patients with neurogenic bowel dysfunction.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 26 January 2023]: Digital rectal examination, digital rectal stimulation and the digital removal of faeces are all locally commissioned services. As such information on formal written policies owned by individual trusts is not held centrally.

■ NHS: Finance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[138317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to announce long term funding settlements for the NHS in order to allow investment in the future of the service.

Will Quince:

The Government has and will continue to prioritise investment into the National Health Service. Funding confirmed at the last Spending Review was on top of the £33 billion for the historic long-term NHS settlement announced in 2018. Taken together with the £8 billion funding announced at the 2021 Autumn Statement, which was announced to enable rapid action to improve emergency, elective and primary care performance, the NHS resource budget in England will increase to £165.9 billion in 2024/25, a £38.9 billion cash increase over the parliament. As per usual practice for Government departments and their arm's length bodies, future NHS funding will be determined at future Spending Reviews.

■ NHS: Industrial Disputes

Wes Streeting:

[\[134028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS in England of industrial action taken by NHS employees since 15 December 2022.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 2 February 2023]: The Department does not hold this information centrally.

■ NHS: Pay**John Redwood:** [\[117395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many senior managers in the NHS, including NHS Trusts and administrative bodies, earn over £100,000 a year.

Will Quince:

At NHS Trusts and other core organisations, between October 2021 and September 2022, 3,010 staff earned over £100,000. Furthermore, in the same time period, at NHS Support Organisations and Central Bodies, 500 staff earned over that amount. All remuneration, including non-basic pay elements such as band supplements, medical awards, geographic allowances, local payments, on call payments, overtime, recommended retail prices, shift work payments and other payments, are included in this total.

■ Patients: Rehabilitation**Feryal Clark:** [\[136834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to help ensure that patients receive timely rehabilitation or reablement support when leaving hospital after 31 March 2023.

Feryal Clark: [\[137970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report Rehabilitation, recovery and reducing health inequity: easing the pain, published by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, published in September 2022, whether he is taking steps to encourage implementation of that report's recommendations by (a) his Department, (b) NHS England and (c) integrated care boards.

Helen Whately:

Working with local authorities and community partners, NHS England has begun to develop and pilot a new approach to intermediate care, including rehabilitation and reablement support. Initial learning emerging from the pilot sites will be available by April 2023, and this will support more widespread adoption and implementation during 2023/24. By autumn 2023, NHS England will develop a new planning framework and national standard for rapid discharge into intermediate care.

■ Pharmacy**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[138059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the long-term financial sustainability of community pharmacies.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[138060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to help support the long-term sustainability of community pharmacies.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[138061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of potential workforce challenges facing community pharmacies.

Neil O'Brien:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) five-year deal 2019/24 commits £2.592 billion every year to community pharmacy.

In September 2022, we announced a one-off £100 million investment into pharmacy for the remainder of the five-year deal.

As part of the agreement announced in September, NHS England committed to working with the sector to undertake an independent economic analysis of National Health Service pharmaceutical services. This review will help inform the negotiation of the future contractual framework for community pharmacy.

The Department and NHS England are monitoring the impact of the availability of the workforce on the provision of NHS pharmaceutical services and working with community pharmacy employers to maintain patient access to the services that are commissioned from contractors. The results of Health Education England's latest annual community pharmacy workforce survey are currently being analysed and the pharmacy workforce across the NHS is also be considered in the development of the Long-term Workforce Plan, to be published later this year.

■ Pharmacy: Finance

Simon Jupp:

[\[138435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with (a) NHS England and (b) the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on the level of funding for community pharmacies through the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework for (i) 2024-25 and (b) 2025-26.

Neil O'Brien:

No discussions regarding the levels of future funding for community pharmacies through the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) for 2024-25 and 2025-26 have been held with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC). However, the PSNC have, during formal consultation on years four and five of the current five-year deal, made a case for more funding. The Department and NHS England are jointly considering what should follow the end of the current CPCF 2019-24 five-year deal.

In September 2022, as part of the agreement for years four and five of the current CPCF 2019-24 five-year deal, NHS England committed to working with the sector to undertake an independent economic analysis of NHS pharmaceutical services. This review will help inform the negotiation of the future contractual framework for community pharmacy.

■ Physiotherapy

Wes Streeting:

[\[134027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many physiotherapists were employed by NHS England in each of the last five years.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 2 February 2023]: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics for England. These include staff employed by hospital trusts and commissioning bodies, but exclude staff directly employed by primary care, general practitioner surgeries, local authorities, and other providers.

The table below shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) physiotherapists working in the Hospital and Community Health Services for the last five years:

DATE	OCT-18	OCT-19	OCT-20	OCT-21	OCT-22
Number of FTE staff	19,442	19,912	20,888	21,861	22,684

Source: NHS Digital Workforce Statistics.

Note: These numbers do not include NHS support organisations and central bodies such as NHS England.

■ Pregnancy Loss Review

Feryal Clark:

[\[138032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the Pregnancy Loss Review final report.

Maria Caulfield:

The Pregnancy Loss Review was commissioned to consider the registration and certification of pregnancy loss occurring before 24 weeks gestation and the quality of National Health Service care. The Review will make recommendations on improving the care and support women and families receive when experiencing a pre-24-week gestation baby loss.

We know that the Pregnancy Loss Review has been delayed, and part of this delay is due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are working with the independent review leads to get it published as soon as possible.

■ Prescription Drugs

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhési:

[\[136822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the public have access to NHS prescription medicines in a timely manner.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the impact of pharmacy closures on the (a) access to and (b) availability of prescription medicine.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential implications of funding cuts to NHS pharmacies.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of Government funding provided to community pharmacies.

Neil O'Brien:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 five-year deal commits £2.592 billion each year to the sector. In September 2022, following negotiation with the sector, we announced a one-off £100million investment into pharmacy for the remainder of the five-year deal.

The Department closely monitors the market and is working in partnership with NHS England and local authorities to evaluate the effect of closures on patient access. In England, access to NHS pharmaceutical services is good with 80 per cent of the population living within 20 minutes walking distance of a community pharmacy. The Pharmacy Access Scheme supports patient access and provision in areas where there are fewer community pharmacies by providing additional payments to pharmacies whose closure would have the greatest impact on patient access.

As part of the agreement announced in September, NHS England committed to working with the sector to undertake an independent economic analysis of NHS pharmaceutical services. This review will help inform the negotiation of the future contractual framework for community pharmacy.

■ Preventive Medicine: Finance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[137872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to increase funding for preventative healthcare.

Neil O'Brien:

The Autumn Statement makes available up to an additional £8 billion investment for the NHS and adult social care in England in 2024-25. In addition to funding confirmed at the last Spending Review, this means the NHS resource budget will receive a £38.9 billion cash increase over this Parliament. Local authorities in England receive a public health grant to support their statutory duty to improve the health of their population. At the Spending Review 2021, we considered the need for local authority public health funding and confirmed that the public health grant would increase over the settlement period. In 2022/23, the grant increased by 2.81% to £3.417 billion.

This is in addition to targeted investment through local government in start for life support and drug and alcohol treatment services.

The Government recognises that preventative interventions can deliver significant health benefits for individuals and reduce the burden of preventable illness on the NHS. In each of 42 areas across England, Integrated Care Systems (ICS) bring together health and care organisations around a core purpose including improving population health and tackling health disparities. For each ICS, an integrated care strategy describes how locally assessed health needs will be met. Statutory guidance makes clear that prevention should be considered when preparing these strategies.

■ Primary Health Care

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[138414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which health and care organisations were consulted as part of his development of the Primary Care Recovery Plan.

Neil O'Brien:

The Primary Care Recovery Plan is currently being drafted and will be published in the coming weeks.

■ Radiotherapy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[136826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure there are sufficient numbers of trained radiologists to deliver interventional oncology therapies.

Will Quince:

As of October 2022, there were 3,608 full-time equivalent (FTE) consultants in the clinical radiology specialty in the National Health Service in England. This is an increase of 415 (13%) since 2019.

As of October 2022, there were 1,588 FTE doctors in training in the clinical radiology specialty in the NHS in England. This is an increase of 252 (18.9%) since 2019.

The Government has funded an additional 20 places for Specialty Training year 6 for Interventional Radiologists in 2021/22 and 2022/23, and Health Education England has started training into Interventional Radiology at Specialty Training year 1.

The Government has funded 1,500 (25%) more medical school places each year for domestic students in England since 2020.

Increasing the overall radiology workforce will increase the pool of radiologists who can train to deliver interventional oncology therapies.

■ Radiotherapy: South East

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of trained radiologists in (a) Slough constituency and (b) the south-east of England as of December 2022.

Will Quince:

The Department does not hold information on National Health Service (NHS) staff by constituency. Data on staff working across hospital and community health services is published monthly based on the hospital trust that employs staff. The latest data currently available is for October 2022.

As of October 2022, there were 50 full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors working in the specialty of clinical radiology at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust. Of these, 40 FTE were consultant, associate specialist or specialty doctor grades.

At the same point in time there were 723 FTE doctors, working in the specialty of clinical radiology across NHS trusts and commissioning bodies in the South East of England. Of these, 518 FTE were consultant, associate specialist or specialty doctor grades.

■ Respite Care

Liz Kendall:

[\[135218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many days' worth of respite care services have been received by family carers in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall:

[\[135219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average number of days of respite care services received by family carers in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall:

[\[135220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many family carers received respite breaks in each of the last 12 months.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the data requested on respite care services.

■ Smoking: Health Education

Wes Streeting:

[\[136681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's work to reduce smoking since the dissolution of Public Health England.

Neil O'Brien:

All tobacco control functions and resources from former Public Health England have been transferred to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities within the Department. No assessment has been made.

■ Social Services: Finance**Helen Morgan:**[\[136807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the increase in the national living wage in April 2023 on the adequacy of funding for local authority provision of social care.

Helen Whately:

The Government took into account a wide range of pressures including inflation and National Living Wage increases when determining the additional funding made available at the Autumn Statement.

We are making available up to £7.5 billion over two years to support adult social care and discharge - with up to £2.8 billion available in 2023/24 and up to £4.7 billion in 2024/25. This historic funding is more than sufficient to cover these pressures and enable Local Authorities to deliver tangible improvements in adult social care services.

Dame Caroline Dinenge:[\[137786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that additional funding for hospital discharge will be allocated to registered care settings.

Helen Whately:

The Department has no current plans to provide discharge funding directly to care providers.

The £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund has been distributed to local authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). The funding has been pooled locally into the Better Care Fund, to facilitate joint planning and decision-making across health and care systems. This funding should be used for locally determined measures to reduce delayed discharge, which could include funding care packages in registered care settings.

The additional £200 million funding specifically for short term care is held centrally by NHS England (NHSE) and allocated to ICBs, who may work with registered care settings where that is the most appropriate approach in their circumstances.

■ Social Services: Labour Turnover**Liz Kendall:**[\[135222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of paid care workers have left the social care sector in each of the last 13 years.

Liz Kendall:

[\[135223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number and proportion of social care staff who have left the sector and moved to a job in (a) retail, (b) hospitality and (c) the NHS in each of the last 13 years.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold robust, consistent data on the adult social care workforce before 2012/2013.

Skills for Care have published the number of employees who left an adult social care role in a Local Authority or independent provider as a proportion of the total number of those employees in each year from 2012/13 to 2021/22 at the following link and shown in the table attached:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.skillsforcare.org.uk%2FAdult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data%2Fworkforce-intelligence%2Fdocuments%2FASC-Workforce-Statistical-Appendix-2021.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

However, Skills for Care's publication does not include the destination of workers leaving a job in the adult social care sector. This means that we cannot distinguish between those who have left the sector entirely (or which sector they have moved to) and those moving between jobs within the sector. Skills for Care have found that 67% of the roles successfully recruited in 2021/22 were filled by staff who had been working in the sector, implying that much of the annual turnover rate is made up of movement between adult social care employers.

Attachments:

1. Percentages of Employees [FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE Percentage of employees .docx]

■ **Social Services: Labour Turnover and Recruitment**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[138318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out a long term recruitment and retention strategy for adult social care.

Helen Whately:

There are no plans to publish a long-term recruitment and retention strategy for adult social care. However, we will be publishing further detail of our workforce reform plans outlined in the People at the Heart of Care white paper.

■ **Social Services: Reform**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[136635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to reform social care, and whether he plans to publish a social care strategy.

Helen Whately:

In December 2021, *People at the Heart of Care* was published, setting out a 10-year vision for reforming adult social care. This Government has made progress on implementing this vision, including increasing digitisation; developing our approach for oversight of the adult social care system; and enhancing the collection and use of data.

In spring 2023, the Government will publish a plan for the next 2 years, that builds on the progress made so far.

■ Social Services: Staff**Liz Kendall:**[\[135224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the (a) average age, (b) gender breakdown and (c) ethnicity of the social care workforce.

Helen Whately:

Skills for Care have published data which shows that for 1,510,00 filled posts in the adult social care sector in 2021/22, the mean age of workers was 44.6 years, 82% were female while 18% were male, and 77% were white while 23% were from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background.

■ Stomach Cancer**Daisy Cooper:**[\[138056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve survival rates for gastric cancer.

Helen Whately:

Improving early diagnosis of cancer, including gastric cancers, is a priority, as reflected in the NHS Long Term Plan ambition. A Best Practice Timed Pathway for oesophago-gastric cancer has been produced and sets out how timely and effective care can be provided to patients presenting with oesophago-gastric cancer symptoms. This aims to diagnose patients within 28-days following an urgent suspected cancer referral by their general practices.

NHS England has commissioned a clinical audit into oesophago-gastric cancer. The clinical audit provides regular and timely evidence for cancer service providers to understand where patterns of care in England vary and help guide quality improvement initiatives. The National Cancer Programme is working with Cancer Alliances to implement recommendations from the audit.

■ Unispace Global: Contracts**Nick Smith:**[\[136559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 31 January 2023 to Question 120948 on Unispace Global: Contracts, whether the settlement reached in July 2021 required Sante Global LLP to deliver on the obligations in the

original Unispace Global contract; whether any of the obligations in the original contract were waived as part of the new settlement; and what proportion of the original contractual obligations have now been met.

Will Quince:

I must begin by correcting the record regarding the date of the settlement. An agreement resolving the dispute was signed in July 2022, whereas the earlier Parliamentary response refers to a settlement having been reached in July 2021. I have made arrangements for the record to be corrected in Hansard.

I can confirm that the obligations to deliver product have been fully met, with the last delivery of replacement products having been received on 17 October 2022.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Derek Twigg:

[\[138311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applications have been refused in each year since 2017; and how many asylum seekers who have had their applications refused have been removed from the UK in each year since 2017.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office publishes data on asylum and returns in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on initial decisions on asylum applications are published in table Asy_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Data on numbers of asylum-related returns are published in table Ret_05 of the '[Returns summary datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data for initial decisions on asylum applications relates to the year ending September 2022. The latest data for returns statistics relates to the end of June 2022.

■ Asylum: Children

Caroline Lucas:

[\[132337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the response to the Urgent Question on 24 January 2023 on Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children, Official Report column 861, what assessment she has made of the capacity of local authorities to offer foster care placements to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

The following lines have been provided by the Department for Education as they have lead responsibility for this policy area:

The Department for Education 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. DfE 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.

DfE 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.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[136694]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of an inquiry into safeguarding measures in relation to asylum accommodation in the context of reports of 200 missing asylum-seeking children

Robert Jenrick:

The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. We have robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in emergency interim hotels are safe and supported whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of specialist social workers and nurses.

We have no power to detain UASC in 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 and led by our directly engaged social workers. A multi-agency, missing persons protocol is mobilised alongside the police and local authorities, to establish their whereabouts and to ensure that they are safe.

Regarding an inquiry; the Home Secretary is taking advice from officials and considering the appropriate next steps.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[136703]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the appropriateness of the use of hotel accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; and if she will take steps to review that assessment in the context of reports of missing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Robert Jenrick:

The rise in the number of UASC crossing the Channel in small boats means there are significant challenges on providing local authority care places for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give some unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst Local Authority accommodation is found. The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are as safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with a Local Authority.

When considering whether to accommodate UASC in Home Office operated hotels, advice and guidance was sought from organisations with expertise and experience with young people. These included the Department for Education, Safeguarding Advice and Children's Champion and Local Authorities.

Safeguarding is a key consideration when identifying potential hotels for temporary use by the Home Office to accommodate UASC. Hotel specific risks assessments are completed and mitigation against risks put in place. If the facility is not considered appropriate, we do not continue to pursue the hotel as an option.

We are clear that we must end the use of hotels as soon as possible. We are providing Local Authorities with children's services with £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

■ Asylum: Greater London**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[131277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with the (a) Secretary of State for Education and (b) officials from local authorities in London on safeguarding provisions for people under 18 years old who live in asylum accommodation in hotels.

Robert Jenrick:

We take the safety and welfare of those in our care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, extremely seriously. Home Office officials and our accommodation providers engage on a weekly basis with partners across London Boroughs as part of long-established engagement forums.

Alongside such multi-agency forums, officials also hold specific safeguarding discussions with statutory leads in boroughs covering individual cases of concern or more thematically. Officials in Home Office regularly have conversations regarding updates to published policy and guidance such as the Allocation of Asylum Accommodation policy and the AASC Accommodation Safeguarding Framework.

The recent Independent Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI)'s report on UASC accommodated in hotels notes that Home Office staff were clear on their commitment to safeguard the young people housed in hotels and had put in place

processes and guidance in order to achieve this. The report found that the people working with young people were all “engaged, empathetic, supportive and enthused” about their work.

The ICIBI also said that the Home Office’s approach to addressing children’s mental health support reflected a “best practice approach”. The ICIBI found the young people in accommodation unanimously reported feeling safe, happy and were treated with respect.

No individuals, apart from the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, are residing at any of the hotels. All individuals working directly with the young people accommodated at the hotels have Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and all those working operating on the hotel sites have DBS clearance.

■ COE Parliamentary Assembly

John Howell:

[135200]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the debate entitled The Istanbul Convention, which took place at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2023.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The UK ratified the Istanbul Convention on 21 July 2022, demonstrating our commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). The Convention came into force in the UK on 1 November 2022.

The Government recognises the crucial work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the involvement of all members of the UK delegation. We know of the important PACE debate which took place on the Istanbul Convention on 25 January, during which there was a discussion, amongst other things, about how we need societal attitudes to change and the importance of educating everyone, in particular men and boys, that VAWG is unacceptable. We recognise this and that is why in March 2022, we launched a national communications campaign, ‘Enough’, to target and challenge the harmful behaviours that exist within society, educate young people about healthy relationships and consent, and ensure victims can recognise abuse and receive support. The second phase of the campaign launched in October 2022 and focuses on the range of safe ways a bystander can safely intervene if they witness VAWG.

Our Tackling VAWG Strategy and complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan aim to transform the response to these crimes with actions to prevent abuse, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to ensure the right systems are in place to tackle them.

■ Forensic Science: Finance**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[135161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding her Department has provided to the Transforming Forensics programme in each year since 2019.

Chris Philp:

Since 2019, the Home Office has provided the Transforming Forensics Programme with the following funding in each year since Financial Year 2019/20:

FINANCIAL YEAR	AMOUNT
2019/20	£16.3m
2020/21	£9.1m
2021/22	£19.8m
2022/23	£10m allocation – final spend to be confirmed

Mr Barry Sheerman:[\[135162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress has been made on the Transforming Forensics Programme; and whether she plans to provide further funding to the programme.

Chris Philp:

The Transforming Forensics Programme supports the modernisation of forensic services through the development of new services, tools and applications.

Since its inception, achievements have included setting up the Forensics Capability Network which supports forensics practitioners nationally, supporting the government response to the Rape Review by rolling out specialist digital forensics equipment to 24 forces, and developing an end-to-end digitised fingerprinting app which is available to forces for adoption.

The programme will close at the end of this financial year, having transitioned its ongoing activities into the Police Digital Service.

■ Immigration: Enforcement**Sir Stephen Timms:**[\[137714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's news story entitled Immigration enforcement surge since pledge to tackle illegal working, published on 23 January 2023, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of that announcement on people with section 3 leave to remain status.

Robert Jenrick:

Immigration enforcement focuses its activity on those in the UK who are abusing our laws. Individuals with section 3c leave are lawfully in the UK and are not liable for enforcement action unless they breach the conditions of that leave.

■ **Manston Asylum Processing Centre**

Chloe Smith: [\[135180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to change how it uses the Manston Short-term Holding Facility.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office has no plans to change its usage of Manston as a processing centre for people arriving in the UK by small boat.

■ **Manston Asylum Processing Centre: Detainees**

Rosie Duffield: [\[135451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are held at Manston migrant processing centre.

Robert Jenrick:

As of 21:15 on 30 January, there were no persons held at Manston.

■ **Nick Timothy**

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[138285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contracts the Home Office currently has with Nick Timothy.

Chris Philp:

Nick Timothy is undertaking a short piece of work to advise on structures and systems which support the Home Secretary in the Home Office.

Nick Timothy started in the role on December 12 and the current appointment period is to the end of February. It is unpaid

■ **Police Custody: Children**

Janet Daby: [R] [\[138014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the provision made by the Concordat on Children in Custody on the transfer of children unable to be bailed into local authority accommodation.

Chris Philp:

The Government published the Concordat on Children in Custody in 2017 which clearly sets out the statutory duties of the police and local authorities and provides a protocol for how transfers of children from custody to local authority accommodation should work in practice. We are clear that children should only be detained in custody

when absolutely necessary and where there are opportunities to divert children away from custody, these must be considered.

The Government is supporting Local Authorities to meet their statutory duty and to ensure there is sufficient provision in their area through capital investment. The 2021 Spending Review announced £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 Home Department does not collect data on the type or status of the person who acted as an Appropriate Adult. Our Police Powers and Procedures bulletin found that for children who were detained in police custody, an AA was called in 99% of cases.

We part fund the National Association of Appropriate Adults (NAAN), which supports organisations providing appropriate adult services to young people and vulnerable adults in police custody and regularly engage with NAAN to discuss the provision of training to Appropriate Adults across England and Wales. More information can be found at <https://www.appropriateadult.org.uk/>.

■ **Salah Asserha**

Peter Gibson:

[\[138411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will urgently meet with the hon. Member for Darlington to discuss the case of his constituent Salah Asserha and her Department's response to that matter.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office responded to the hon. Member on 7 February 2023.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Overseas Trade: Taiwan**

Jim Shannon:

[\[133593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she is taking steps to increase trade with Taiwan.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK and Taiwan share a deep, £8bn trade and investment relationship. Longstanding Trade Talks with Taiwan are held annually to boost trade and support economic growth. In November 2022 my Rt. Hon. Friend for Chelsea and Fulham, the former Minister of State for Trade Policy, co-hosted the UK-Taiwan 25th annual Trade Talks in Taipei, during which discussions were held on areas of mutual interest, including on barriers to trade in sectors like fintech, food and drink and pharma, aimed at helping more UK firms export and invest in Taiwan. We are exploring a range of opportunities to further enhance our trade partnership.

■ Trade Agreements: Gulf Cooperation Council**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[133993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether any chapters have been concluded during negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Nigel Huddleston:

Two rounds of negotiations on a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been held, covering all the objectives outlined in the UK's Strategic Approach. The UK has exchanged draft chapter text with the GCC across most policy areas.

JUSTICE**■ Administration of Justice: Racial Discrimination****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[135423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Racial Bias and the Bench, published by the University of Manchester in November 2022, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of (a) including a section on anti-Black racism in the Equal Treatment Bench Book and (b) increasing the number of editors of that Book from Black communities.

Mike Freer:

To preserve the independence of the judiciary, the Lord Chief Justice, the Senior President of the Tribunals, and the Chief Coroner have statutory responsibility for judicial training, under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, and Coroners and Justice Act 2009 respectively, exercised through the Judicial College, which produces the Equal Treatment Bench Book.

■ Crimes of Violence: Transgender People**Matt Western:**[\[135405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many violent offences were committed against transgender women in each year since 2018.

Edward Argar:

Information on characteristics of victims of offences is not centrally recorded in the Court Proceedings Database held by the Ministry of Justice and to obtain it would involve a manual interrogation of court records which would result in disproportionate cost to the department.

■ Drugs: Trials**Steve Reed:**[\[135253\]](#)

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

Mike Freer:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Employment Tribunals Service**Angela Rayner:**[\[135264\]](#)

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

Angela Rayner:[\[135265\]](#)

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

Angela Rayner:[\[135266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of employment tribunal claims were disposed of in each year between 2010 and 2022.

Mike Freer:

The number of receipts, disposals and outstanding employment tribunal claims between 2010 and 2022 can be found on [Tribunal Statistics Quarterly: July to September 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

■ Ministry of Justice: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992**Chris Stephens:****[R]** [\[135318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

Mike Freer:

In order to comply with section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, the MoJ shares (where it is appropriate and in line with privacy statements) information with its recognised departmental trade unions on a regular basis through formal negotiation, meaningful consultation and engagement. This includes sharing general information as well as information requested during a specific engagement or consultation.

■ Rape: Trials**Steve Reed:** [\[135248\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

I refer the honourable Member to the answer I gave on 6 January 2023 to Question 117602, available from <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-06/117602>.

■ Reoffenders**Janet Daby:** [R] [\[136752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what comparative assessment she has made of the trends in the level of the reoffending rate among (a) children and (b) adults.

Damian Hinds:

This Government is tackling the causes of reoffending to make our streets safer. We are investing in probation services and new initiatives to reduce reoffending and beat crime.

The overall proven reoffending rate for adults has fallen by 6.0 percentage points from 30.0% in 2010/11 to 24.0% in 2020/21.

The overall proven reoffending rate for children has fallen by 9.7 percentage points from 40.9% in 2010/11 to 31.2% in 2020/21.

Our Prisons Strategy White Paper sets out our ambitious plans to reduce reoffending. We will invest to improve prison leavers' access to accommodation, employment support and substance misuse treatment, and on further measures for early intervention to tackle youth offending.

■ Theft: Trials**Steve Reed:** [\[135251\]](#)

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

Mike Freer:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Youth Courts**Janet Daby:** [R] [\[135474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were awaiting hearing in the Youth Court as of 30 January (a) in each of the last five years and (b) 2023.

Damian Hinds:

There were 8,099 youth outstanding cases in magistrates' courts in England and Wales as at the end of September 2022, the most recent time period available. This includes any case involving a defendant under the age of 18 heard in the magistrates' courts, not just those heard in the Youth Court. It is not possible to separate out statistics for the latter.

Cases involving young defendants are given priority, irrespective of the Court in which they appear, and youth cases are continually reviewed to ensure that they are progressed as quickly as possible.

At any one time, there will always be outstanding cases - these are not backlogs, they are cases where evidence is being prepared for trial. The table below shows the number of the outstanding youth cases for the period end of September 2017 to end of September 2022. Outstanding youth cases at the magistrates' court in 2020 were impacted by the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic but have since returned to levels seen prior to the pandemic.

TIME PERIOD	OUTSTANDING YOUTH CASES AT MAGISTRATES COURTS, ENGLAND & WALES
September 2017	9,025
September 2018	8,685
September 2019	8,472
September 2020	10,759
September 2021	7,690
September 2022	8,099

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[135310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 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.

Dehenna Davison:

The department maintains a positive relationship with our trades unions and shares a broad range of appropriate material with them, depending upon the subject under discussion.

■ Freeports: Wales**Hywel Williams:** [\[138288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether it is his Department's policy that all approved freeport bids in Wales will receive £26 million of initial funding.

Dehenna Davison:

The UK and Welsh governments have committed to delivering a Freeport in Wales. Subject to business case approval, there is access to seed capital funding of up to £26 million.

■ High Rise Flats: Natural Gas**Geraint Davies:** [\[135121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many and what proportion of high rise residential towers over 60 metres have gas pipes supplying all floors.

Lee Rowley:

The department does not currently hold this information.

The new Building Safety Regulator will make buildings safer by enforcing a new regulatory regime for high-rise residential and other in scope buildings and overseeing the safety and performance of all buildings.

■ Housing: Construction**Julian Knight:** [\[135286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to encourage local authorities to adopt housing estates from planning developers more promptly.

Lucy Frazer:

Where a road is offered for adoption, the Highways Authority will assess whether the road has been constructed to the correct standard and will make a decision whether or not to adopt the road.

The maintenance of a highway is a significant financial burden and a local highway authority must be satisfied that any roads it chooses to adopt, are sufficiently robust and built to the correct standards, to ensure its risks and liabilities are reduced so far as practicable.

The Department for Transport has issued an advice note to councils to help them navigate some of the complexities surrounding new developments and the adoption, maintenance and upkeep of roads. This includes recommending early engagement with the relevant highway authority, to help facilitate an easier adoption process. The advice note is available [here](#).

■ Housing: Mould

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[135386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the number and proportion of households that have mould.

Dehenna Davison:

Further to the answer I gave to Question UIN [126650](#) on 26 January 2023, the annual [English Housing Survey](#) publishes data across all tenures on damp (mould and condensation).

■ Levelling Up Fund

Julian Knight: [\[135325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impact of inflation on infrastructure projects funded through round one of the Levelling Up Fund.

Dehenna Davison:

We continue to support successful Levelling Up Fund round 1 projects and have put in place a proportionate project adjustment process. We will work with local areas to find practical solutions and make sensible adjustments to the scope and phasing of projects to mitigate delivery challenges including cost inflation whilst also maintaining value for money.

We have also agreed a £65 million package of support for successful applicants, to help ensure they have the necessary capacity and capability to deliver their projects.

Julian Knight: [\[135326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to provide feedback to local authorities who were unsuccessful in round two of the Levelling Up Fund.

Dehenna Davison:

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

■ Local Government: Elections

Rachael Maskell: [\[135282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing Ukrainian refugees resident in England to vote in local elections.

Daisy Cooper: [\[135419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing legislative proposals to enable Ukrainian citizens who arrived in the UK on a Homes for Ukraine or Ukraine Family Scheme visa to vote in (a) general and (b) local elections in England.

Lee Rowley:

The *Representation of People Act 1983* and subsequent legislation set out which non-UK nationals' resident in the UK can participate in our Parliamentary and Local elections.

Local Plans: Green Belt**Daisy Cooper:** [\[135421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Written Ministerial Statement entitled Update on the Levelling Up Bill, HCWS415, published on 6 December 2022, whether local authorities which are developing a draft local plan are able to exclude sites submitted by landowners, developers, agents and site promoters which are located on green belt.

Daisy Cooper: [\[135422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Written Ministerial Statement of 6 December 2022, HCWS415, on Update on the Levelling Up Bill, what guidance his Department issues on whether the Planning Inspectorate can give substantial weight to that Statement when examining appeals of a refusal of permission for a development on green belt land in instances where there is not a currently adopted local plan and when housing need as calculated by the currently calculated housing targets cannot be demonstrably satisfied.

Felicity Buchan:

Due to the Secretary of State's role in the planning system, I cannot discuss the details of an individual Local Plan or comment on the acceptability or otherwise of individual sites. Nor can I comment on specific planning applications.

The proposals set out in the Written Ministerial Statement are now subject to public consultation, and are not at this time government policy. Any final policy changes will be confirmed once the National Planning Policy Framework is updated.

Veterans: Homelessness**Rachael Maskell:** [\[135291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department takes steps with Cabinet colleagues to help identify instances where local authorities have failed to prevent homelessness among veterans.

Rachael Maskell: [\[135347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to prevent local authorities from evicting veterans from temporary housing if permanent housing is unavailable.

Rachael Maskell: [\[135348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the performance of local authorities,

including City of York Council, in housing veterans and helping to prevent homelessness of veterans.

Felicity Buchan:

Levels of veteran homelessness are low - less than 1% of homeless households. Latest numbers for the City of York can be found within the quarterly data publication (Apr - June) available [here](#) (Table A3). This shows there were no households who had a support need due to service in the Armed Forces.

Veterans have a priority need for accommodation - which means the local authority must provide temporary accommodation until settled accommodation is secured. The Homelessness Code of Guidance, available [here](#), provides direction to local authorities on carrying out their functions, in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Our team of housing advisers continue to advise and challenge local authorities to improve homelessness services.

For 22/23 local authorities have been provided with £366million through the Homelessness Prevention Grant to meet their homelessness strategies, including support for homeless veterans. City of York Council received £392,145. In addition, this Government recently announced a further £8.55m to support the delivery of new veteran supported housing.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Conditions of Employment

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[136666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if they will take steps to (a) publish an equality impact assessment and (b) consult with trade unions when proposing new HR policies for their Department; and if they will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker:

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, by providing employees with Inclusion in the Civil Service training, and publishing guidance on the NIO intranet for employees to understand how and when to conduct an equality impact assessment.

There is no legal requirement to publish duty assessment documentation (often referred to as equality impact assessments).

However, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, S.75 screenings are routinely published on the Departments transparency pages.

The Northern Ireland Office always seeks to work with trade unions, through meaningful consultation and engagement to help inform decision making.

■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland**Stephen Farry:** [\[138007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer 26 January 2023 to Question 126873 on Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland, if he will list the (a) third sector organisations and (b) charities that he has held discussions with on New Deal funding for Northern Ireland.

Mr Steve Baker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has not held any discussions with third sector organisations or charities on New Deal for Northern Ireland funding.

The Secretary of State will make announcements in due course regarding the allocation of remaining New Deal for Northern Ireland funding.

■ Special Envoy to the United States on Northern Ireland**Ruth Jones:** [\[135420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he plans to appoint a Special Envoy to the United States of America on Northern Ireland.

Mr Steve Baker:

There is no plan to appoint a Special Envoy to the US on Northern Ireland at this time.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY**■ Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[139282\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, when staffing budget proposals for 2023-24 were presented to the board.

Sir Charles Walker:

The IPSA Board considered market benchmarking, data, and MP and staff representations at its meetings of 19 October 2022, 7 December 2022 and 14 December 2022.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Fuels****Henry Smith:** [\[135212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish an independent review of aviation sector evidence on the barriers, opportunities and conditions required for a competitive UK Sustainable Aviation Fuel industry.

Jesse Norman:

The Department commissioned an independent review, undertaken by Philip New, on the barriers to investment in sustainable aviation fuel in the UK and further measures industry or the Government might take. The Government will respond to the review in due course.

■ Bus Service Operators Grant**Iain Stewart:**[\[137828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to launch its consultation on reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department for Transport intends to publish the consultation on reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant later this year.

■ Bus Services: Standards**Alex Sobel:**[\[135486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he is taking steps to support local governments and combined authorities in holding bus companies to account for their service delivery.

Mr Richard Holden:

The National Bus Strategy, published in March 2021, set out the Government's vision for delivering better bus services for passengers across England. All local transport authorities (LTAs) have been asked to improve their bus services using the powers set out in the Transport Act 2000, to meet the requirements of the Strategy and qualify for government funding.

LTAs and bus operators must work together to improve punctuality, reliability, communications and overall passenger satisfaction via a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), delivering that plan either through a statutory Enhanced Partnership (EP) or franchised bus services.

BSIPs must include a mandatory passenger charter which provides all bus users with the right to expect certain standards of service on a consistent basis. In circumstances where standards are consistently missed, LTAs can refer the operator to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

My Department is working with the sector to develop a Bus Centre of Excellence which will provide guidance and support to LTAs and operators, to help deliver improved standards of service.

■ Cars: Exhaust Emissions**Munira Wilson:**[\[138430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to introduce a car scrappage scheme to support people switching to greener vehicles.

Munira Wilson:[\[138444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a car scrappage scheme in the South East to support residents in counties bordering Greater London to switch to greener vehicles following the Ultra Low Emission Zone expansion.

Jesse Norman:

The expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone across London is a matter for the devolved Greater London Authority. Any concerns about the adequacy of the Mayor of London's proposed scrappage scheme are matters for them.

Whilst the Government has no current plans for a national scrappage scheme, it already provides incentives for consumers and businesses to purchase and run zero emission vehicles, including lower tax rates for the cleanest vehicles, funding to support electric vehicle chargepoint installation and plug-in vehicle grants.

■ Charging Points: Stockport**Navendu Mishra:**[\[135460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has held discussions with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council in the last 12 months on increasing the number of electrical vehicle public charging points in Stockport.

Jesse Norman:

Last June, the Secretary of State for Transport wrote to local authorities, including Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, encouraging them to engage with the upcoming Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund and the existing On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme. Officials from the Department for Transport have since met with Stockport Council to discuss LEVI, which will provide councils in England with resource and capital funding to plan and deliver local charging infrastructure.

■ Customs: Ashford**Damian Green:**[\[137707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on fulfilling its commitments on environmental mitigations for the Sevington Inland Border Facility.

Mr Richard Holden:

My Department has already delivered biodiversity enhancements within the Inland Border Facility boundaries by implementing a landscaping scheme to achieve a positive biodiversity net gain as habitats mature.

The Department owns the adjacent land to the east of Sevington Inland Border Facility (IBF), known as Sevington East, and intends to use to further offset the environmental impact of the IBF development by creating a local biodiversity asset. Extended archaeological investigations have had an impact on the delivery of this.

Those investigations and the work on land formations have now concluded and plans are being updated to deliver the seeding and planting for the biodiversity scheme later this year.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure**

Gill Furniss:

[\[138344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his Answer of 26 January 2023 to Question 129918 on Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure, if he will provide a list of Local Authorities who have developed Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

Jesse Norman:

Active Travel England collected information about the status of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) in August 2022 as part of Local Authority capability self-assessments. 78 upper tier authorities confirmed that they have developed LCWIPs for some or all of their areas. A list of these authorities will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ **Department for Transport: Recruitment**

Christine Jardine:

[\[138346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department has spent on head-hunters in each of the last three years.

Jesse Norman:

Due to the financial reporting system in the department it is not possible to separate out spend associated with external recruitment consultancy services from all other consultancy spend for the majority of departmental recruitment.

■ **Department for Transport: Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992**

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[135311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

Jesse Norman:

Officials from the Department for Transport regularly engage with representatives of recognised trade unions, provide information to aid discussions and respond to requests for information in accordance with the legislative requirements.

■ **Driving Licences: Medical Examinations**

James Daly:

[\[135424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average time was for processing a drivers medical check by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in the latest period for

which data is available; and how many and what proportion of outstanding checks are waiting for third parties to provide medical information.

Mr Richard Holden:

The current average time to make a licensing decision in cases where the driving licence applicant has declared a medical condition is 81.18 working days. This figure includes new applications, notifications and renewals for both Group 1 (cars and motorcycles) and Group 2 (HGV and bus) drivers. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s business plan target is to make a licensing decision within 90 working days in 90 per cent of cases for applications received from October 2022.

On 31 January the DVLA was dealing with 139,238 driving licence applications where a medical condition must be investigated before a licence can be issued. In 78,124 of these cases, the DVLA is awaiting information from third parties (including NHS health care professionals or the customer themselves) before any further action can be taken.

The length of time taken to deal with an application depends on the medical condition(s) involved and whether further information is required before a decision on whether to issue a licence can be made. It is important to note that the majority of applicants renewing an existing licence will be able to continue driving while their application is being processed, providing they have not been told not to drive by a doctor or optician.

■ **Driving under Influence**

Alison McGovern:

[\[136601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will publish estimates of drink-drive collisions and casualties more frequently than once a year.

Mr Richard Holden:

There are no plans to increase the frequency of publication at this stage, though this will be reviewed based on any feedback from users of the statistics in future, in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

■ **East Coast Main Line and West Coast Main Line: Closures**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[138455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to hold discussions with Network Rail on the potential merits of ensuring that maintenance closures on the east and west coast mainlines are scheduled on different dates.

Huw Merriman:

Network Rail is committed to ensuring that at least one cross-border route is available for passenger and freight services at all times other than in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances. Where that is not possible, Network Rail sets out what steps are being taken to minimise disruption for passengers and freight services.

■ Euston Station: High Speed 2 Line

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[135384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions has he had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the planned London Euston terminus of the HS2 line.

Huw Merriman:

The Secretary of State for Transport has regular discussions with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on the Department's capital portfolio, including HS2.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[135385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it remains his Department's policy for HS2 to terminate at London Euston station.

Huw Merriman:

The Government remains committed to delivering HS2 from Euston to Manchester.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[135387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of whether the HS2 Euston terminus will be delivered (a) within budget and (b) on time.

Huw Merriman:

The Government remains committed to delivering HS2 from Euston to Manchester. Decisions on how the programme is phased and delivered will be announced at the appropriate time.

■ Floods: Stockport

Navendu Mishra: [\[136780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council on tackling flooding under the railway bridge on Crossley Road in Stockport.

Huw Merriman:

Local highway authorities have a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highways network in their area. It is up to Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council how best to fulfil its statutory duty. I understand that the Council is fully aware of the issue, has erected electronic warning signs for drivers and is seeking to address the underlying issues. In line with our broader approach to local government, the Government does not intervene in local decisions on these matters.

■ Flybe: Insolvency

Ruth Jones: [\[135407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Civil Aviation Authority on Flybe being placed in administration.

Jesse Norman:

The Department speaks to the Civil Aviation Authority regularly and have spoken to them multiple times over the last few days as they respond to the situation and provide advice to passengers to help them make their journeys as smoothly and affordably as possible. Whilst this is a commercial decision for the company, it is a challenging time for staff, and it is welcome news that airlines are keen to take on many of their staff.

Ruth Jones:[\[135409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Chief Executive of Belfast City Airport on taking steps to support employees at the airport who are affected by Flybe being placed in administration.

Jesse Norman:

In the early hours of the morning of Saturday 28 January, Flybe Limited ceased trading. This was a commercial decision by the board of the company. The Government recognises that this will be a difficult time for Flybe's passengers and staff. The immediate priority has been to support people travelling home and employees who have lost their jobs.

Aviation is a devolved matter. However, officials at the Department for Transport have contacted Belfast City Airport to discuss the impacts of the announcement and have also been in contact with the Northern Ireland Department for Communities (DfC), as they are responsible for jobseeker support and related services in Northern Ireland.

Ruth Jones:[\[135410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on Flybe being placed in administration.

Jesse Norman:

In the early hours of the morning of Saturday 28 January, Flybe Limited ceased trading. This was a commercial decision by the board of the company.

The Government recognises that this will be a difficult time for Flybe's passengers and staff. The immediate priority has been to support people travelling home and employees who have lost their jobs.

Aviation is broadly a devolved matter, although officials at the Department for Transport engage regularly with the Welsh Government on aviation policy. No discussions have taken place between the Department for Transport and the Welsh Government in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of Flybe, as the airline did not operate scheduled services in Wales.

■ High Speed 2 Line

Louise Haigh:

[\[138326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether they will conduct an updated assessment of the benefit-cost ratio of HS2, including an assessment of changing land use.

Huw Merriman:

The Government will continue to provide updated economic assessments of HS2 at key decision points for the programme, as it has done to date, most recently in January 2022 with the publication of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for Phase 2b Crewe-Manchester, subsequently updated in June 2022. The economic analysis in the SOBC provided analysis of a range of impacts, including the impact on land use, and an assessment of the benefit-cost ratio for the Phase 2b Western Leg and a combined appraisal of HS2 Phases 1, 2a and the 2b Western Leg.

Louise Haigh:

[\[138327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether pre qualification for HS2 Phase 2a main civil engineering works contract has been approved.

Huw Merriman:

The pre-qualification questionnaire for the HS2 Phase 2a main civil engineering works contract has been developed but has not yet been issued.

Louise Haigh:

[\[138328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when HS2 Phase 2a Design and Delivery Partner was (a) put out to tender and (b) whether it has been awarded.

Huw Merriman:

The Invitation to Tender for the HS2 Phase 2a Design and Delivery Partner was published on 13 January 2022. The contract has not yet been awarded.

■ Highway Code

Alison McGovern:

[\[136600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of the changes made to the Highway Code in January 2022.

Mr Richard Holden:

The changes to The Highway Code aim to improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.

The percentage of road users reporting to know either a little or a lot about the Highway Code changes increased from 36% in January 2022 to 58% in August 2022, with 83% of road users having heard of the changes by August.

■ Logistics: Vacancies**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[136589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the (a) number of vacancies and (b) level of skill shortages in each occupation within the logistics industry.

Mr Richard Holden:

The latest ONS data estimates vacancies in the Transport and Storage sector to be 47,000 between October-December 2022, down 15.3% on the previous quarter. We are taking forward initiatives to ensure the sector has the skills it needs, including the introduction of HGV skills bootcamps.

■ Public Transport: Standards**Sarah Olney:** [\[135468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to improve public transport in order to ensure a viable alternative means of transport to electric cars once petrol vehicles are banned after 2030.

Mr Richard Holden:

This department supports a range of choices in transport and expects to do so into the future.

■ Railways: Disability**Grahame Morris:** [\[138294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any heavy rail operators have a dispensation from compliance with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Requirements.

Huw Merriman:

The Secretary of State publishes an Annual Report to Parliament on the granting of exemptions and dispensations against accessibility standards. Reports are available from 2010 onwards and the most recent report can be found here, subsequent annual reports will be published shortly on the GOV.UK website.

Grahame Morris: [\[138330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many train carriages in use on the rail network do not meet the standards specified in the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Requirements.

Huw Merriman:

The Department does not maintain records of the number of vehicles in use on the rail network that do not meet modern accessibility standards.

All passenger vehicles that are in use by operators contracted by the Department for Transport are compliant with mandatory accessibility standards for new and upgraded rail vehicles.

■ Road Works

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[135292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has provided guidance to local authorities on whether companies are required to provide notice to local authorities when digging up pathways.

Mr Richard Holden:

Highway authorities have a duty to manage their networks effectively by co-ordinating works taking place on their roads under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Before planning to carry out works on the highway, which includes the footway, utility companies must seek permission (a permit) from the highway authority and agree how long the works will take. If they take longer than expected, the highway authority can levy penalty charges against the utility. The Government does provide statutory guidance on the operation of permit schemes:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/street-works-the-2007-permit-scheme-regulations-as-amended-in-2015

■ Shipping: Liberia

Alex Cunningham:

[\[138340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2023 to Question 133973 on Shipping: Liberia, if he will publish the Liberian Registry's notification to the Maritime Accident Investigation Branch.

Mr Richard Holden:

We will publish the notification in the House library.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[138341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2023 to Question 133973 on Shipping: Liberia, what powers a Substantially Interested State has to make recommendations to the Flag State under the Casualty Investigation Code.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Casualty Investigation Code does not directly provide a mechanism for a substantially interested State to make a formal recommendation to the marine safety investigating State. However, a substantially interested State is able to influence the investigation through cooperation; it must be given the opportunity to comment upon the final report; and its comments must be taken into consideration by the marine safety investigating State before the final report is published and a response provided.

TREASURY■ **Belarus: Sanctions****Siobhain McDonagh:**[\[135124\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle instances where businesses circumvent sanctions on Belarus; and if he will meet with the hon. Member for Mitcham and Morden to discuss this matter.

Siobhain McDonagh:[\[135125\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle instances where businesses circumvent sanctions on Belarus; and if he will meet with the hon. Member for Mitcham and Morden to discuss this matter.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC is responsible for enforcing trade sanctions and investigating potential breaches of those controls.

We use a range of enforcement options such as education, warning letters, issuing compound settlements, seizures, disruptions and in the most serious of cases, referral to the Crown Prosecution Service for consideration for prosecution.

We undertake a preliminary assessment into all credible intelligence/allegations of trade sanctions offences and work with other government departments and international partners to identify high-risk movements.

Any UK person or company that is in breach of trade sanctions potentially faces a heavy fine or imprisonment.

■ **Economic Situation: Equality****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[903536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent fiscal steps he has taken to help tackle regional economic inequalities.

John Glen:

The Treasury remains committed to tackling this country's geographical inequalities; the Chancellor recently outlined how spreading opportunity 'everywhere', including through devolution deals such as that recently announced with the North East, is crucial to long-term growth.

This Government has invested billions towards levelling up in this Parliament. Most recently, the Government announced the results of the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund's second round, and rolled out the £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

■ Environment Protection: Finance

Jim Shannon:

[\[137770\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the UK Government Green Financing Framework, published on 30 June 2021, to allow the proceeds of green bonds to finance nuclear energy projects.

Andrew Griffith:

As set out in the British Energy Security Strategy, nuclear energy is a key part of the UK's low-carbon energy mix alongside solar, wind and other energy sources. These technologies are important in tackling climate change and diversifying the UK's supply, contributing to the UK's energy security and sustainable growth.

We do not rule out the possibility that the Framework may be revised at some point in the future (for example to reflect changing standards in the green bond market or to include Nuclear energy profits) and, if so, we will be transparent about any revisions at that time.

■ Freeports: Economic Situation

Robin Millar:

[\[903535\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of freeports on the economy.

John Glen:

By encouraging investment in specific sites through a package of benefits and offering a business-friendly environment, Freeports will create high-skilled jobs and drive productivity. In turn, this will ensure sustainable economic growth and regeneration for communities that need it most. The economic impact of individual bids was an important factor in deciding successful freeport locations, and is further assessed through the business case process.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Priti Patel:

[\[136594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential economic merits of (a) freezing and (b) reducing fuel duty.

James Cartlidge:

In response to high fuel prices, the Government announced at Spring Statement 2022 a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre. This is the largest cash-terms cut across all fuel duty rates at once, ever, and is only the second time in 20 years that main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut. This represents a tax cut worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23, benefiting anyone who consumes fuel across the UK

The Government will confirm future policy on fuel duty in the Budget in the Spring, as has been the case in previous years.

■ Hospices: Energy**Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[138044\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide further support towards energy costs for the hospice sector in addition to the Energy Bill Discount Scheme.

James Cartlidge:

On January 9, the Government has announced a new Energy Bills Discount Scheme to provide eligible business, charities and the public sector, including eligible hospices with a discount on high energy bills for a further 12 months from April 23 until March 24. This will help those locked into contracts signed before recent substantial falls in the wholesale price manage their costs and provide others with reassurance against the risk of prices rising again.

The Government has been clear that the current levels of support through Energy Bills Relief Scheme, unprecedented in its nature and huge scale, were time-limited and intended as a bridge to allow organisations to adapt. The new scheme therefore strikes a balance between supporting businesses for a further 12 months, from April 2023 to March 2024, and limiting taxpayer's exposure to volatile energy markets.

■ Hospitals: Capital Investment**James Wild:**[\[903533\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on capital funding for the new hospitals programme.

John Glen:

I discuss a range of priorities on health with DHSC SoS, including delivery of the New Hospital Programme.

The programme was funded at Spending Review 2020 with £3.7bn for 4 years up to 2024/25.

Capital funding for the New Hospitals Programme beyond 2025 will be announced at the next Spending Review, as is standard practice.

■ Minimum Wage: Fines**Angela Rayner:**[\[135267\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers were served with penalties for not paying their staff the national minimum wage between 1 January and 31 December 2022.

Angela Rayner:[\[135269\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers were served with a Notice of Underpayment between 1 January and 31 December 2022.

Angela Rayner:[\[136645\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers were served with penalties for not paying their staff the national minimum wage in each year between 2010 and 2022.

Angela Rayner:[\[136647\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers were served with a Notice of Underpayment in each year between 2010 and 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it.

HMRC continues to crack down on employers who ignore the law, ensuring that workers receive the wages they are entitled to.

Data on the number of penalties issued by HMRC to employers in breach of National Minimum Wage (NMW) legislation is published routinely by financial years. Table 1 in the link below provides this data for each financial year between 2010/2011 – 2020/2021. The data for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 has not yet been published.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1074680/nlw-nmw-enforcement-compliance-statistics.xlsx

The numbers of Notices of Underpayment (NoUs) issued for each financial year between 2010/2011 – 2020/2021 is in the table below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF NOUS
2010/2011	1,140
2011/2012	968
2012/2013	736
2013/2014	680
2014/2015	735
2015/2016	862
2016/2017	888
2017/2018	836
2018/2019	1,049
2019/2020	1,031
2020/2021	610

Data covering the year 2022/2023 has not been finalised.

■ Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties**Sarah Olney:** [\[135469\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to take steps to cover the potential reduction in road tax receipts after the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles is banned in 2030.

James Cartlidge:

In his 2022 Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that from April 2025 electric cars, vans and motorcycles will begin to pay Vehicle Excise Duty (VED, also known as 'Road Tax') in the same way as petrol and diesel vehicles. The Government has made clear since 2020 that motoring taxes need to keep pace with the change to electric vehicles. With the electric vehicle transition accelerating, and with tough decisions to be made on tax to secure the public finances, it's right that all drivers will start to make a fair tax contribution.

As with all taxes, VED is kept under review and any changes are considered and announced by the Chancellor.

■ Multinational Companies: Taxation**Stephen Hammond:** [\[136517\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the calculations by which an estimate of £2.11bn of revenue in 2024-25 from implementation of the global minimum corporate tax reforms was arrived at.

Stephen Hammond: [\[136518\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what account was taken of potential behaviour change in estimating revenue arising from implementation of the global minimum corporate tax reforms.

Stephen Hammond: [\[136521\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many multinational enterprises with global revenues in excess of 750 million euros per annum conduct business activities in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

The number of Multinational Enterprises which have headquarters in the UK is 387. The latest information can be found in <https://www.oecd.org/tax/tax-policy/corporate-tax-statistics-fourth-edition.pdf>. The number of multinational enterprises which have operations in the UK, but are headquartered outside of the UK is 4,000.

The process for estimating the Exchequer yield from implementation of Pillar 2 policy in the UK can be found in the Autumn Budget 2022: Policy Costings, available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1118364/Autumn_Statement_2022_Policy_Costings_.pdf.

■ Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation

Pat McFadden: [\[132317\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many permissions for legal costs have been issued to sanctioned individuals by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation.

Pat McFadden: [\[132319\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many permissions for legal costs have been issued to Russian sanctioned individuals by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation.

Stephen Doughty: [\[134018\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many individuals designated under the UK sanctions regimes have been granted access to frozen assets to fund legal costs in each of the last five years; and what was the total value of asset use authorised.

Layla Moran: [\[134044\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications for licences the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation has received in each of the last five years.

Layla Moran: [\[134045\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation has issued licences for legal fees in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) publishes the number of financial sanctions licences issued in its Annual Review. Information about the total number of licences and the total number of legal fees licences that OFSI has granted for the last five financial years can be found in OFSI's Annual Review documents, which are publicly available on OFSI's website. OFSI will publish the latest figures in the next Annual Review in due course. OFSI does not publish details about individual licences granted, including source and quantum of funds licensed.

■ Tax Avoidance

Sarah Olney: [\[136718\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential number of people who could become bankrupt due to the Loan Charge and the use of section 684 discretion.

Jim Shannon: [\[137775\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of individuals who may be declared bankrupt in connection with the Loan Charge, including the use of section 684 notices.

Victoria Atkins:

No assessment has been made of the number of people who may be declared bankrupt as a result of debts arising from the use of a disguised remuneration avoidance scheme.

Where debts arise, HMRC are not always the only creditor. Some individuals are declared bankrupt as a result of a non-HMRC debt and some individuals may choose to enter insolvency themselves based on their overall financial position.

HMRC only ever considers insolvency as a last resort, and they encourage taxpayers to get in contact to agree the best way to settle their tax debts. To date, HMRC has not initiated insolvency proceedings against any taxpayer for a Loan Charge debt.

Anyone who is worried about being able to pay what they owe should contact HMRC, who may be able to agree an instalment arrangement based on the individuals' financial circumstances. There is no maximum length for these arrangements.

■ Tax Evasion**Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[136551\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether officials at his Department have had discussions with their counterparts at HMRC on the Department's policy for conducting compliance investigations of businesses' payrolls in the period since the outbreak of covid-19.

Mrs Pauline Latham:[\[136552\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that HMRC payroll compliance checks are (a) manageable and (b) proportionate for businesses.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC strive to ensure that all of the compliance checks carried out, including those on payroll compliance, are proportionate and manageable for those that we deal with. During a check, our officers will only request information and documents that are needed to check the customer's tax position. They work with the customer to ensure any deadline to provide information is reasonable and achievable, considering the size and nature of the request. HMRC officials regularly engage Treasury officials and Ministers on compliance strategy, approach and priorities.

■ Taxation: Stratford-on-Avon**Matt Western:**[\[135403\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people received a penalty from HMRC in Stratford-on-Avon constituency in 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

We cannot provide a response on behavioural penalties by constituency, as different types of entities (businesses, partnerships and individuals) can have addresses that differ from where the business takes place.

■ Treasury: Conditions of Employment

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[136660\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if they will take steps to (a) publish an equality impact assessment and (b) consult with trade unions when proposing new HR policies for their Department; and if they will make a statement.

James Cartlidge:

HMT has embedded procedures to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty relating to equality assessments for new and existing policies.

The Trade Unions are consulted when new HR policies are implemented.

■ Treasury: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

Emily Thornberry:

[\[133565\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January to Question 118869 on Treasury: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution, how many members of staff received training sessions as a result of the payments made to Rada Business of (a) £3,600 on 2 March 2021, (b) £3,600 on 15 March 2021 and (c) £7,200 on 17 March 2021.

James Cartlidge:

36 staff attended this course over four one-day workshops. RADA Business has provided training to HM Treasury for a number of years to support the development of staff.

WALES

■ Flybe: Insolvency

Ruth Jones:

[\[135408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential impact of Flybe being placed in administration on people in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales.

David T C Davies:

The Government acknowledges that this will be a difficult time for Flybe's passengers and staff. Our immediate priority has been to support people travelling home and employees who have lost their jobs. Flybe hasn't operated from Cardiff Airport since 2020 and we recognise the impact this has had on the airport in the years since.

Financial assistance to providers or air transport services is a devolved matter and therefore in the hands of the Welsh Government, although officials at the Department for Transport engage regularly with the Welsh Government on aviation policy.

With specific regard to Cardiff Airport, a robust strategy is urgently needed to ensure the sustainability of Cardiff Airport, having originally been bought by the Welsh Government for £52m in 2013 and has since (in 2021) been valued at just £15m.

This year marks a decade since the Welsh Government bought Cardiff Airport. We've seen warnings raised over the site's future sustainability and have seen major airlines – such as Wizz Air and Flybe – ceasing all operations at the site. There are no signs of improvement. Annual passenger numbers have fallen since the pandemic, down from 1.6 million in 2019 to 812,000 in the year to November 2022.

It's absolutely crucial that the Welsh Government publishes a comprehensive strategy to place the airport on a more sustainable footing, with a crucial aim of returning it to the commercial sector at the earliest opportunity. Doing so, I hope, would be of benefit to the people of Newport West, Wales and the rest of the UK.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Child Maintenance Service: Complaints

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[136866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of response times to complaints about the Child Maintenance Service.

Mims Davies:

We aim to contact customers within 15 working days to clear their complaint or agree how to investigate it if it will take longer.

DWP now triage complaints giving priority to vulnerable claimants who may be at risk, and those with benefit payment issues. We continue to investigate all complaints as quickly as we can and, as part of the triage process, we write or call those customers, hon. members where there may be a delay in answering their complaint.

Since 2021, Child Maintenance Service complaints team has seen their response times to complainants steadily improve and are now responding to almost all complaints within the timescale.

■ Child Maintenance Service: Finance

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[136865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding provided to the Child Maintenance Service's Financial Investigation Unit.

Mims Davies:

The Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) is allocated 2.36% of the Child Maintenance Service funding. The amount allocated to FIU is proportionate to the number of resources on the team.

■ Child Maintenance Service: Standards

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average amount of time is for a Child Maintenance Service case to be concluded once it has been referred to the Financial Investigation Unit.

Mims Davies:

Financial Investigations are average currently taking 23 weeks from allocation to completion by an investigator. Criminal cases will take significantly longer.

All timings will depend on the complexity of each individual case.

■ Children: Maintenance

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the enforcement powers of the Child Maintenance Service for ensuring that parents receive the money they are owed.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) continues to take rigorous action to collect maintenance, combining robust negotiation activity with the highly effective use of its extensive range of Enforcement Powers. This approach is driven by the Payment Compliance strategy increasing CMS compliance influencing activities to tackle non-paying cases and challenge non-compliant behaviours. CMS applies a Continuous Improvement focus to Enforcement strategy and processes.

The UK went into its first lockdown on the 23rd March 2020, its second on the 5th November 2020 and its third on the 6th January 2021. The Child Maintenance Service was affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and the resultant changes to the Department's operational priorities and staffing resources. CMS have worked in partnership with Courts and Enforcement Agents following the restrictions on Enforcement activity during this period to quickly return to normal operating practice and pursue non-compliant parents.

Total child maintenance collected using Enforcement Actions amounted to £36.1 million in the quarter to September 2022 compared with £33.8 in September 2021 and £28.4 in September 2020. This rise in collections is linked directly to increased collections through Deductions from Earnings Orders, lump sum and regular deductions taken directly from paying parents' bank accounts, Liability Order and Bailiff actions and making full use of all available sanctions.

(Source – Child Maintenance Service published Statistics : National Tables – table 7.1 'Enforcement Actions', April 2015 to September 2022).

As a result of a focussed effort to increase enforcement activity £49.4 million was paid through the Collect & Pay service in the quarter to June 2022 compared to the quarter ending December 2019 where £44.1 million was paid before the impact of the pandemic took effect.

(Source – Child Maintenance Service published Statistics : National Tables – table 5 ‘Money Due and Paid each quarter’ January 2015 to September 2022).

There has been a consistent downward trend in the proportion of unpaid maintenance as a proportion of maintenance arranged since 2017, falling from 12.5% in 2017 to 8.2% in September 2022.

(Source – Child Maintenance Service published Statistics : National Tables - table 6 ‘how much maintenance CMS has arranged March 2015 to September 2022).

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[136863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she is taking steps to minimise the financial impact of a failure to pay child maintenance on the receiving parent in the context of the cost-of-living crisis.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) continues to take rigorous action to collect maintenance, combining robust negotiation activity with the highly effective use of its extensive range of Enforcement Powers. This approach is driven by the Payment Compliance strategy increasing CMS compliance influencing activities to tackle non-paying cases and challenge non-compliant behaviours. CMS applies a Continuous Improvement focus to Enforcement strategy and processes.

Total child maintenance collected using Enforcement Actions amounted to £36.1 million in the quarter to September 2022 compared with £33.8 in September 2021 and £28.4 in September 2020.

(Source – Child Maintenance Service published Statistics : National Tables – table 7.1 ‘Enforcement Actions’, April 2015 to September 2022).

As a result of a focussed effort to increase enforcement activity £58.5 million was paid through the Collect & Pay service in the quarter ending September 2022 compared to £44.8 million in the quarter ending September 2020.

(Source – Child Maintenance Service published Statistics: National Tables – table 6 ‘How much maintenance the Child Maintenance Service has arranged’ January 2015 to September 2022).

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Complaints

David Linden:

[\[136809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's transparency data entitled Complaints about DWP: financial year 2021 to 2022, published on 17 May 2022, and Complaints about DWP: financial year 2022 to 2023, published on 31 January 2023, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the trend in the number of complaints received by his Department.

Mims Davies:

DWP has made significant improvements to the complaints services since 2021 moving to a single tier model, with the aim of simplifying the process and prioritising

vulnerable customers. We continually monitor complaints including the volumes and, where needed we have introduced further improvement including developing a consistent approach to complaints through new quality standards. We are committed to learning from complaints, using insight to support further improvements.

Complaint volumes were slightly lower in 2021-22, and whilst the data published on 31 January 2023 represents the first three quarters of 2022/23, volumes remain much lower than pre-pandemic levels. Overall volumes continue to represent less than 1% of the customer caseload.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Recruitment

Christine Jardine: [\[138347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on head-hunters in each of the last three years.

Mims Davies:

The following figures apply to Senior Civil Service Recruitment only, to note, this does not include digital recruitment.

2020/21: £190,627.84

2021/22: £211,054.00

2022/23 YTD: £171,608.46

These figures represent executive search activity spend on SCS (Deputy Director – Director General) recruitment for non-digital roles across these years.

■ Employment

Alison McGovern: [\[136603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's review on workforce participation will consider the role of unpaid carers.

Alison McGovern: [\[136604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's review into workforce participation will include the impact of childcare costs on participation in the workforce.

Alison McGovern: [\[136605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's review of workforce participation will consider the role of public transport.

Alison McGovern: [\[137807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's review on workforce participation will consider students.

Guy Opperman:

The Prime Minister has tasked the Secretary of State to look in detail at the issue of workforce participation, to identify and understand the barriers preventing people from joining the workforce or resulting in people leaving the workforce early.

The Department is working across government to identify and help address the causes of economic inactivity, building on the Government's existing package of support to help people start, stay and succeed in work.

■ Employment: Impact Assessments**Alison McGovern:**[\[133981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the capacity for the Employment Data Lab is to carry out evaluations on how many impact assessments are underway or planned.

Guy Opperman:

The Employment Data Lab have completed and published one evaluation to date.

Two more evaluations are underway, and the team are actively engaged in on-going discussions with a further eight organisations regarding participation.

■ Household Support Fund**Priti Patel:**[\[136596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to paragraph 5.12 of the Autumn Statement, published on 17 November 2022, when he plans to issue the (a) allocations to local authorities from and (b) guidance on the Household Support Fund; and if he will issue guidance on the use of these allocations by local authorities to support victims of domestic abuse and violence.

Mims Davies:

As outlined in the Autumn Statement, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year.

This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion.

In England, this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which will help those most in need with the cost of essentials.

The guidance, details and individual Local Authority allocations for this forthcoming extension will be announced in due course before the scheme begins on 1 April 2023.

■ Jobcentres

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[135299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2023 to Question 122461 on Jobcentres, if he will publish the same data for each of the last five years.

Guy Opperman:

That is not possible as the UC service was not mature enough to have reliable data that could support this view across all 7 Operational areas.

■ Labelling: Packaging

Geraint Davies:

[\[138258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to include (a) endocrine disruptors, (b) persistent, mobile and toxic (PMT) substances, (c) very persistent, very mobile (vPvM) substances, (d) persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) substances and (e) very persistent, very bioaccumulative (vPvB) substances within regulations on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.

Geraint Davies:

[\[138259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what position the Government is taking in the United Nations Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals on EU proposals for new hazard classes for (a) endocrine disruptors, persistent, mobile and toxic and very persistent, very mobile substances and (b) persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic and very persistent, very bioaccumulative substances.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has lead responsibility across Government for classification and labelling of chemicals, including the implementation of the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of classification and labelling of chemicals (UN GHS) into domestic chemicals regulation. In Great Britain (GB), this is the GB Classification Labelling and Packaging Regulation (known as the GB CLP Regulation).

At the December meeting of the UN GHS, the formulation of a new informal working group 'potential hazard issues' was agreed. This group will consider the most appropriate way to take forward the EU's proposed new 'hazard classes' on endocrine disruptors (EDCs), persistent, mobile and toxic (PMT) and very persistent, very mobile substances (vPvM) and persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) and very persistent, very bioaccumulative substances (vPvB) at the UN GHS level. It is likely this work will take several years to resolve and will need to involve scientific experts from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to ensure the most relevant and up-to-date science is considered in the development of any criteria for classification at the UN GHS.

The UK attended the inaugural meeting of this working group and will continue to be involved, working cooperatively with other delegations in GHS to move towards a consensus position. In order to respond appropriately and engage fully within this working group, HSE will consult with a range of policy and technical experts, from both within HSE and a number of other UK government departments and agencies, to assist in the development of UK views on the issues as they are raised at the UN GHS forum. There are no plans to establish additional hazard classes in the GB CLP Regulation without consensus at the UN GHS.

■ Local Housing Allowance: York

Rachael Maskell:

[\[135284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of the level of Local Housing Allowance during the cost of living for recipients of that benefit in York.

Mims Davies:

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were raised to the 30th percentile of local market rents, a significant investment of almost £1 billion, we have maintained the increase since then so that everyone who benefited from the increase continues to do so. LHA rates are not intended to cover all rents in all areas.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available for those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs. Since 2011 we have provided nearly £1.6 billion in funding to local authorities for DHPs.

We recognise that rents are increasing but the challenging fiscal environment means that difficult decisions were necessary to ensure support is targeted effectively.

The Government announced substantial cost of living support for 2023/24 in the Autumn Statement to help low income households. This included Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable, meaning around 8 million households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to a further £900 in Payments in 2023/24. The benefit cap will also be uprated by 10.1% in 2023-24.

In addition, to protect the most vulnerable, working-age and disability benefits will be increased in line with inflation for 2023-24.

The Government is extending the Household Support Fund (HSF) providing an additional £1bn to help with the cost of household essentials, for the 2023-24 financial year, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding for this support to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the HSF backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

■ Pension Credit

Matt Rodda: [\[135374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information his Department holds on the number of people (a) eligible for and (b) claiming Pensions Credit as of 30 January 2023; and if he will publish this information.

Laura Trott:

The latest estimates for Pension Credit take-up in a financial year are available in the "Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up" publication, which can be accessed on the statistics section of gov.uk:

[Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2019-to-2020)

The latest available data for those claiming Pension Credit relates to May 2022. As of May 2022, the Pension Credit caseload was 1,369,990.

Matt Rodda: [\[135375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of those eligible for Pension Credit in each region were claiming it in the most recent period for which data are available.

Laura Trott:

Estimates for Pension Credit take-up in a financial year are only available at the Great Britain level and are available in the "Income-related benefits: estimates or take-up" publication, which can be accessed on the statistics section of gov.uk. The latest publication relates to the financial year 2019 to 2020.

[Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2019-to-2020)

Matt Rodda: [\[135376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to publish statistics on Pensions Credit uptake for the financial years (a) 2020-21, (b) 2021-22 and (c) 2022-23.

Laura Trott:

In March we will publish the Family Resource Survey for 2021/22. Following this, work will begin to assess whether the data can produce new take-up estimates. In line with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics I will provide an update at this stage. 2022/23 take up will be published as normal in Autumn 2024. Due to the impacts of the pandemic it will not be possible to publish estimates for 2020/21.

Matt Rodda: [\[135439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data his Department holds on Pension Credit uptake by age.

Laura Trott:

The estimates for Pension Credit take-up 2019 to 2020 can be found on the statistics section of gov.uk. [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2019-to-2020)

■ **Shipping: Liberia****Alex Cunningham:**[\[138342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has had discussions with the Health and Safety Executive on the suspected fatality of a UK resident worker employed on the Liberian registered Valaris vessel in the UK Continental Shelf on 22 January 2023; and if he will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

HSE and other regulatory bodies are providing support to Police Scotland's enquiries. As this is an ongoing investigation the department is unable to respond.

■ **Social Security Benefits****Hywel Williams:**[\[138310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of social security benefit rates.

Guy Opperman:

The Government has brought forward legislation to raise State Pensions and benefits by 10.1% which the House of Commons passed on 6 February.

■ **Universal Credit****David Linden:**[\[135446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and proportion of claimants who were placed in the Intensive Work Search group as a direct result of the changes made in the Universal Credit (Administrative Earnings Threshold) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 were then moved from this group because of an increase in earnings which took them over the Administrative Earnings Threshold between 26 September 2022 and 29 January 2023.

David Linden:[\[135447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of claimants who were placed in the Intensive Work Search group between 26 September 2022 and 29 January 2023 as a direct result of the changes made in the Universal Credit (Administrative Earnings Threshold) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 experienced a reduction in average earnings.

Guy Opperman:

Data for the period stated is not available.

David Linden:[\[135449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what feedback his Department sought between 26 September 2022 and 29 January 2023 from Work Coaches on the practical impact of the Universal Credit (Administrative Earnings Threshold) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 on claimants.

Guy Opperman:

The Department is always working with Work Coaches and JCP local area managers on any change. It is too early for us to evaluate the impact on claimants at this stage.

Matt Western:[\[138378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the flexibility of the eligibility requirement for Universal Credit for Ukrainian refugees who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and are continuing their studies remotely.

Mims Davies:

The core objective of Universal Credit is to support claimants to enter work, earn more or prepare for work in the future, therefore full time students are not usually eligible to claim Universal Credit. There are some exceptions where students may be eligible for Universal Credit such as where they are responsible for a child or are enrolled on a part time course and are seeking employment. Whilst the Department for Work and Pensions has provided immediate access to Universal Credit and jobs support for those arriving in the UK from Ukraine because of the Russian invasion, individuals must still meet the eligibility criteria, in order to receive Universal Credit and other Social Security benefits.

■ Universal Credit: Childcare**Nick Fletcher:**[\[136795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Universal Credit claimants received childcare support in the latest year for which data is available.

Guy Opperman:

Statistics on the number of households in receipt of Universal Credit are published every three months. The latest statistics are available by the number of households who either receive or do not receive the childcare element, to August 2022, on [Stat-Xplore](#).

■ Universal Credit: Young People**David Linden:**[\[133686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January to Question 126631 on Universal Credit: Young People, what proportion of Universal Credit claimants under the age of 25 lived independently in the most recent period in which data is available.

Guy Opperman:

The latest available statistics show, in August 2022, there were around 170,000 single under 25 year olds on Universal Credit in payment and entitled to the housing element indicating they pay their own rent and do not live with family members or as a couple.

■ Workplace Pensions: EU Law**Matt Rodda:****[135372]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, what estimate his Department has made of the number of laws that will be need to be reviewed relating to workplace pensions.

Laura Trott:

A public facing dashboard lists all legislation that falls within the scope of the Retained EU law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, including for my department. This dashboard will be updated on a quarterly basis and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/retained-eu-law-dashboard>

Matt Rodda:**[135373]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill on existing case law relating to workplace pensions.

Laura Trott:

We are considering how best to seamlessly implement the measures in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill whilst minimising the impact on the pension industry and members of occupational pension schemes.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Hove

Ian Byrne:

[132556]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to recent reports of the abduction of unaccompanied children from a Home Office residence in Hove, what training was provided to security staff contracted by her Department to manage the security of those children.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 31 January 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Robert Jenrick:

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, extremely seriously. The wellbeing of children is our number one priority and our accommodation providers are required to ensure accommodation is safe and in line with contractual requirements.

It is also not true to say that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are being kidnapped from Home Office hotels. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are not detained and are free to leave the accommodation. They may choose to leave for a number of reasons, such as visiting family.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to protect all children, regardless of where they go missing from. This can be from home or from a care setting as a looked-after child.

Home Office Safeguarding Hub works closely with accommodation providers to ensure early identification of vulnerabilities, where issues are not disclosed by customers, and onward referral to the statutory agencies of health, police, and social services. Asylum seekers have full access to the advisory services provided by Migrant Help who are available to contact 24/7. Contracted security staff within UASC hotels complete comprehensive training.

We take the safety and welfare of those in our care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, extremely seriously.

Contracted security staff within UASC hotels complete comprehensive training.

The wellbeing of children is our number one priority and our accommodation providers are required to ensure accommodation is safe and in line with contractual requirements.

Home Office Safeguarding Hub works closely with accommodation providers to ensure early identification of vulnerabilities, where issues are not disclosed by customers, and onward referral to the statutory agencies of health, police, and social services.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Review of the Computer Misuse Act 1990

The Minister of State for Security (Tom Tugendhat): [\[HCWS546\]](#)

The Government is reviewing the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (CMA / the Act) and this statement provides an update on the progress of the review.

It is essential that the UK has the right legislative framework to allow us to tackle the harms posed to our citizens, businesses and government services online. As part of this, we initiated a review of the CMA, and following a Call for Information on the CMA, we have been considering the proposals made in response. A number of proposals were put forward, both for changes to the Act itself, and for additional powers to allow law enforcement agencies to more effectively tackle the offences covered by the Act.

We will issue a formal consultation today to seek views on a number of proposals made during the consultation, including:

- Considering the development of a new power to allow law enforcement agencies to take control of domains and internet protocol (IP) addresses where these are being used by criminals to support a wide range of criminality, including fraud and CMA offences.
- Developing a power to require the preservation of computer data, ahead of its seizure, to prevent it being deleted where it may be needed for an investigation. While requests from law enforcement agencies for preservation are generally met, the UK does not have an explicit power to require such preservation, and having such a power would make the legal position clear.
- Considering whether a power to take action against a person possessing or using data obtained by another person through a CMA offence, such as through accessing a computer system to obtain personal data, would be of benefit, subject to appropriate safeguards being in place. Currently, the CMA covers unauthorised access to computer, but the unauthorised taking or copying of data is not covered by the Theft Act so it is difficult to take action in these cases.

In addition, a number of other issues were raised during the Call for Information, relating to the levels of sentencing, statutory defences to the CMA offences, improvements to the ability to report vulnerabilities, and whether the UK has sufficient legislation to cover extra-territorial threats. As part of our work to improve the cybersecurity of the UK, we will work with a wide range of stakeholders with a policy interest in these areas, to ensure that any proposals that we take forward will deliver enhanced protection of the UK in cyberspace.

A copy of this consultation will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and published on GOV.UK.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Update on Government Business****Prime Minister (Rishi Sunak):**[\[HCWS547\]](#)

To ensure the whole of government is geared up to deliver for the British people, with the approval of His Majesty The King, I have today created four new departments.

The changes will ensure the right skills and teams are focused on my five priorities: to halve inflation, grow the economy, reduce debt, cut waiting lists and stop the boats.

A new Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has been tasked with securing our long-term energy supply, bringing down bills and halving inflation. The move recognises the significant impact rising prices have had on households across the country as a result of Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, and the need to secure more energy from domestic nuclear and renewable sources as we seize the opportunities of net zero.

A dedicated Department for Science, Innovation and Technology will drive the innovation that will deliver improved public services, create new and better-paid jobs and grow the economy. Having a single department focused on turning scientific and technical innovations into practical, applicable solutions to the challenges we face will help make sure the UK is the most innovative economy in the world.

A combined Department for Business and Trade will support growth by backing British businesses at home and abroad, promoting investment and championing free trade.

A re-focused Department for Culture, Media and Sport will recognise the importance of these industries to our economy and build on the UK's position as a global leader in the creative arts.

Finally, and as part of these changes, responsibility for National Security and Investment policy, and the associated teams, will move from what was the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to sit under the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Cabinet Office.

These Machinery of Government changes will be included in Main Estimates 2023-24 in order to reallocate the relevant budgetary provision and other spending authority. The Accounting Officers in the transferring departments will continue to have formal responsibility for the transferred functions up until the point at which the Supply Estimate and related legislation is approved. Ahead of this time responsibilities will be agreed in the usual way through the exchange of Accounting Officer letters.

An explanatory note providing detail on each of these changes has been placed in the Library of both Houses and published on gov.uk.