



## Daily Report

Friday, 24 March 2023

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 March 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:37 P.M., 24 March 2023). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS AND TRADE

#### ■ British Patient Capital

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[167106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what discussions she has had with (a) British Patient Capital and (b) The Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on the investment of British Patient Capital in the five critical technologies identified in the Science and Technology Framework.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

There are regular discussions between relevant ministers, officials and British Patient Capital (BPC) on supporting research and development (R&D)-intensive companies, including those in the five technologies identified in the Science and Technology Framework. BPC's Core programme disproportionately supports R&D-intensive companies. 11% of firms receiving BPC-backed investment are academic spinouts, compared to 2% of all equity-backed companies. 92% of companies surveyed for an external evaluation of BPC used the investment they received to fund R&D activities. BPC's Future Fund: Breakthrough programme has directly invested £101m into fifteen companies. At Spring Budget 2023, it was announced that BPC would increase its focus on R&D-intensive industries.

#### ■ Conditions of Employment and Environment Protection

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[169361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a human rights and environmental due diligence law to increase protection for (a) environmental and (b) workers' rights.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government both encourages and supports the mostly voluntary, business-led, approach to due diligence; as set out in international frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises. Additionally, the Environment Act has introduced world-leading due diligence legislation, in order to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Cabinet Office: Procurement**

**Angela Rayner:** [\[157643\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many suppliers the Department excluded from procurement on the grounds of (a) fraud, (b) corruption and (c) any other grounds under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 between 2015 and 2022.

**Alex Burghart:**

*[Holding answer 8 March 2023]:* The information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. To obtain the information a manual search through individual records would be required as this is not recorded centrally on departmental systems.

The grounds for the exclusion of bidders from public procurement procedures are set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These rules set out the circumstances in which bidders must, or may, be excluded from a public procurement process.

The Procurement Bill brought forward by this Conservative Government, currently being considered by Parliament, expands the scope of misconduct which can lead to exclusion. We are also increasing the time period within which misconduct can lead to exclusion from 3 years to 5; bringing subsidiary companies into scope of exclusion; and making the rules clearer so that contracting authorities can undertake exclusions with more confidence

**■ Emergencies: Planning**

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[170749\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the UK Government Resilience Framework, published on 19 December 2022, what his planned timetable is for delivering the UK Resilience Academy.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK Resilience Academy is set to be launched for all those with a role in resilience by 2025. Planning began in early 2023 with Departments, Devolved Administrations, national colleges, academia, and local resilience stakeholders to inform the scope of the Academy.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[170750\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the UK Government Resilience Framework, published on 19 December 2022, what estimate he has made of when a new Head of Resilience will be appointed.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Framework committed the Government to appointing a Head of Resilience to provide systematic leadership of the Government's programme to strengthen national resilience. The current role of the Resilience Director in the Cabinet Office will evolve into the Head of Resilience role. We are currently undertaking a review of

responsibilities and accountabilities across Lead Government Departments, which includes detailed consideration of the role of the Head of Resilience.

**Fleur Anderson:**[\[170751\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the UK National Resilience Framework, published on 19 December 2022, when he plans to make the first annual statement to Parliament on civil contingencies risk and the UK Government's performance on resilience.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As set out in the action plan for implementation, the annual statement on resilience will be established by 2025, although our intention is to make a first statement within the next year.

**Fleur Anderson:**[\[170753\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the UK Government Resilience Framework, published on 19 December 2022, on what date the National Security Council sub-committee on resilience plans to hold its first meeting.

**Jeremy Quin:**

My colleague, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, confirmed in the House last week that he has now chaired the first meeting of the National Security Council (Resilience).

**■ Emergencies: Warnings****Fleur Anderson:**[\[170748\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to ensure that Emergency Alerts reach people who (a) are digitally excluded and (b) do not have smart phones.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The emergency alerts system is an additional tool that supplements the Government's warning and informing systems for use in emergencies. Alerts work on all 4G and 5G phone networks in the UK. Those without a compatible device would still be informed about an emergency through other accessible channels including television, radio and print media. Any live emergency alerts will also be uploaded to view on the [www.gov.uk/alerts](http://www.gov.uk/alerts) webpage.

Emergency alerts do not replace any other form of warning tools available to the government. They are an additional tool in our national resilience toolbox to keep the public safe.

**■ Emigration****Margaret Ferrier:** [167144]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an estimate of the number of UK citizens that emigrated to (a) Australia, (b) New Zealand, (c) the US and (d) Canada in the last 12 months.

**Alex Burghart:**

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 16 March is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. [ONS Response](#) [PQ167144HR.pdf]

**■ G20 and G7: Departmental Responsibilities****Darren Jones:** [168091]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Department has overall responsibility for the UK Government's representation at the G7 and G20.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Ministers across HM Government represent the UK at G7 and G20 ministerial meetings, in line with relevant areas of policy responsibility. The Prime Minister represents the UK at the G7 and G20 Summits, preparation for which is led by the Cabinet Office with the support of other relevant Departments.

**■ Government Departments: Contracts****Angela Rayner:** [162190]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has any record of public contracts being awarded to suppliers on the UK Sanctions List between 1 January 2021 and 31 January 2023.

**Alex Burghart:**

*[Holding answer 13 March 2023]:* Details of all suppliers excluded from the procurement process are included in the Contract Award Report, which is approved and signed off by Cabinet Office Commercial. No central record of these exclusions is held by the Cabinet Office, and in order to confirm the details of suppliers excluded from any procurement would mean checking each Contract Award Report approved and signed off between 1 January 2021 and 31 January 2023.

The UK imposes a range of sanctions against individuals or organisations that pose a threat to our country or its interests. Alongside procurement exclusions, these include asset freezes, travel bans, trade sanctions and transport sanctions.

**Pensioners: Employment****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[170609\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of people above State Pension Age who have returned to employment after having previously retired since November 2021.

**Alex Burghart:**

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

A response to the Hon gentlemen's Parliamentary Question of 21/03 is attached

**Attachments:**

1. [ONS response](#) [PQ170609 (1).pdf]

**Public Sector: Contracts****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[167137\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) private companies and (b) community and voluntary sector organisations are contracted to provide public services.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[167138\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people are employed by (a) private companies and (b) community and voluntary sector organisations contracted to deliver public services.

**Alex Burghart:**

This information is not held centrally

Details of Government contracts above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

**Public Sector: Staff****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[167139\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff have transferred to contractors under TUPE regulations since 2010.

**Alex Burghart:**

Information on the number of individuals that have transferred under TUPE regulations to an organisation under contract with the Cabinet Office is not held.

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****BBC Radio: Local Broadcasting****Rachael Maskell:**[\[167168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the BBC on extending local content on BBC Local Radio.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government recognises the important role that the BBC's local radio services play in terms of the provision of local news and information, and of community engagement in the local area.

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the Government as set out in its Royal Charter, and decisions on service delivery are a matter for the BBC.

However, we are disappointed that the BBC is planning to reduce parts of its local radio output. In the Department's regular conversations with the BBC, we have been clear that it must make sure it continues to provide distinctive and genuinely local radio services, with content that reflects and represents people and communities from all corners of the UK.

The Government also expects Ofcom, as regulator of the BBC, to ensure the BBC is robustly held to account in delivering its public service duties. The Government has already asked Ofcom about how they are considering this issue, and Ofcom has now set out its assessment of the market impact of the BBC's proposals. I understand that Ofcom is continuing discussions with the BBC on the impact of its proposals on audiences.

**■ British Film Institute: Expenditure****Mike Kane:**[\[165292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how much the British Film Institute has spent in each region in each of the last three years.

**Julia Lopez:**

At the heart of the British Film Institute's ten year strategy, Screen Culture 2033, is a core principle for the work of the BFI to reach across the UK, so that everyone across the regions and all four nations can experience, create and benefit from screen culture.

The below table has been extracted from [data](#) that government publishes on identifiable expenditure in the regions and nations of the UK.

It shows all expenditure in 2021/22 prices, to provide a more accurate picture accounting for inflation.

**BFI Country and Region Spend 2019-2022; 2021-22 prices**

COUNTRY/REGION	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	TOTAL
Scotland	£1,629,000	£2,132,000	£2,049,000	£5,810,000
Wales	£971,000	£1,271,000	£1,108,000	£3,350,000
Northern Ireland	£5,076,000	£5,029,000	£6,565,000	£16,670,000
England - North East	£802,000	£1,284,000	£889,000	£2,975,000

COUNTRY/REGION	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	TOTAL
England - North West	£2,234,000	£4,162,000	£2,675,000	£9,071,000
England - Yorkshire and the Humber	£1,730,000	£5,147,000	£2,706,000	£9,583,000
England - East Midlands	£1,560,000	£6,522,000	£1,727,000	£9,809,000
England - West Midlands	£1,959,000	£4,380,000	£2,454,000	£8,793,000
England - East	£6,200,000	£15,438,000	£6,944,000	£28,582,000
England - London	£10,155,000	£21,422,000	£13,668,000	£45,245,000
England - South East	£3,607,000	£7,781,000	£5,365,000	£16,840,000
England - South West	£1,793,000	£6,181,000	£2,633,000	£10,607,000
Outside UK	£971,000	£1,330,000	£1,006,000	£3,307,000
Total	£38,687,000	£82,169,000	£49,786,000	£170,642,000

Whilst BFI spending in London and the South East accounts for almost 36% of its total spending over 2019-22, this is due in part to the relatively high proportion of the industry based in London and the South East (70%) and also, due to the established method of recording awards based on applicant postcode, does not capture the broader outputs and widespread impact of organisations based in London and the South East but delivering on a regional or UK-wide basis.

For example, BFI National Lottery distribution awards - such as the award which supported *Parasite* to reach 1.6 million people across the UK - are used to give audiences everywhere the chance to enjoy the widest possible range of films; overall, titles supported by distribution awards have generated 4.5 million admissions across every corner of the UK over the course of 2017-2022. The Light Cinema Co. received £3 million from the Culture Recovery Fund and, whilst its head office is in London, the award was used to support its 10 cinemas, 7 of which are in the North of England. And 'Into Film', a London-based organisation who received £24 million from the BFI over 2017-2022, used this funding to deliver Film Clubs in UK schools, reaching in the last year alone more than 3 million children at over 6,500 schools across the UK. Through its National Lottery Funding Plan, the BFI will be devolving even more funding to organisations across the regions and nations through its National Lottery

Skills Clusters Fund, which will invest £9 million in 6-7 clusters across the UK to lead on skills and training in their area, making sure people from a wide range of places have the opportunity to get into the industry. The BFI also funds a network of organisations across the UK - including in Nottingham, Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester - to lead audience and talent development work in their respective regions and nations, with £15.2 million to be awarded to 11 partner organisations over the next three years.

## ■ Civil Society: Government Assistance

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[170569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how she intends to target her Department's package of support for charities and community organisations in England, as announced in the Budget on 15 March 2023.

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[170570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what timeframe she expects to deliver his Department's package of support for charities and community organisations in England, as announced in the Budget on 15 March 2023.

**Stuart Andrew:**

As announced in the recent Spring Budget, the Government will provide over £100 million of support for charities and community organisations in England. This will be targeted towards those organisations most at risk, due to increased demand from vulnerable groups and higher delivery costs, as well as providing investment in energy efficiency.

Work is underway to finalise the delivery time frame and eligibility criteria. Further details will be announced as soon as possible.

## ■ Football: Sportsgrounds

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[167103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she is taking steps to increase the transparency of football club investigations into fan safety; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of mandating the publication of investigation recommendations such as that regarding the match between Sheffield Wednesday and Newcastle United on 7 January 2023.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The safety of spectators at sporting events is of the highest importance to His Majesty's Government and we will continue to work closely with all relevant authorities to ensure that football fans can continue to enjoy the sport whilst attending matches safely.

Local authorities issue safety certificates for relevant football stadia within their boundaries, and are responsible for local engagement and assessment. Sheffield City Council convened a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meeting following the

concerns raised by Newcastle United supporters who attended the FA Cup third round tie at Hillsborough Stadium on 7th January 2023. The minutes from the SAG meeting have been published and Sheffield City Council have taken action to address the safety concerns that were raised.

## ■ Music Venues: Finance

**Bill Esterson:**

[[170582](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential benefits of a ticket levy on large music events and arenas to support grassroots music.

**Bill Esterson:**

[[170583](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make it her policy to extend social investment tax relief to grassroots music venues.

**Julia Lopez:**

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

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport 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 the recent Energy Bills Support Scheme.

We will continue to engage with the sector on the impact of current pressures. As part of this engagement, Minister Lopez is meeting Music Venues Trust shortly to discuss issues facing the live music sector, and how to support growth of the music sector and wider Creative Industries.

The Creative Industries have been identified by this Government as a priority growth sector. We will shortly be publishing a Creative Industries Sector Vision that will set out our 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.

## ■ Radio: Music

**Lee Anderson:**

[[167236](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing age restrictions on music played by radio stations.

**Julia Lopez:**

There are rules in place to protect [under-eighteens](#) in relation to programme scheduling and content, as well as to protect the public generally in relation to [harmful and / or offensive material](#). These are set out in the [Broadcasting Code](#),

which is published by Ofcom in its role as the independent regulator with responsibility for broadcast content and standards. Ofcom also publishes [guidance to broadcasters](#) in relation to offensive language, including with regard to lyrics in music tracks, and takes enforcement action, where appropriate, to deal with breaches.

The Government has no plans to introduce additional regulatory burdens on radio stations.

## DEFENCE

### ■ A400M Aircraft: Parachuting

**John Healey:**

[\[170545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March to Question 163729 on A400M Aircraft: Parachuting, what estimate he has made of the number of Atlas A400M aircraft that will receive first clearance for low-level parachuting in April 2023.

**John Healey:**

[\[170546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March to Question 163729 on A400M Aircraft: Parachuting, what estimate he has made of when all Atlas A400M aircraft will receive clearance for low-level parachuting.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Atlas (A400M) fleet of aircraft is planned to receive first clearance for low-level parachuting in April 2023 with full low-level parachuting clearances in place in early 2024. Clearances will be given for the entire Atlas (A400M) fleet rather than for individual aircraft.

### ■ Ammunition: Production

**John Healey:**

[\[168009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to help increase the production of 155mm ammunition in the UK.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I have him on 3 March 2023 to questions 155014 and 155015.

**Attachments:**

1. [Ammunition Production](#) [155014 Ammunition Production.docx]

### ■ AUKUS: Nuclear Reactors

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[170742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where the nuclear reactors for the SSN-AUKUS submarines will be built.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[170743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the document entitled Fact sheet: Trilateral Australia-UK-US Partnership on nuclear-powered submarines, updated on 13 March 2023, which elements of the SSN-AUKUS will be built (a) at the Barrow Shipyard and (b) elsewhere in the UK.

**Alex Chalk:**

All the UK's SSN-AUKUS hulls will be built at the Barrow shipyard, and all the nuclear reactors for the UK and Australian SSN-AUKUS submarines will be made in the UK by Rolls Royce in Derby. This arrangement will create thousands of jobs, particularly in Barrow-in-Furness - the home of British submarine building.

**■ Cyprus: Military Bases****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[158810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to commission an official standard for the sovereign territories of Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

**James Heappey:**

I can confirm that there are no plans to commission an official standard for the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia at this time.

**■ David Carrick****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[170747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether allegations were made against David Carrick for violence against women during his service in the army.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

We are not aware of any complaints having been reported against David Carrick during his Army service.

**■ F-35 Aircraft****Luke Pollard:**[\[170729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any F-35 jets have been affected by harmonic resonance issues with their engines; and what steps he is taking to resolve these engine issues.

**Alex Chalk:**

No aircraft from the UK's operational F-35 Lightning fleet have been identified as being at risk of experiencing harmonic resonance, but a small number of aircraft in production for the UK were identified.

In early March 2023, the F-35 Joint Program Office authorised a modification to mitigate the harmonic resonance issue. This has been fitted to the UK aircraft due to be delivered off the production line, and will be implemented across the entire UK fleet.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement****Angela Rayner:**[\[170631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many suppliers his Department has excluded from procurement on the grounds of (a) fraud, (b) corruption and (c) other grounds under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 from 2015 to 2022.

**Alex Chalk:**

As part of its standard procurement processes, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requires potential suppliers to confirm whether they have been convicted in the last five years of certain offences set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These include offences relating to fraud and corruption.

Since Financial Year 2015-16, the MOD has placed over 14,000 contracts, and decisions on exclusion are made case-by-case. Information on how many suppliers have been excluded from procurement is therefore not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**■ Ministry of Defence: TikTok****John Healey:**[\[169200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason his Department has kept its official Ministry of Defence TikTok account.

**John Healey:**[\[169201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the TikTok account for his Department is hosted on a Government device.

**John Healey:**[\[169202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the TikTok account for his Department utilises an official Departmental email address.

**John Healey:**[\[169203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what risk assessment took place prior to the decision by his Department to retain its TikTok account.

**Angela Rayner:**[\[170634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 167132 on Ministry of Defence: TikTok, which devices are being used to publish and monitor his Department's TikTok content; and what security measures are in place to prevent hacking and spyware on those devices.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) TikTok account has been implemented to communicate globally the ongoing efforts of the UK Armed Forces, including our work with nine partner nations, to train Ukrainian soldiers and prepare them for frontline combat.

To deliver our messages internationally we must leverage the largest digital platforms available to us with the most significant reach and scale. Defence communications needs to speak to both domestic and overseas audiences and as well as showcasing Defence events, our comms also form part of UK strategic messaging. TikTok is currently key to reaching vital overseas audiences.

Our TikTok channel showcases the amazing courage and determination of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to win the war and highlights the multilateral support for UK-led training of Ukrainian troops.

Whilst the benefits vs risk case is finely balanced, the MOD's secure publishing model and long-standing experience of digital communication channels management enable us to operate the channel safely.

Robust processes are in place to control publishing to social media from within the MOD. Communications on social media are delivered by separate systems through a small number of communications staff. TikTok communications, like all social media publishing, are delivered via third-party software and no Government (or personal) devices are being used to publish or monitor the platform directly. The MOD's secure publishing model means that no MOD staff are logged into TikTok using an official device.

## **Nuclear Reactors**

**John Healey:**

[\[169193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment has he made of the potential benefits to UK (a) defence and (b) industrial capability of utilising microreactor technologies for defence tasks.

**John Healey:**

[\[169194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has provided funding to the defence industry for the research and development of micro-reactor technology.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Defence is considering potential use cases for micro nuclear reactors in defence. There is obvious potential as both a low carbon, high density energy source and one that can offer new operational freedoms from a traditional fossil fuel supply chain. No Ministry of Defence funding has yet been allocated to defence industry for research and development of this technology.

## **Portsmouth Dockyard**

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[169446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) size in hectares and (b) Housing Unit Potential of HMNB Portsmouth is.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[169450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) size in hectares and (b) housing unit potential of Marchwood Military Port is.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[169452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) size in hectares and (b) housing unit potential of Britannia Royal Naval College is.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[169454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the (a) size in hectares and (b) housing unit potential of HMS Raleigh.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[169456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) size in hectares and (b) housing unit potential of RM Bickleigh is.

**Alex Chalk:**

HMNB Portsmouth is 119.438 hectares in size.

Marchwood Military Port is 92.724 hectares in size.

Britannia Royal Naval College is 67.355 hectares in size.

HMS Raleigh is 100.89 hectares in size.

RM Bickleigh is 24.555 hectares in size.

No assessment has been made of the Housing Unit Potential of these sites, as they have not been identified for disposal.

## ■ Sir John Moore Barracks

**John Healey:**[\[168016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) size in hectares and (b) housing unit potential is of the Sir John Moore Barracks in Shorncliffe.

**John Healey:**[\[168018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the (a) size in hectares and (b) Housing Unit Potential of Wainscott Barracks.

**John Healey:**[\[168020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the (a) size in hectares and (b) Housing Unit Potential of Keogh Barracks.

**Alex Chalk:**

Sir John Moore Barracks in Shorncliffe is 40.152 hectares in size.

Wainscott Barracks is 24.084 hectares in size.

Keogh Barracks is 46.263 hectares in size.

No assessment has been made of the Housing Unit Potential of these sites, as they have not been identified for disposal.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Academies: Admissions

**Chi Onwurah:**

[167101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2023 to Question 132392 on Admissions: Academies, whether her Department has provided (a) additional support and (b) guidance to local authorities to help them meet their statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for all children living in their area.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department supports Local Authorities with capital funding for additional school places provided through the Basic Need Grant. Based on Local Authorities' forecasted pupil numbers, the Department has provided £535 million to create school places needed for September 2023, a further £745 million for places needed by September 2024 and £195 million for places needed by September 2025. At a national level, births have been dropping since 2013. There will continue to be a need for new school places, particularly if areas have a higher birth rate, new housing developments or increased migration from the UK and overseas.

Local Authorities can use the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to manage significant growth in pupils' numbers. As part of the DSG, the Department has allocated £259 million in Growth and Falling Rolls funding to Local Authorities in 2023/24. This is an increase of £13 million on funding allocated for 2022/23.

The Department also provides funding to Local Authorities for children who have arrived due to humanitarian and resettlement schemes. In 2022/23 the Department has so far allocated £160 million funding for children who have arrived via the Homes for Ukraine scheme and will allocate a further £30 million at the end of March 2023 for children from Afghanistan in bridging hotels.

Guidance on the process to create a free school, where a Local Authority has identified the need for a new school, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption>.

Guidance for Local Authorities on the prescribed alterations process to increase places at existing maintained schools can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>.

The Department engages with Local Authorities on a regular basis to review their plans for creating additional places and to consider alternatives where necessary. When Local Authorities are experiencing difficulties, the Department provides additional support and advice to help them find solutions as quickly as possible, including when there are sudden population influxes.

**■ Childcare: Fees and Charges****Rachael Maskell:**[\[167271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the average annual cost of childcare for households with (a) one child, (b) two children and (c) more than two children (i) under the age of two and (ii) between the ages of two and five; and what recent steps she has taken to improve access to affordable childcare.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department does not estimate the average annual cost of childcare in the way the question has set out. The reporting year 2021 'Childcare and early years survey of parents' incorporates a breakdown of weekly childcare spend at family level, which includes families with 1, 2 or 3+ children, and also at child level, including child age. It is also the case that some parents use formal childcare in term time only (38 weeks) whereas others use it year-round.

In the Spring Budget announcement of 15 March 2023, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced transformative reforms to childcare for parents, children, and the economy. By 2027/28, the government will expect to be spending in excess of £8 billion every year on free hours and early education, helping working families with their childcare costs. This represents the single biggest investment in childcare in England ever.

The reforms include:

- Providing over £4.1 billion by 2027/28 to fund 30 hours of free childcare for children over the age of nine months
- Investing £204 million from September 2023, rising to £288 million in 2024-25 to uplift the rates for existing entitlements
- Increasing the supply of wraparound care through £289 million start up funding
- Attracting more people to childminding through an up to £7.2 million start up grant fund
- Giving providers more flexibility by changing staff-to-child ratios to 1:5 for two year olds in England
- Launching a consultation on further measures to support reform of the childcare market, to explore further flexibilities for providers

**■ Childcare: Finance****Stephen Morgan:**[\[167219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact of childcare ratios on the finances of childcare providers.

**Stephen Morgan:**[\[167220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has conducted a cost-benefit analysis of increasing adult to child ratios in childcare settings.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The government remains committed to supporting the childcare sector and providing flexibility to providers, to help more parents to access childcare in support of their working lives. On 15 March 2023, the government announced a significant new investment in childcare, worth over £4.1 billion, by 2027/28. In addition, the government has decided to proceed with the proposed changes to staff-to-child ratios for 2-year-olds from 1:4 to 1:5, to bring English ratios in line with Scottish ratios.

The government trusts that setting managers know their children and their staff best, and fully supports the judgement of setting managers and practitioners to work at the ratios that are right for the individual needs of their staff and children. The proposed changes to ratios would continue to be a statutory minimum requirement for settings, and there will be no obligation on providers to operate at the statutory minimums.

A full response to the consultation can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1142987/Childcare\\_regulatory\\_changes\\_government\\_consultation\\_response.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1142987/Childcare_regulatory_changes_government_consultation_response.pdf). Childcare Regulatory Changes: Consultation Response (publishing.service.gov.uk).

Alongside the consultation, the department ran a survey of early years providers to establish the likely impact of the changes on provision. This survey has been published in full here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1143005/Findings\\_from\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_staff-child\\_ratio\\_consultation\\_survey.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1143005/Findings_from_the_early_years_staff-child_ratio_consultation_survey.pdf).

The government will be publishing a full regulatory impact assessment proportionably assessing the impact of the change in ratios on businesses, individuals and other groups in society.

**■ Children: Temporary Accommodation****Paula Barker:**

[167259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department issues guidance to school leadership teams on supporting children housed in temporary accommodation.

**Paula Barker:**

[167260]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support her Department is providing in the educational setting to children and young people housed in temporary accommodation.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department's guidance on school attendance sets out clear expectations of schools, trusts and local authorities in relation to improving school attendance. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>. This guidance recognises that issues with housing (such as being in temporary accommodation) can impact on children's ability

to attend school regularly, and highlights the importance of effective multi-disciplinary support for the family to address attendance problems where that is the case.

The government provides a range of help to schools to support disadvantaged pupils, which may include those in temporary accommodation. The Pupil Premium, rising to around £2.9 billion next financial year, is supporting schools to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. School leaders use this extra funding to tailor support, based on the needs of their disadvantaged pupils, and to invest in proven practices that improve outcomes. Currently 1.9 million of the most disadvantaged children are eligible for and claiming a free nutritious meal. In addition, the government is committed to continuing support for school breakfasts. In November 2022, the department extended the National School Breakfast Programme for an additional year until the end of the summer term in 2024.

## ■ **Foster Care**

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[167247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take improve the level of foster carer retention.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department recognises the urgent need to change the way local authorities retain foster carers. We are investing over £3 million to deliver an initial fostering recruitment and retention programme in the North East Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance. As part of this, retention will be improved with the evidence-based model Mockingbird. Since 2014, the department has provided over £8 million to help embed the Mockingbird programme as an innovative model of peer support for foster parents and the children in their care. The department will then expand our recruitment and retention programme from 2023, by investing over £24 million.

The department will work to recruit and retain more foster carers where there are particular shortages. Depending on local need, this may include sibling groups, teenagers, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, other children who have suffered complex trauma or parent and child foster homes.

Additionally, the department continues to fund Fosterline and Fosterline Plus, a free-to-access helpline and support service for current and prospective foster carers, to provide high quality, independent information and advice on a range of issues.

In recognition of the increasing costs of living, we are also raising the National Minimum Allowance (NMA). Foster carers will benefit from a 12.43% increase to the NMA. This above inflation increase in allowance will help foster parents cover the increasing costs of caring for a child in their home.

## ■ Free School Meals: Disadvantaged

**Paul Blomfield:**

[167087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to extend the eligibility criteria for free school meals to cover all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit and equivalent benefits.

**Nick Gibb:**

Since 2010, the number of pupils receiving a free school meal (FSM) has increased by more than two million. This increase in provision is due to the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals and generous protections put in place as benefit recipients move across to Universal Credit. Over a third of pupils in England now receive FSM, compared with one in six in 2010.

The Department believes that the current eligibility threshold level, which enables children in low income households to benefit from FSM, while remaining affordable and deliverable for schools, is the right one. The Department does not have plans to change the current eligibility conditions for FSM, but will continue to keep eligibility under review to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them. The Department continues to monitor the consequences of the rising cost of living and is working with other Government Departments to provide support to disadvantaged families.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Pay

**Stephen Morgan:**

[167217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of levels of pay for graduates in the early years sector.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department publishes data on pay for early years staff by qualification level. The most recent data is available in the 2021 provider survey here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-finances-survey-of-childcare-and-ey-providers-2021>.

The majority of the early years sector is made up of private, voluntary and independent organisations who set their own rates of pay. The department acknowledges the concerns raised by the sector regarding workforce recruitment and retention, including the perceived impact of salary rates.

Following the transformational Spring Budget 2023 announcement and the extension of the 30 hours free childcare entitlement, we will work closely with the sector to develop a plan to grow and develop the workforce, including how to improve professional development within the sector. We will share further information in due course.

**■ Pre-school Education: Safety****Stephen Morgan:****[167218]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that children in early years settings (a) are safe and (b) receive adequate social interaction when the adult-to-child ratio is increased.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The government remains committed to supporting the childcare sector, and to providing flexibility to providers in order to help more parents to access childcare in support of their working lives. That is why, on 15 March 2023, the government announced a significant new investment in childcare worth over £4.1 billion by 2027/28. In addition, the government has decided to proceed with the proposed changes to staff to child ratios for 2-year-olds from 1:4 to 1:5, to bring English ratios in line with Scottish ratios.

The health and safety of children will always be a priority, it is providers' responsibility to ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out specific ratios and qualification requirements for specific age bands. These ratios are there to help ensure that there is adequate staffing to meet the needs of and to safeguard children. Additionally, providers are required to adhere to the learning and development requirements within the EYFS, which are available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974907/EYFS\\_framework - March 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework - March 2021.pdf). These requirements are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge, and attitudes children need to thrive, and as foundations for good future progress.

The department is also changing the EYFS framework to increase safety and help prevent choking incidences in early years settings. We will make it explicit that 'adequate supervision' whilst children are eating means that children must always be in sight and hearing of a member of staff, not just within sight or hearing.

The government trusts that setting managers know their children and staff best, and fully supports the judgement of setting managers and practitioners to work at the ratios that are right for the individual needs of their staff and children. The proposed changes to ratios would continue to be a statutory minimum requirement for settings, and there will be no obligation on providers to operate at the statutory minimums.

Providers can continue to work to tighter ratios if they decide that is best for the children and staff at their setting. A full response to the consultation is accessible at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1142987/Childcare\\_regulatory\\_changes\\_government\\_consultation\\_response.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1142987/Childcare_regulatory_changes_government_consultation_response.pdf).

**Pupils: Absenteeism****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[167216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schoolchildren were persistently absent in the 2021-22 academic year.

**Nick Gibb:**

Information on the number of pupils who were persistently absent is published here:  
<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>.

**Students: Finance****Sam Tarry:**[\[167263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 25 July 2022 to Question 37600 on Students: Finance, what progress her Department has made on delivering an Alternative Student Finance product compatible with Islamic finance principles.

**Robert Halfon:**

The government is committed to delivering an Alternative Student Finance (ASF) product compatible with Islamic finance principles as soon as possible. To support the delivery of an ASF product to date, the government has taken new powers in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 to enable the Secretary of State to provide alternative payments, in addition to grants and loans. We have further carried out work with specialist advisers, the Islamic Finance Council UK, on the design of an ASF model.

As set out in the answer of 25 July 2022 to Question [37600](#), the government is introducing the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE), which will significantly change the ways students can access learning and financial support.

Work is underway to assess how we can ultimately deliver an ASF product alongside the LLE. We are procuring advice from experts in Islamic finance and will be working with the Student Loans Company to better understand timescales for delivery of an ASF product.

In our response to the LLE consultation, published on 7 March 2023, we set out our aim that students will be able to access an ASF as part of the LLE as soon as possible after 2025.

**Students: Mental Health Services****Hilary Benn:**[\[170550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support students whose courses have been affected by the insolvency of Supporting Minds CIC.

**Robert Halfon:**

Supporting Minds is a private organisation that neither has contracts with, nor receives government funding from, the Education and Skills Funding Agency or the Office for Students in respect of the provision it delivers and students it has enrolled.

The department's advice to any individuals affected by the closure of this organisation is to contact the National Careers Service to seek advice about the options for enrolling onto another course with a different provider.

The National Careers Service provide careers information, advice and guidance to people of all ages and can help individuals to make decisions on learning, training and work at all stages of their career. Their website is available at:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>.

As a private provider not receiving government funding, the department assumes it will have charged students for its provision. Affected students will need to make a claim with the insolvency practitioner to try and recover those funds.

**ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO****■ Carbon Emissions****Wera Hobhouse:**

[167204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a right of local supply that would enable community and smaller-scale low carbon generation schemes to sell directly to local people.

**Graham Stuart:**

The right to local energy supply already exists under the Electricity Act 1989 and Ofgem has existing flexibility to award supply licences that are restricted to specified geographical areas or premises type. Energy suppliers already offer local tariffs which offer discounted prices at times when electricity is generated locally. The Government is considering what reforms are needed to the retail market regulatory framework to support the uptake of new and innovative business models by consumers.

**■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Procurement****Angela Rayner:**

[170630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many suppliers his Department has excluded from procurement on the grounds of (a) fraud, (b) corruption and (c) other grounds under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 from 2015 to 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

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

## ■ District Heating: Energy Bills Discount Scheme

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[170714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of including heat networks in the list of sectors eligible for the Energy and Trade Intensive Industries scheme.

**Amanda Solloway:**

There will be thresholds for qualifying for the Energy and Trade Intensive Industries Energy Bill Discount Scheme (EBDS). These thresholds have been set at sectors falling above the 80th percentile for energy intensity and 60th percentile for trade intensity, plus any sectors eligible for the existing energy compensation and exemption schemes. The government does not expect heat networks to qualify for the ETII scheme. As announced at the Budget the government will instead make a separate EBDS rate available for heat networks supplying domestic customers.

## ■ Electricity Generation: Finance

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[167133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he has plans to ensure that surplus power produced by privately owned (a) wind turbines, (b) small hydroelectric schemes and (c) other power generators is (i) fed into the National Grid and (ii) used for localised storage.

**Graham Stuart:**

Surplus power produced by privately owned wind turbines, small hydroelectric schemes and other power generators can flow into the electricity network under the terms of the connection agreement with the network owner. The Smart Export Guarantee gives small scale low-carbon electricity generators the right to be paid for the renewable electricity they export to the grid. The Government and Ofgem are facilitating the deployment of electricity storage at all scales through the [Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan](#).

## ■ Energy Company Obligation: Inflation

**Ben Lake:**

[\[167205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the impact of inflation on the delivery of the Energy Company Obligation.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is continually monitoring delivery and developments in the ECO market, and if the Government determine that further action is required then, it will explore all options available.

## ■ Energy: Hospices

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[168001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate his Department made of the energy needs of hospices when calculating available support under the Energy Bills Discount Scheme.

**Amanda Solloway:**

As part of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme review, the Government assessed a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence from businesses and stakeholders, including hospices, on sectors that may be most affected by rising energy prices based on energy and trade intensity.

The Energy Bill Discount Scheme will run from April until March 2024, and will continue to provide a discount to eligible non-domestic customers, including hospices. The discount is applied directly to the energy bills of eligible businesses by their energy providers.

The new scheme strikes a balance between supporting businesses and other non-domestic customers over the next 12 months.

## ■ Heat Pumps

**Ben Lake:**

[\[167207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department plans to take to install 600,000 heat pump installations by 2028.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Heat and Buildings Strategy sets out a range of policies supporting the development of the heat pump market towards 600,000 installations per year by 2028. These policies include the Future Homes Standard, which will ensure new homes are built zero carbon-ready, a market-based mechanism for low-carbon heat and proposals to phase out fossil-fuel heating systems in off-gas-grid buildings.

The Government is also investing £6.6 billion in this parliament, with a further £6 billion committed to 2028, in schemes that support the installation of heat pumps, including the Boiler Upgrade Scheme and Home Upgrade Grant.

## ■ Hydrogen

**Ben Lake:**

[\[167206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when his Department plans to make an announcement on the future use of domestic hydrogen.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government is working closely with industry and regulators to support a range of research, development and testing projects. This includes pioneering hydrogen heating consumer trials, designed to determine the feasibility, costs and convenience of using hydrogen as an alternative to natural gas for heating.

The knowledge and experience gained in delivering trials in communities, together with the results of our wider R&D and testing programme, will enable the Government to take strategic decisions in 2026 on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising heat.

## ■ Nuclear Reactors: Construction

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[170584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what his policy is on the deployment of further large-scale nuclear reactors in the UK after Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C.

**Andrew Bowie:**

In order to meet the nuclear ambition set out in the British Energy Security Strategy, we will need to consider a range of technologies and options for deployment, including both large-scale reactors and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).

Launched at my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget, Great British Nuclear (GBN) will enable Britain's deployment of nuclear reactors beyond Sizewell C, addressing constraints in the nuclear market and delivering an ambitious civil nuclear programme. The initial focus for GBN will be on SMRs, but it will support government's consideration of further large-scale projects beyond Sizewell C to help us deliver on our net zero ambitions.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Finance

**Ben Lake:**

[\[167208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department is taking to encourage private sector funding for renewables.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Contracts for Difference scheme is the Government's main mechanism for supporting investment in new low-carbon electricity generation projects in Great Britain. This month we will be launching the Allocation Round 5, for which Government has set an initial budget of £205 million. Allocation rounds will now run annually to accelerate deployment and investment in renewable generation.

## ■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Eligibility

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

[\[169178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an estimate of the number of disabled people who were no longer eligible for the Warm Home Discount scheme following changes to eligibility criteria in winter 2022-23.

**Amanda Solloway:**

As households previously applied through their suppliers, who set their own application processes and eligibility criteria and selected successful applicants each year, the Government has not been able to assess how many households are no longer eligible.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Conservation Areas: Air Pollution

**Alex Sobel:**

[165490]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of (a) special areas of conservation, (b) special protected areas and (c) sites of special scientific interest in England did not meet the favourable condition status because of air pollution in the latest period for which data is available.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Our recently published Environmental Improvement Plan recognises that air pollution, in particular ammonia, harms biodiversity through nitrogen deposition. The Plan sets out action that Defra has taken including publication of guidance, delivery of advice through Catchment Sensitive Farming and funding for low emissions farm equipment. It also includes ambitious further measures to drive down emissions of ammonia from farming, including new rules to reduce emissions from organic manures and extension of environmental permitting to dairy and intensive beef farms.

The Trends report published by Defra indicates the proportion of SACs, SPAs and SSSIs that are in exceedance of critical loads and levels for atmospheric nitrogen pollution and can be found here: [Trends Report 2022: Trends in critical load and critical level exceedances in the UK](#).

According to the 2022 report, over 90% of sensitive SACs, SPAs and SSSIs are predicted to exceed their site-relevant critical loads for nutrient nitrogen deposition for at least one of their features: a) 90.9% of sensitive SACs or approx. 78% of all SACs  
b) 91.7% of sensitive SPAs or approx. 85% of all SPAs

c) 91.1% of sensitive SSSIs or approx. 65% of all SSSIs Exceedance of acidity critical loads is predicted for 73.3% of sensitive SACs, 85.7% SPAs and 55.7% of sensitive SSSIs

Information on air quality for individual protected sites can be found on the Air Pollution Information System ( [www.apis.ac.uk](http://www.apis.ac.uk) ).

### ■ Disposable Wipes: Plastics

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[169364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she will bring forward legislative proposals to ban wet wipes containing plastic.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Government is carefully considering the impact of wet wipes containing plastic and more information will be available in due course.

## ■ Litter

**Dean Russell:**

[169481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the local council's powers to deal with litter (a) nationally and (b) in Watford constituency.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In recent years we have bolstered local authority enforcement powers by raising the upper limit on fixed penalty notices for littering and introducing powers to issue the keeper of a vehicle, from which litter is thrown, with a civil penalty. We have also published guidance on the provision of litter bins and provided nearly £1 million across 44 councils to help them purchase new bins.

We will be undertaking a research project which considers the effectiveness of the different enforcement options available to local authorities, including fixed penalties, and the barriers they face in using these. The results of this research will inform policy development in this area.

## ■ Swimming

**Layla Moran:**

[170708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the evidence required for bathing status designation, how many swimmers are considered adequate to reach the threshold of a large number of people.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Bathing Water Regulations 2013 require the Secretary of State to identify and maintain a list of the surface waters in England where she expects a large number of people to bathe. All applications for bathing water designation are assessed against this criterion and other criterion as set out in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 and in the guidance available at [Bathing waters: apply for designation or de-designation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bathing-waters-apply-for-designation-or-de-designation).

## ■ Wildlife: Conservation

**Dean Russell:**

[169484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to protect the (a) populations and (b) habitats of (i) hedgehogs, (ii) red squirrels and (iii) rare species of wildlife in the UK.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government remains committed to taking action to recover our threatened native species, that is why we have set four legally binding targets to drive and measure improvements in nature recovery in England. These targets are: to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030; then to reverse declines by 2042; to reduce the risk of species extinction by 2042; and restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat, also by 2042. We have set out our plan and policies to deliver

against our species biodiversity targets in the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23) published 31 January 2023. The EIP23 revises the 25-Year Environment Plan as part of our obligations under the Environment Act.

Measures introduced in the Environment Act such as biodiversity net gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies will help deliver actions to recover species such as the hedgehog. Additionally, our new environmental land management schemes will pay for sustainable farming practices, creating and preserving habitat such as woodland, heathland and species-rich grassland, as well as making landscape-scale environmental changes, all of which could benefit species such as hedgehog.

Defra, Natural England and the Forestry Commission are signatories to the United Kingdom Squirrel Accord. This partnership, of over 40 organisations seeks, to secure and expand red squirrel populations through the delivery of actions set out in the England Red Squirrel Action Plan. Additionally, Defra has provided £300k, to support research and development of fertility control methods to reduce numbers of grey squirrels and impacts on red squirrels, tree health and forestry. Work to reduce grey squirrel impacts will be supported by Defra's commitment in the EIP to update the 2014 Grey Squirrel Action Plan, detailing commitments to support landowners to manage the numbers of grey squirrels.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Commonwealth: Foreign Relations

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[167073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish the minutes of his bilateral meetings with the Foreign Ministers of (a) Rwanda, (b) Ghana, (c) Nigeria and (d) Kenya at the 22nd Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting on 15 March 2023.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Foreign Secretary had constructive discussions with many of his counterparts from the Commonwealth during the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting on 15 March 2023, covering a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues. The Foreign Secretary looks forward to working with them and other member states as part of the Commonwealth family, particularly on areas where the Commonwealth can deliver tangible benefits for its members, namely strengthening intra-Commonwealth trade, building resilience to climate change and promoting democracy and good governance.

### ■ East Africa: Development Aid

**Dan Carden:**

[\[170706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what specific commitments his Department will make to funding sustainable farming projects in

East Africa following the Government's commitment in the Integrated Review Refresh to drive the shift to sustainable agriculture.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK continues to support new financing from the World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB) to address food security, including through enhancing sustainable agriculture. We have championed the AfDB's Climate Action Window (CAW) and are providing £200 million to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate change including by developing more sustainable and resilient food production. We will continue to share the UK's scientific expertise to increase innovation and agricultural productivity. We have demonstrated leadership through the COP process, including on the Agriculture Breakthrough Goal to make climate resilient, sustainable agriculture technology affordable and accessible for farmers everywhere by 2030.

■ **Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[170707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with local organisations in Ethiopia to reach the people in need of food assistance since October 2022.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Ethiopia is projected to have the world's largest humanitarian caseload in 2023, with the UN estimating that 28.6 million people will be in need of assistance. In January, I [Minister Mitchell] announced support that will improve access to food or nutrition supplies for 600,000 people. On 21 March I met with Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke and finance Minister Shide and discussed the enormous levels of humanitarian need and the UK's humanitarian support to Ethiopia.

No UK funding goes directly to local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Ethiopia; however, in calendar year 2022, the UK provided £7.6 million to the pooled Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF) to support a range of international and local NGOs. As a donor to the EHF, the UK has encouraged the localisation agenda. In 2022, EHF funding to local NGOs - directly and through subgrants - amounted to \$26.5 million (£21 million) an increase of 36% from 2021.

■ **EU Law: Northern Ireland**

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[170559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many new EU laws and decisions have been applied in Northern Ireland since the start of the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Leo Docherty:**

We have been notified of around 250 amended or replaced EU goods regulations and directives under Article 13(3) since the old Protocol came into effect, for which there was no choice but to apply them automatically. Under the Windsor Framework, as EU goods rules are amended or replaced in the future, we have the powerful new

democratic safeguard provided by the Stormont Brake. This ends the automatic presumption of dynamic alignment on goods and addresses the democratic deficit, giving the Stormont institutions a powerful role in the decision on whether significant new goods rules impacting on everyday life in Northern Ireland should be applied.

## ■ Freeports: Northern Ireland

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[170558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Windsor Framework will allow freeports to be set up in Northern Ireland.

**Leo Docherty:**

We are committed to extending the benefits of our Freeports programme across the UK and to working with stakeholders from sectors and places across Northern Ireland on how best to do so. Of course we need to see a restored Northern Ireland Executive before those discussions can be progressed further, similar to our engagements with Scottish and Welsh governments on proposals there.

## ■ Marine Environment: Treaties

**Henry Smith:**

[\[167077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans that the UK will ratify the UN High Seas Treaty; and what steps he is taking to encourage global partners to do so.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Draft text for an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction - the BBNJ Agreement - was agreed on 5 March. It will be adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference at a further meeting, later this year. This is a landmark agreement for biodiversity and will mean much greater protection for over 60% of the global ocean.

The UK will work to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible, and work with global partners to ensure it is implemented quickly and effectively.

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[167094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans that the UK will ratify the UN High Seas Treaty; and what steps he is taking to encourage global partners to do so.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Draft text for an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction - the BBNJ Agreement - was agreed on 5 March. It will be adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference at a further meeting, later this year. This is a landmark agreement for biodiversity and will mean much greater protection for over 60% of the global ocean.

The UK will work to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible, and work with global partners to ensure it is implemented quickly and effectively.

## ■ Myanmar: Armed Forces

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

[\[169177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help prevent the supply of aviation fuel to the Myanmar military.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

On 31 January the UK sanctioned two companies and two individuals responsible for supplying the military regime with aviation fuel. We have also updated our Overseas Business Risk Guidance to make it clear UK businesses should conduct thorough supply-chain due diligence to ensure commodities, such as aviation fuel, do not reach the Myanmar military. The UK is committed to targeted sanctions which impose a cost on those profiting from, or supporting, the regime's campaign of violence against the civilian population.

## ■ Southern Africa: Storms

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[167072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the Governments of (a) Malawi, (b) Mozambique, (c) Madagascar and (d) Zimbabwe with the impact of Cyclone Freddy.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK is working closely with the Governments of Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar and Zimbabwe to respond to Cyclone Freddy. In Malawi, we are supporting the Emergency Operations Centre established in Blantyre and looking at options for further UK support, including to help those still stranded, to help manage trauma cases and to extend our support to tackle the ongoing cholera outbreak. In Mozambique, we are providing shelter and dignity kits for up to 30,000 people and providing extra funding to reduce the cholera risk. The UK-supported START Fund provided £700,000 of additional funding to partner organisations in Madagascar and up to £144,0000 in Zimbabwe in response to Cyclone Freddy. Support includes strengthening shelters, cash distributions and assistance on healthcare.

## ■ Tunisia: Political Prisoners

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[169360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Tunisian counterpart on the detention of Said Ferjani; and if he will take steps with international counterparts to request the release of all political prisoners in that country.

**David Rutley:**

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for North Africa, raised the recent wave of arrests directly with Tunisian Chargé d'Affaires on 23 February, underlining the importance of due legal process and respect for freedom of expression and association. His Majesty's Ambassador to Tunisia also raised UK concerns regarding the arrests with Foreign Minister Nabil Ammar on 23 February. Officials and Ministers have regular discussions with the Tunisian authorities and international counterparts to reiterate the UK's belief in the importance of space for legitimate political opposition, civil society, strengthening human rights and including all voices in building resilient and successful democracies. We will continue to engage the Tunisian authorities on these issues.

**■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland****Hywel Williams:**[\[170553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2023 to Question 155046 on UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland, how the transit procedure which will allow goods to travel from Wales to Northern Ireland through the Republic of Ireland using the green lane will operate; whether goods arriving in the Republic of Ireland from Wales which are destined for Northern Ireland will be subject to the same degree of checks as those which go directly from Great Britain to Northern Ireland; and which part of the Windsor Framework provides for that transit procedure.

**Leo Docherty:**

We have delivered a new Green Lane which means that goods staying in the UK will be freed of unnecessary paperwork, checks and duties when they move into Northern Ireland. The Green Lane is open to all UK businesses where they import or sell goods that are not ultimately destined for the EU market. This will include goods travelling from Wales to Northern Ireland through the Republic of Ireland using the transit procedure, as the processes otherwise applied for goods imported into the Republic of Ireland are a matter for the Irish Government. Following EU exit, the UK successfully negotiated membership of the Common Transit Convention. This is already part of domestic UK law by the Customs Procedures (EU Exit) Regulations 2018. There is already guidance on the use of transit procedures on Gov.uk, and as we bring the new green lane on stream we will set out further guidance on how those arrangements operate.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Blood: Ethnic Groups****Navendu Mishra:**[\[170758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage people from ethnic minority backgrounds to donate blood.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Department works with NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) as it continues its work towards recruiting and retaining more blood donors from ethnic minority backgrounds. Diversifying the donor base is a key priority for NHSBT, to address health disparities and ensure patients from all backgrounds can receive the best matched blood.

Work to increase the supply of Ro Kell negative blood type includes increased investment into targeted marketing and engagement. NHSBT launched its "Not Family but Blood" campaign in October 2022, aimed at recruiting more black heritage blood donors.

In addition, the Community Grants Programme funds community and faith/belief organisations to drive awareness, understanding and behaviour change around donation. In the Programme's latest round, £440,000, including £40,000 from Anthony Nolan, was invested to support 39 organisations to raise awareness of organ, blood, and stem cell donation.

**■ Care Workers: Car Allowances****Navendu Mishra:**[\[148814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will offer financial support to local authorities to help social care providers increase the mileage allowance paid to care workers.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is making available up to £7.5 billion over two years to support adult social care and discharge. Local authorities, who work with care providers to determine fee rates, have discretion about how to use this historic increase in funding to best address the pressures in their local areas.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Justin Madders:**[\[167270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has held recent discussions with medical advisers on covid-19 vaccination roll outs; and what steps he is taking to use medical evidence to inform decisions on future vaccination roll outs.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Each COVID-19 vaccine candidate is assessed by teams of scientists and clinicians on a case-by-case basis and is only authorised once it has met robust standards of effectiveness, safety and quality set by Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) is the expert body set up to provide advice on national vaccination and immunisation programmes to all four United Kingdom health departments. The JCVI considers vaccines once they are authorised by the MHRA.

As set out in the Living with COVID strategy published in 2021 the Government intends to continue to be guided by JCVI advice on which groups should be offered vaccination for COVID-19 and when and to whom any booster doses should be offered.

The most recent advice from JCVI on COVID-19 announced on 7 March 2023 was to offer a precautionary spring booster to those in the population most vulnerable to serious outcomes from COVID-19, including older people and those who are immunosuppressed.

## ■ Dental Services: Children

**Rachael Maskell:**

[170654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will allocate NHSE dentistry budget underspend to Integrated Care Boards in 2023-24 for the provision of NHS dental services for children.

**Neil O'Brien:**

NHS England is responsible for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population. Many of these functions will transfer to integrated care boards (ICBs) from April 2023.

We have assessed the merits of ringfencing National Health Service dental funding provisions. NHS England has provided guidance for ICBs that requires dental funding to be ringfenced, with any unused resources re-directed to improve NHS dental access in the first instance. A schedule setting out the dental ringfence has been issued to ICBs. NHS England's 2023/24 revenue finance and contracting guidance, which provides more detail, is available via the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/2023-24-revenue-finance-and-contracting-guidance/>

## ■ Dental Services: Staff

**Rachael Maskell:**

[170656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish a dentistry workforce plan which sets out the number of full time equivalent people working in each dental profession role.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[170657]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish a dentistry workforce plan.

**Will Quince:**

The Government has committed to publishing the National Health Service Long Term Workforce Plan, which will include projections for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in five, 10 and 15 years' time. This plan will be published shortly and will include the dentistry workforce.

## ■ Dentistry: Registration and Training

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[170655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's response to the consultation entitled Changes to the General Dental Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council's international registration legislation, updated on 28 November 2022, what progress he has made on reducing the amount of time international dentists have to wait to (a) sit exams and (b) become professionally registered.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Department has worked with the General Dental Council (GDC) to develop legislative changes which allow the regulator greater flexibility to amend its existing international registration processes and explore alternative registration pathways as it considers appropriate. The legislative changes came into force on 8 March 2023. It is for the GDC, as an independent regulator, to decide how best to use the flexibility that these changes allow. We understand that the GDC will consult on changes to how the Overseas Registration Exam (ORE) operates during summer 2023, which will enable it to increase the number of dentists it can assess, potentially allowing overseas dentists to join its register more quickly. The current legal framework for the ORE will remain in place until the GDC introduces new rules on the operation of the ORE 12 months after the legislation comes into force, in March 2024. This will allow the GDC time to consult on and finalise its approach in response to feedback from stakeholders.

## ■ Eating Disorders: Hospital Beds

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[147206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many child eating disorder beds there were in the NHS in each year since 2010.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 23 February 2023]:* The data in the following table, collected from NHS England, provides the number of National Health Service-commissioned inpatient beds for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) eating disorder services. It is important to note that NHS England does not hold reliable data for 2016 and prior. Bed numbers can vary throughout the year as units close and new ones open. These figures therefore are the average number of beds across the year.

SERVICE	CAMHS
2017/2018	216
2018/2019	221
2019/2020	249
2020/2021	236

SERVICE	CAMHS
2021/2022	230
2022/2023	256

### ■ Employment Schemes: Disability

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[170611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish further details on the expansion of the Individual Placement and Support scheme in England announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Spring Budget 2023.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As set out in the Budget, the Government will further embed tailored employment support within mental health services in England, by expanding the Individual Placement and Support scheme. Further information will be made available in due course.

### ■ Maternity Disparities Taskforce

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[169393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will outline the timetable for the next meeting of the Maternal Disparities Taskforce.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Maternity Disparities Taskforce was established in February 2022, to tackle disparities for mothers and babies and reduce maternal and neonatal deaths. The Taskforce brings together experts from across the health system, Government departments and the voluntary sector to explore and consider evidence-based interventions to tackle maternal disparities. The Taskforce will be meeting again shortly.

### ■ Menopause: Health Services

**Julian Knight:** [\[169318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what investment his Department is making in menopause support services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government is investing an additional £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the National Health Service in England. Integrated care boards are responsible for commissioning services that meet the needs of their local population including for women experiencing the menopause.

The Government is introducing a new Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) prescription prepayment certificate from 1 April 2023 to reduce the cost of HRT for women experiencing the menopause.

The NHS England National Menopause Care Improvement Programme is working to improve clinical menopause care in England and reduce disparities in access to treatment. The NHS is also developing an education and training package on menopause for healthcare professionals.

#### ■ Mental Health Services: Asylum

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[169271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of referrals there have been to (a) GPs and (b) mental health specialists citing the asylum process as contributing to mental ill health in the last 12 months.

**Maria Caulfield:**

This information is not collected and therefore no estimate will be made.

#### ■ Mental Health Services: Young People

**Dean Russell:**

[\[169478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what NHS mental health support is in place for young people.

**Dean Russell:**

[\[169480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on increasing the number of mental health support teams in schools.

**Maria Caulfield:**

It is the responsibility of integrated care boards to make available appropriate provision to meet the health and care needs of their local populations. We are supporting them to expand mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan, which commits to increasing investment into mental health services by at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023/2024 compared to 2018/2019.

Part of this increased investment will enable an additional 345,000 children and young people aged between 0-25 years of age to access National Health Service-funded mental health services and mental health support teams in schools and colleges. Spend for children and young people's mental health services has increased from £841.4 million in 2019/2020 to £994.8 million in 2021/2022, with a planned spend of £1.0815 billion in 2022/2023. This funding is across both NHS specialised commissioning and local commissioning. The source of this data is the NHS England dashboard, which is published quarterly. Previous and most recent NHS mental health dashboards are available at the following link:

[www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-mental-health-dashboard](http://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-mental-health-dashboard)

We are making good progress on expanding access year on year, as the number of children and young people aged under 18 supported through NHS-funded mental health services, with at least one contact with services, was 689,621 in the year up to July 2022 compared to 618,537 in the year up to July 2021.

As of spring 2022, there were 287 mental health support teams in place in around 4,700 schools and colleges across the country, offering support to children experiencing anxiety, depression, and other common mental health issues. Mental health support teams now cover 26% of pupils, a year earlier than originally planned. By next month we expect this to have increased to 399 teams, covering around 35% of pupils.

## ■ **NHS: Audiology**

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[168097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS England's 2023-24 priorities and operational planning guidance published on 27 January 2023, what estimate his Department made of the potential change in the number of people using NHS audiology services as a result of the introduction of self-referral.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 22 March 2023]:* No estimate has been made of the potential change in the number of people using National Health Service audiology services due to the introduction of self-referral. The introduction of self-referral for age-related hearing loss aims to streamline access for patients eligible for NHS audiology services where a general practitioner appointment is not clinically necessary.

## ■ **Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Organ and Tissue Donation) Bill**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[166220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of the delay in the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill on organ donation and transplantation in Northern Ireland.

**Neil O'Brien:**

No specific assessment has been made.

## ■ **Obesity: York**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[167179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of obesity in children (a) nationally and (b) in York.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[167181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to screen children to identify those at risk of obesity.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) collects data on children aged four to five years old in Reception and 10 to 11 years old in Year 6. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities publishes national and local level data on Fingertips. For children aged four to five years old, the prevalence of obesity in England was 10.1% and 8.9% in York in the academic year 2021/22. For children aged 10-11 years old the prevalence of obesity in England was 23.4% and 18.9% in York in the academic year 2021/22.

NCMP is a surveillance programme providing trend data on childhood weight status. It is not a screening programme. However, local authorities can choose to notify parents of their children's measurements. When a child is identified as living with obesity, a tailored feedback letter provides a parent with information about local healthy lifestyle and child weight management services available. They may also be invited to contact the school nursing team to discuss their child's growth and support available.

**■ Paediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome: Children****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[167241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he (a) has had and (b) plans to have discussions with NHS England on ensuring the (i) adequacy and (ii) consistency of treatment pathways for children living with (A) PANS and (B) PANDAS; and what steps he is taking to ensure that children living with (1) PANS and (2) PANDAS and their parents receive adequate (x) information and (y) support to take informed decisions on care pathway options.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such discussions with NHS England have taken place or are planned at present. Should the evidence base develop further, clinical policy may be updated by relevant organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. NHS England would then consider the development of care pathways for those living with PANS and PANDAS. In the meantime, integrated care systems are responsible for planning care for their populations.

**■ Smoking****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[170556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it remains his Department's policy to have a national target to be smokefree by 2030.

**Neil O'Brien:**

It remains the Department's policy to have a national target to be Smokefree by 2030. In the coming weeks, the Government will unveil a set of proposals to realise the Smokefree ambition and respond to the recommendations in the Khan Review.

**■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme****Sir Christopher Chope:****[166115]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2023 to Question 152186 on Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme, how many of the claims (a) awarded and (b) rejected were for people whose deaths were recorded by coroners as having been caused as a result of a Covid-19 vaccination.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 March 2023]: As of 23 February 2023, of the 48 awarded claims relating to the COVID-19 vaccine, 23 were claims made on behalf of a deceased person, and in all cases the deaths were recorded by coroners as having been caused by a COVID-19 vaccination. Of the 890 rejected claims, 52 were made on behalf of a deceased person and in no cases were the deaths recorded by a coroner as having been caused by a COVID-19 vaccination.*

**HOME OFFICE****■ Asylum****Dame Diana Johnson:****[170560]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum caseworkers were employed by her Department in January (a) 2021, (b) 2022 and (c) 2023.

**Dame Diana Johnson:****[170562]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of asylum caseworkers employed by her Department at the end of the (a) second, (b) third and (c) final quarter of 2023.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The number of asylum caseworkers employed by the Home Office for each financial year between 2010/11 to 2021/22 can be found in the ASY\_04 tab of the published immigration statistics located here: Immigration and protection data: Q4 2022 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

Information for the financial year ending March 2023 is not yet released.

**Dame Diana Johnson:****[170561]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the attrition rate for asylum caseworkers was in January (a) 2021, (b) 2022 and (c) 2023.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The latest data on the attrition rate of decision makers are not routinely published but have been released to the Home Affairs Select Committee. The response can be found here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31774/documents/178754/default/>.

To reduce attrition rates and help maintain our decision-making experience we have implemented a recruitment and retention allowance. We have already doubled our decision makers over the last 2 years, and we are continuing to recruit more. This will take our expected number of decision makers to 1,800 by summer and 2,500 by September 2023.

## ■ Asylum: Housing

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[170635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number and proportion of properties at Bwiza Riverside Estate, Kigali that will house (a) Rwandan citizens and (b) asylum seekers transferred from the UK.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Government of Rwanda is responsible for procuring accommodation in Rwanda and have the capability to expand and increase capacity as required for relocated individuals.

## ■ Diplomatic Service: Protection and Security

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[170759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of protection and security for diplomatic (a) staff, (b) families and (c) premises buildings in the UK.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The security and dignity of diplomatic missions in the UK, and their staff, is of utmost concern and His Majesty's Government fully recognises our obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The right to gather lawfully and demonstrate a point of view is a basic democratic right. But rights to lawful protest do not extend to violent or threatening behaviour.

Our protective security system is rigorous and proportionate. However, it is our long-standing policy not to provide detailed information on diplomatic security arrangements. To do so could compromise the integrity of those arrangements and affect the security of the individuals and locations concerned.

## ■ Electronic Cigarettes: Imports

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

[\[167186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of illicit vaping products that were imported in the last 12 months.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office has made no estimate of the number of illicit vaping products that were imported in the last 12 months.

**■ HM Passport Office: Labour Turnover****Dame Diana Johnson:****[170563]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the attrition rate was for passport office caseworkers in 2022.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The attrition rate for case-working staff only is not held in a reportable format.

**■ Illegal Migration Bill****Marsha De Cordova:****[170720]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the economic and equality impact assessment of the Illegal Migration Bill before the bill reaches Committee stage.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We will publish an equality impact assessment and economic impact assessment in respect of the Illegal Migration Bill in due course.

**■ Missing Persons: Racial Discrimination****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[170695]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has taken recent steps to tackle potential racial bias in missing person investigations.

**Chris Philp:**

People that go missing include some of the most vulnerable in our society. The Government is determined that missing people and their families receive the best possible protection and support from statutory agencies, including law enforcement, Government, and the voluntary sector.

The Government acknowledges that the most recent data published by the National Crime Agency, covering the period 2020-21, indicated that Black people are disproportionately affected by missing incidents: <http://missingpersons.police.uk/en-gb/resources/downloads/missing-persons-statistical-bulletins>. This aligns with the findings from The Ethnicity of Missing People report, which also indicates the over-representation of Black children in care in missing reports.

To improve the police response to missing people from all backgrounds and address racial and ethnic disparities, the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) works with police forces across England and Wales, the charity Missing People and the NCA Missing Persons Unit to consider these issues and what action is needed.

**■ Nitrous Oxide: Misuse****Sir Greg Knight:****[170551]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Nitrous oxide: updated harms assessment, published by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of

Drugs on 6 March 2023, what steps she plans to take to help prevent the misuse of nitrous oxide; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) published their report on nitrous oxide on 6 March, setting out the evidence as it currently stands and making seven recommendations.

The Government will consider the ACMD advice carefully along with any other available evidence, as appropriate, and will respond in due course.

**■ Slavery: Victims**

**Afzal Khan:**

[[170712](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the impact the Illegal Migration Bill on victims of (a) slavery and (b) human trafficking.

**Robert Jenrick:**

I refer the Hon. Member to my response to Question 161356 on 22 March: [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

**■ Undocumented Migrants: Legal Aid Scheme**

**Afzal Khan:**

[[170711](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help people entering the UK by irregular means access legal (a) advice and (b) aid before they are removed.

**Robert Jenrick:**

All migrants (with the exception of those who are removed within 7 days of refusal of leave to enter at the border) are given a notice period prior to removal allowing time for access to justice, and those detained pending removal are able to access legal aid surgeries.

**■ Visas: Applications**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[[169468](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by what process the Home Secretary decides whether to (a) predetermine an application before a person attends a Visa Application Centre and (b) excuse the requirement to attend a Visa Application Centre to enrol their biometrics for a visa.

**Robert Jenrick:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave to UIN 130066 on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023: [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

## JUSTICE

### ■ Ministry of Justice: Procurement

**Angela Rayner:**

[[170632](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many suppliers his Department has excluded from procurement on the grounds of (a) fraud, (b) corruption and (c) other grounds under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 from 2015 to 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

The information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. To obtain the information a manual search through individual records would be required as this is not recorded centrally on departmental systems.

The grounds for the exclusion of bidders from public procurement procedures are set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These rules set out the circumstances in which bidders must, or may, be excluded from a public procurement process.

The Procurement Bill brought forward by this Conservative Government, currently being considered by Parliament, expands the scope of misconduct which can lead to exclusion. We are also increasing the time period within which misconduct can lead to exclusion from 3 years to 5; bringing subsidiary companies into scope of exclusion; and making the rules clearer so that contracting authorities can undertake exclusions with more confidence.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Elections: Proof of Identity

**Luke Pollard:**

[[167221](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many and what proportion of Voter Authority Certificate applications in England have been rejected as of 1 March 2023.

**Dehenna Davison:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [165271](#) on 20th March 2023.

### ■ High Rise Flats: Battersea

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[[170715](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what information his Department holds on whether a contract has been signed to start fire safety remediation work at Time House in Battersea.

**Lee Rowley:**

Time House in Battersea is below the height eligibility threshold for the Building Safety Fund and so we do not hold information on whether the housing association has signed contracts to commence remediation of the building.

## ■ Investment Zones: Ellesmere Port

**Justin Madders:**

[[170641](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make a statement on the decision to not proceed with Ellesmere Port industrial area as an investment zone.

**Dehenna Davison:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [167099](#) on 21st March 2023.

## ■ Leasehold

**Steve McCabe:**

[[169183](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to abolish the system of lease holding.

**Steve McCabe:**

[[169184](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent steps his Department has taken to protect the rights of leaseholders.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Secretary of State [set out, in the House, his intention](#) to bring the 'outdated and feudal' tenure of leasehold to an end. The Government wishes to extend the benefits of freehold ownership to more homeowners. That is why we have committed to end the sale of new leasehold houses, and to reinvigorate commonhold so it can finally be a genuine alternative to leasehold; it is why we have banned the charging of ground rent in new leases which takes away that incentive to build leasehold; and it is why we will make it easier for leaseholders to purchase the freehold of their building, and take control of their building management, by enhancing enfranchisement and the Right to Manage.

## ■ Leasehold and Social Rented Housing: Service Charges

**Sarah Olney:**

[[170679](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to take steps to help tackle large increases in service charges for (a) leaseholders and (b) social housing tenants.

**Felicity Buchan:**

We are committed to protecting leaseholders, ensuring service charges are transparent and removing barriers to challenge when things go wrong.

I refer the Hon. Member to the [Autumn Statement](#)'s announcement on the cap on social rents.

**■ Local Government: Publicity****Damien Moore:**[\[169417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to correspondence from the hon. Member for Southport, what assessment he has made of the extent to which a letter sent to constituents by a councillor from Sefton Council in March 2022 was compliant with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

**Damien Moore:**[\[169418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the correspondence from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Local Government and Building safety to the hon. Member for Southport on 27 February, when he will provide the update promised in that letter on potential breaches of the publicity code by Sefton Council.

**Damien Moore:**[\[169419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he expects his Department will provide a final response to the issue first raised in correspondence of 6th April 2022 from the hon. Member for Southport on potential breaches of the Publicity Code; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the average amount of time it takes his Department to resolve issues raised in correspondence from hon. Members.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Publicity Code is guidance to which local authorities must have regard when producing publicity, defined as “any communication in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or a section of the public”. The Local Government Act 1986 gives the Secretary of State the power to issue Directions to secure compliance with one or more specified provisions of the Code, or all the provisions of the Code.

The Department has made enquiries with Sefton Council Chief Executive on this matter on two separate occasions in recent months and the Council’s responses are currently under active consideration. If and when a decision is taken to exercise the power to issue Directions that decision will be placed in the public domain in due course.

**■ Roads: Safety****Rachael Maskell:**[\[167174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on (a) the impact of speed limits on road safety in residential areas and (b) potential steps to increase road safety in such areas.

**Dehenna Davison:**

As has been the case under successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed. Policy relating to road safety is primarily a matter for the Department for Transport.

**Tenancy Deposit Schemes****Justin Madders:**[\[170640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of insurance based tenancy deposit schemes.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government views the tenancy deposit protection system, including the insured schemes, as broadly effective in increasing tenant confidence and protecting against the loss of deposit monies and will continue to closely monitor the performance of the schemes.

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Northern Ireland****Gavin Robinson:**[\[170636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding will be allocated to organisations in Northern Ireland through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Dehenna Davison:**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will act as the successor to the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund across the United Kingdom.

Within Northern Ireland, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund provides £126,854,145 of new funding for local investment to March 2025. The Investment Plan details how Northern Ireland's overall allocation will be spent and the impact that we expect it to have. Having announced our first 'green spaces' projects in February, we plan to announce the outcome of the economic inactivity competition shortly. This will represent investment of over one-third of the fund, and the Investment Plan sets out our intention to go on and support a range of other interventions, including support for local businesses, as well as communities and place packages over the period to March 2025.

**SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY****Emergencies: Energy Supply****Cat Smith:**[\[168063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if she will take steps to expand Ofcom's definition of emergency organisation to include the national power cut and electricity network safety service.

**Julia Lopez:**

The three digit number “105” is already provided free-of-charge by the UK's six Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), so it is easy for customers to report a power outage or an electricity network safety issue.

To modify “105” to have the same qualities as an emergency number (including call prioritisation and roaming) yet not directed to the emergency service answer points would also be technologically difficult as it would require changes to underlying networks and handset functionality to enable them to distinguish the additional type of call (emergency, non-emergency, power cut), which would require international standards agreement.

Any steps to reclassify “105” as an emergency service would need to be driven by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and require thorough consultation with the telecommunications sector, Ofcom, Ofgem, and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

**■ Innovation and Research: EU Countries****Rachael Maskell:**[\[167175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps she is taking to collaborate on research and innovation projects with EU countries.

**George Freeman:**

The Government continues to be ready to work constructively with the EU and EU Member States on a range of issues including UK association to Horizon Europe. Most recently, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I met with the EU Ambassador to the UK on 14 March to discuss collaboration on science and research, including the Horizon Europe programme. The EU have not yet made any proposals to address the financial terms of UK association, given we are now over 2 years into a 7-year programme.

**■ Innovation and Research: Finance****Rachael Maskell:**[\[167176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps her Department are taking to (a) collaborate with international counterparts on research and innovation and (b) find international funding for research and innovation projects.

**George Freeman:**

The Government aims to place research and innovation at the heart of international bilateral and multilateral relationships, to accelerate the UK's global science and technology superpower ambitions and underpin the UK's position as a global force for good. A key enabler will be the delivery of the new DSIT International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) with key partner countries which was announced in December 2022 with an initial budget of £119 million.

The Government continues to be ready to work constructively with the EU on a range of issues including UK association to Horizon Europe.

## ■ Social Media: Age

**Emily Thornberry:**

[169222]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, with reference to reports by the Reuters news agency on 6 March 2023, if she will publish the data gathered by Ofcom for the number of (a) Snapchat, (b) TikTok, (c) Instagram, (d) Youtube, (e) Twitter, (f) Facebook, (g) Twitch, (h) WhatsApp, (i) Reddit, (j) Discord, and (k) Tumblr accounts belonging to suspected underage users in the UK that were blocked by each of those social media companies in the twelve months up to April 2022.

**Paul Scully:**

Decisions on publishing the data it holds are a matter for Ofcom as the independent regulator for video-sharing platforms in the UK. Ofcom maintains a list of currently notified services under the video-sharing platform regime which can be found [here](#).

In October 2022, Ofcom published a report on its first year of video-sharing platform regulation. It is accessible [here](#).

The Online Safety Bill will require providers to take steps to ensure that only users who are old enough are able to access services which have age restrictions or risk causing them harm. Providers which have age restrictions will need to specify in their terms of service what measures they use to prevent underage access and apply these terms consistently.

## ■ Social Media: Artificial Intelligence

**Chi Onwurah:**

[169275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2023 to Question 125342, whether the Online Safety Bill includes measures to help prevent the use of coding algorithms that may lead to increased racial stereotyping.

**Paul Scully:**

Under the Online Safety Bill, all platforms will need to undertake risk assessments for illegal content, and services likely to be accessed by children will need to undertake a children's risk assessment. This will ensure they understand the risks associated with their services, including in relation to their algorithms. They will then need to put in place proportionate systems and processes to mitigate these risks.

When deciding whether it is appropriate to recommend proactive technology, the regulator must have regard to the degree of accuracy, effectiveness and lack of bias achieved by the technology in question. This will help ensure that companies do not use algorithms that may lead to increased racial stereotyping when using proactive technologies to fulfil their safety duties.

More broadly, the Office for AI is working at pace to develop a White Paper setting out our position on governing and regulating AI to ensure the UK is seizing the opportunity presented by AI whilst addressing the potential risks the technology presents. This approach will establish a framework based on a set of cross-cutting

principles to inform how regulators should tackle risks arising from issues such as racial bias in AI decision making. We will work with regulators such as EHRC to explore the practical implementation of our proposed AI regulatory framework alongside regulators' existing duties.

The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation's work programme on Responsible Data Access includes a focus on helping organisations to obtain appropriate access to demographic data to assess potential risks of bias related to ethnicity and other demographic traits. This work follows the CDEI's 2020 review into bias in algorithmic decision-making, which highlighted a range of legal, reputational, and practical barriers to accessing this data.

## ■ Spaceflight

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[167113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps she is taking to help ensure that businesses in the space sector can engage with her Department in delivery of the National Space Strategy.

**George Freeman:**

The Government has made good progress delivering against every element of the National Space Strategy 10 Point Plan, which set out our initial focus areas. We will soon publish the next steps we are taking to: deliver the National Space Strategy, develop the policy which needs to underpin it, and the concrete action we are taking now to support the sector.

The Department regularly engages with businesses in the space sector that are crucial to delivering investment and sector growth.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[167115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps she will take with the (a) Secretary of State for Defence, (b) Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and (c) Secretary of State for Business and Trade to deliver the National Space Strategy.

**George Freeman:**

The delivery of our National Space Strategy is a whole-of-government effort, co-ordinated through the National Space Board jointly chaired by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and the Ministry of Defence. The Government will soon publish the next steps it will take to deliver the National Space Strategy, develop the policy which needs to underpin it, and the concrete action the Government is taking now to support the sector.

**■ Spaceflight: Staff****Chi Onwurah:**[\[167114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps her Department is taking to increase the level of (a) skills and (b) workforces in the industrial space sector.

**George Freeman:**

In the 2021 to 2022 school year, the UK Space Agency's funding delivered over 1.5M interactions between young people and space sector professionals, and the Space Placements in Industry programme has seen over 400 university students undertake placements with space employers, with 60% progressing into space careers.

We will invest up to £15 million in the UK Space Agency's Inspiration programme over this spending period to address the skills gap and inspire the next generation. This funding will improve access to the skilled people that the sector needs, signpost the accessibility of space careers to professionals in other sectors, and ensure that professionals can access relevant training. The space sector continues to benefit from broader STEM careers support delivered by UK Research & Innovation.

**■ Virgin Orbit****Chi Onwurah:**[\[167112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for UK space sector of the decision of Virgin Orbit to pause all operations and furlough staff.

**George Freeman:**

Virgin Orbit's decision to pause operations is a commercial matter for the company. As the company has no permanent staff based in the UK, no UK employees will be affected. Spaceport Cornwall have also confirmed that no jobs will be affected by the announcement. The UK Space Agency is working with Virgin Orbit to understand next steps, as well as any potential effects on the UK supply chain.

The outlook for the UK space sector is very positive. There is significant space launch activity underway in Scotland, with two new spaceports (SaxaVord and Sutherland) anticipating launches in due course. There is also a diverse range of activity beyond launch across the UK space sector, for example in satellite manufacturing, telecommunications, and Earth Observation, which continues to grow rapidly.

**TRANSPORT****■ Euston Station: High Speed 2 Line****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[170696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 163903 on Euston Station: High Speed 2 Line, what his timeframe is for the HS2 Euston station design.

**Huw Merriman:**

The latest design phase for Euston station has been completed by HS2 Ltd's contractors as scheduled. As set out by the Secretary of State for Transport in his written statement to Parliament of 9 March 2023, the Government will take the time to ensure an affordable and deliverable HS2 station design at Euston. Further instruction regarding the next stage of design will be issued by HS2 Ltd in due course.

**Freight: Disability****Cat Smith:**[\[169334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to help support disabled drivers in the haulage industry.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Drivers who may have a disability can drive an HGV so long as they meet the medical standard required. There are more stringent medical and eyesight standards for driving larger vehicles due to the size and weight of the vehicle and the length of time a professional driver typically spends at the wheel.

The Government provides annual grant funding to the Mobility Centres of England, who conduct driving assessments for older/disabled people. Two of these Mobility Centres, in Carshalton and Birmingham, offer driving assessments for older/disabled HGV and PSV drivers.

The Government and industry is investing up to £100 million to improve roadside facilities and rest areas via the 'HGV parking and welfare grant scheme' and National Highways funding to improve roadside facilities. This funding can be used for upgrading and improving facilities for disabled drivers.

**High Speed 2 Line****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[170697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 163903 on Euston Station: High Speed 2 Line, what the timeframe is for the design stage of phase one of the HS2 project.

**Huw Merriman:**

The scheme design for Phase 1 Civils, Old Oak Common Station, Interchange Station and Birmingham Curzon Street are complete with detailed design for assets continuing to be developed to support ongoing construction.

**Motorway Service Areas: Charging Points****Jessica Morden:**[\[169233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to (a) accelerate the rollout of electric vehicle infrastructure to motorway service areas and (b) ensure those areas are able to access the rapid charging fund.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is working closely with motorway service area (MSA) operators to support them in the rollout of electric vehicle chargepoints. Over 97% of MSAs in England currently have rapid charging available. As of March 2023, MSAs in England support drivers with more than 400 open access chargepoints, over 230 of which are rapid (50kW), and over 200 are ultra-rapid (150kW+).

This Government will continue to engage with industry on the development of the Rapid Charging Fund (RCF) to understand their views and gain insight. As part of the RCF, the Government will also identify areas that will be most in need of funding along the strategic road network.

**Road Traffic Control****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[168038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has published recent guidance for local authorities on the publication of traffic management orders when introducing speed restrictions on roads.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Department for Transport's guidance Setting Local Speed Limits instructs that The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (as amended) sets out the procedure to be followed when making speed limit orders and other traffic regulation orders. Traffic Authorities will need to comply with the consultation and publicity requirements before making an order, and with the publicity and traffic signing requirements once an order has been made.

**Shipping: Exhaust Emissions****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[170555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the Clean Maritime Plan 2023.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Department intends to publish an update to the Clean Maritime Plan later this year. It will set out the next steps to decarbonise the maritime sector and limit the impact of shipping on the wider environment.

The update is currently being developed in collaboration with the maritime industry.

**TREASURY****Actuaries: Regulation****Sir Stephen Timms:**[\[170528\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason he proposes that the new Audit Regulation and Governance Authority will regulate non-public interest actuarial work.

**Andrew Griffith:**

As set out in the Government's May 2022 response to its White Paper consultation, *Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance*, the Government intends that the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) will regulate public interest actuarial work. These activities have the most significant adverse consequences if not carried out and completed to an appropriate standard.

For non-public interest actuarial work, ARGA will have powers to set technical standards, but will not have monitoring or enforcement powers.

This approach maintains the status quo in respect of non-public interest actuarial work, as the Financial Reporting Council currently sets technical actuarial standards. It will also deliver a broader strengthening of the actuarial regime, as recommended in Sir John Kingman's independent review.

**■ Bank Services****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[169362\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a minimum level of access to essential in-person banking services.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[169363\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a minimum level of access to free-of-charge cash services for small businesses.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The way consumers and businesses interact with their banking and make payments continues to develop at pace, bringing significant benefits to those who choose to opt for the convenience, security, and speed of digital services.

In recognition that cash continues to be used by millions of people across the UK, the government is currently taking legislation through Parliament as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill to protect access to cash. The Bill will establish the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as the lead regulator for access to cash and provide it with appropriate powers to seek to ensure reasonable provision of withdrawal and deposit facilities. These powers will allow the FCA to have regard to factors it considers appropriate, which could include cost for users.

Regarding in-person banking services, the government believes that everyone, wherever they live, should have appropriate access to banking services. However, decisions on opening and closing branches, and the provision of in-person services, are a commercial issue for banks and building societies.

Guidance from the FCA sets out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches or the number of free-to-use ATMs. The guidance has recently been strengthened and clearly expects firms to put in place alternatives, where this is reasonable, to ensure customer needs are met. Where firms fall short of

expectations, the FCA may ask for closures to be paused or other options to be put in place.

Alternative options to access cash and in-person banking services can be via the Post Office and other industry initiatives including cash pods, mobile banking vans and shared banking hubs. The Post Office Banking Framework allows 99% of personal banking and 95% of business customers to deposit cheques, check their balance and withdraw and deposit cash at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK. Meanwhile, industry has committed to shared banking hubs in over 40 locations across the UK to date.

## ■ Charities: Tax Allowances

**Barbara Keeley:**

[170571]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of restricting charitable tax reliefs to UK charities on the number of donations to UK causes from overseas donors.

**James Cartlidge:**

Restricting charitable tax reliefs to UK charities is not expected to have any impact on the level of donations to UK causes from overseas donors. Overseas donors will be able to continue supporting UK charities and causes in exactly the same way as they have always done.

## ■ Gift Aid

**Barbara Keeley:**

[170573]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of uptake of Gift Aid.

**James Cartlidge:**

Information on trends in the amount of Gift Aid HMRC pays to charities is available in the Charity Tax Relief statistics at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1092066/Tables\\_1\\_and\\_2\\_-\\_summary.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092066/Tables_1_and_2_-_summary.pdf).

**No formal assessment of trend has been made.**

## ■ Research: Tax Allowances

**Chi Onwurah:**

[170595]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 4.52 of the Spring Budget Report 2023, HC1183, published on 15 March 2023, what estimate his Department has made of the potential impact of the postponement of restrictions on overseas R&D tax reliefs expenditure on R&D investment in the financial years (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The previously announced restriction on some overseas expenditure will now come into effect from 1 April 2024 instead of 1 April 2023. This will allow the Government to consider the interaction between this restriction and the design of a potential merged R&D relief.

Overall, R&D reliefs will support an estimated £60 billion of business R&D expenditure in 2027-2028, a 50 per cent increase from £40 billion in 2020-21.

Expenditure on R&D reliefs is forecast to increase in every year of the scorecard period.

**■ Revenue and Customs: Complaints****Alex Sobel:**[\[169413\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to increase the speed of responses to HMRC complaints.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC is committed to delivering performance improvements to complaints handling and response times for customers. HMRC are working hard to address backlogs across post receipts from customers across various channels as well as customer complaints.

**■ Treasury: Written Questions****James Murray:**[\[170754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to Question 165453 tabled by the hon. Member for Ealing North on 14th March 2023.

**Victoria Atkins:**

PQ UIN 165453 has now been answered.

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**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**

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**■ Women: Employment****Jim Shannon:**[\[169288\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps her Department are taking to reduce incidences of workplace misogyny.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Everyone should be able to live without fear of harassment or violence, in the workplace as much as anywhere else. Strong laws against workplace harassment are set out in the Equality Act 2010.

We listened carefully to the experiences shared through our consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace, and committed to a new package of measures which will prioritise prevention. As part of this work, the Government is supporting the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Bill introduced by the Hon.

Member for Bath, which will strengthen protections for employees against workplace harassment.

This builds on the steps we are taking to foster workplaces that celebrate diverse experiences and backgrounds. The Government's Inclusion at Work Panel will tackle bias and ensure fairness in the workplace by developing and disseminating effective resources to help employers. This will help to create workplaces where everyone feels supported and encouraged to reach their career potential.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Access to Work Programme: Finance

**David Linden:**

[\[170704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2023 to Question 166319 on Access to Work Programme: Finance, when the earliest outstanding access to work funding application which has not been placed on hold at the request of the customer was received by his Department.

**Tom Pursglove:**

In addition to the response to question 166319 on 20<sup>th</sup> March, we have also looked at the second and third oldest application, and both are also awaiting information from the customer, employer, and/or outcome of workplace assessment, for the case manager to proceed with the application.

We currently have 7282 applications with case managers. It would be considerably resource intensive to look through all of these to identify the oldest that is not awaiting information from an external source. I can confirm that we do conduct internal checks on the older cases to ensure they are not unnecessarily delayed and that the average clearance time in February for all applications was 58 working days, with 42% of applications having a decision in 25 days.

*Please note that the data supplied is derived from unpublished management information, which was collected for internal departmental use only, and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.*

### ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[170554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to (a) conduct and (b) publish an evaluation of the longer-term outcomes for participants of the Kickstart Scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

The Kickstart evaluation will continue to assess the longer-term outcomes for Kickstart participants after they have completed their six-month jobs. The commissioned process evaluation will conclude in Spring 2023.

We aim to publish the findings of the Kickstart Scheme evaluation once complete.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

### **Dan Carden:**

[\[170705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when his Department plans to respond to email correspondence of 20 February 2023 from the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton.

### **Mims Davies:**

A reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member was sent on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

## ■ Pensions: Lone Parents

### **Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[170610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of private pension savings among single mothers.

### **Laura Trott:**

Automatic Enrolment has increased the number of women contributing to a workplace pension. Pension participation among eligible women in the private sector was 87% in 2021, up from just 40% in 2012. We are taking steps to further increase women's participation in workplace pensions.

We remain committed to implementing the measures recommended in the 2017 review of Automatic Enrolment in the mid 2020s. These will disproportionately benefit lower earners, including people working in multiple low-paid part time jobs, who are predominantly women. We are supporting Jonathan Gullis MP's Private Member's Bill which passed committee stage on Wednesday 15 March, as this presents an immediate route for the legislative powers to expand the Automatic Enrolment framework in the current Parliamentary session.

Changes to Universal Credit announced in the Spring Budget 2023 will support more parents into work or to increase their hours, both of which are likely to increase private pension saving. Parents can claim £300 more per month for childcare for one child or £500 for two children, and lead carers of children aged 1 to 12 will be required to attend more Work Focused Interviews, or increase their Work Related Activity hours.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Age Addition

### **Rachael Maskell:**

[\[170653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in each year since 2010 for which figures are available, how many letters his Department sent to pensioners approaching the age of 80 to inform them that after they reached that age their pension would increase by 25 pence per week under the Age Addition provisions; and how much his Department has spent on (a) postage and (b) administration and paper in connection with those letters.

**Laura Trott:**

Information is available for the last 3 years in respect of the number of BR805s letters which are issued to customers approaching 80 regarding the 25 pence weekly addition. Please see figures below:

2020 – 380,886

2021 – 358,309

2022 – 394,220

Total - 1,133,415

This letter is issued via an automated process and therefore we are unable to provide any information on the administration costs relating to this.

**■ Universal Credit: Chronic Illnesses and Disability****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[170607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 167120 on Employment Schemes: Disability, whether (a) inactive disabled people, (b) people with health conditions and (c) people with additional barriers who are not in receipt of benefits will be eligible for Universal Support.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Universal Support is a supported employment programme which will support inactive disabled people, people with health conditions, and people with additional barriers to employment, into sustained work. Whilst final details are to be confirmed, we expect eligibility will also include inactive people who are not in receipt of benefits.

In developing Universal Support, including confirming the final eligibility criteria, the department will engage with a wide range of key stakeholders, including the representatives of local areas, employers, providers and experts in the delivery of 'place and train' support.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

#### ■ Energy Efficiency Update

**Minister of State (Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero) (Andrew Bowie):**  
**[[HCWS669](#)]**

My noble friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lord Callanan) made the following statement on 22 March:

Today the Government is announcing £1.8bn of funding to cut the emissions and boost the energy efficiency of homes and public buildings across England.

The investment will further reduce energy bills for householders and businesses, as part of the Prime Minister's pledge to halve inflation and ease the cost of living. Altogether, 115,000 homes will benefit from energy efficiency and low carbon heating upgrades, along with 144 public sector organisations responsible for hospitals, schools, leisure centres, museums, universities and other buildings.

It is being delivered through the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG), Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to legally commit to end our contribution to global warming by 2050. This is a huge challenge. But it is also an unprecedented opportunity.

The UK has already shown that environmental action can go hand-in-hand with economic success, having grown our economy by more than three-quarters while cutting emissions by over 40% since 1990.

The effort will be shared across many sectors, and decarbonising the energy used in buildings, and increasing energy efficiency will be a vital component.

The UK is home to around 30 million buildings which are responsible for 31% of UK emissions. We have some of the oldest housing stock in Europe, over 80% of buildings still rely on high carbon fossil fuels for heating and have low levels of thermal efficiency.

To reach our net zero target by 2050 we need to decarbonise the way we heat and cool our homes and workplaces, and to ensure that in the near term we meet our fuel poverty targets and emissions reduction targets.

This £1.8bn investment will be critical in supporting our commitment made in 2022 to reduce the UK's final energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030 against 2021 levels.

#### **The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Home Upgrade Grant**

Through the SHDF Wave 2.1 and HUG 2 the Government are awarding a significant injection of funding worth £1.4 billion to local authorities and providers of social housing.

An additional £1.1 billion in match funding for social housing is being provided by local authorities and providers of social housing, bringing the total investment to £2.5 billion to upgrade social and private homes in England.

The grant funding will be invested from April 2023 to March 2025, although delivery on the SHDF can continue with the use of match funding until September 2025.

The money will go towards improvements to social households and private, low income, off-gas grid households with an EPC rating of D or below and could save homes occupants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills.

Energy cutting and cost saving measures provided through the schemes include external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, new windows and doors and draft proofing measures, as well as heat pumps and solar panel installation.

These schemes will also support around 20,000 jobs in the construction and home retrofit sectors, helping to deliver on our promise to grow the economy and create better paid jobs, whilst supporting families across the country.

The funding awarded through these schemes continues the investment through "Help to Heat" Schemes which has already seen:

- Over £240 million already awarded to the SHDF Demonstrator and SHFD Wave 1 projects, indicating the Government's continued support to the £3.8 billion manifesto commitment between now and 2030 to deliver energy efficiency improvements in social housing.
- Over 37,000 households have seen energy efficiency upgrades as part of the first two phases of the Local Authority Delivery scheme, with a further 20,000-28,000 homes expected as part of the Sustainable Warmth Competition.

In addition to the SHDF and HUG, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero will also use ECO4 and ECO+ to accelerate our efforts to improve homes to meet fuel poverty targets and the Government has committed to a four-year, £4 billion extension and expansion of ECO with ECO4. We have announced a further £1 billion extension of the scheme through ECO+ to start in Spring 2023.

### **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme**

Over £409 million of grant funding has also been awarded through the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This Phase 3b of the scheme will support 144 public sector organisations across 171 projects to undertake low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures across hundreds of buildings.

These projects will not only help reduce the carbon emissions of these public buildings but save them money on their energy bills and ultimately, save the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds in the long-term.

Hospitals, schools, leisure centres, universities and other vital public service buildings across England are set to benefit from the scheme.

£2 billion has now been awarded across over 900 projects to decarbonise the public sector across all phases of the scheme to date, and even more funding through Phase 3b is to come as applications are assessed and approved.

Today's £409 million is part of the wider £2.5 billion package that this government has committed to spending on upgrading public sector buildings between 2020 and 2025, supporting this government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions from public sector buildings by 75% by 2037.

**Funding through the schemes will be allocated across England based on the following allocations:**

REGION	PSDS	HUG	SHDF
East Midlands	£18,112,366	£3,291,300**	£ 74,715,671
East of England	£14,677,719	£23,577,300	£83,628,477
London	£44,280,137	£12,006,000	£131,724,938
North East	£7,636,389	£28,576,000	£29,355,551
North West	£44,555,899	£83,885,000	£105,371,309
South East	£108,324,556	£161,237,898	£128,906,218
South West	£33,450,968	£77,514,032	£ 80,236,981
West Midlands	£88,371,731	£152,745,310	£93,593,216
Yorkshire and the Humber	£21,737,561	£41,144,920	£ 50,053,929
Across regions	£26,688,898	-	-
Scotland*	£1,221,871	-	-

\* The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was open to applications from public sector bodies in England and areas of reserved public services across the UK.

\*\* Further funding is available to the region via the Midlands Net Zero Hub which represents £138m of grant funding across the Midlands

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has also partnered with the Energy Systems Catapult to launch a freely accessible suite of tools, templates, and guidance to support the public sector in further decarbonising their sites.

This support will help public sector bodies through the entire decarbonisation lifecycle, from the first stages of developing a strategy, through funding, installation, and completion, to help make achieving net zero sites and energy savings simpler.

## Energy Efficiency Taskforce

The Government has launched an Energy Efficiency Taskforce to support a step change in the reduction of energy demand through accelerated delivery of energy efficiency across the economy. It will help to support the Government's ambition to reduce total UK energy demand by 15% from 2021 levels by 2030 across domestic and commercial buildings and industrial processes.

## Future Funding

£6 billion of new Government funding will be made available from 2025 to 2028, in addition to the £6.6 billion allocated in this Parliament. This provides long-term funding certainty, supporting the growth of supply chains, and ensuring we can scale up our delivery over time.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Second Meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council

**Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly):** [\*\*\[HCWS670\]\*\*](#)

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council met today, 24 March 2023, in London, with delegates attending in person and by video conference.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič. Representatives from the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive attended, as did representatives from the Crown Dependencies of the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey. 27 EU Member State representatives also attended. A Joint Statement was agreed and published on GOV.UK

The Partnership Council discussed implementation of the TCA and cooperation in a range of areas including energy, regulation, security and Union Programmes.

The Partnership Council supervises the operation of the TCA, providing strategic direction to the work of the Trade Partnership Committee and 18 Specialised Committees

The UK restated its commitment to cooperating with the EU through the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council.

### ■ Tenth meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

**Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly):** [\*\*\[HCWS671\]\*\*](#)

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met today, 24 March 2023, in London with delegates attending in person and by video conference. The meeting was co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič. A Joint Statement was agreed and published on GOV.UK.

The Committee welcomed the agreement of the Windsor Framework and adopted the new arrangements set out within the Framework. The adoption of this agreement restores the free-flow of trade from Great Britain to Northern Ireland through a new green lane; it gives the elected representatives of Northern Ireland a veto over new laws that apply there; and protects Northern Ireland's place in our Union through fixing practical problems including on pets, parcels and medicines and ensuring that UK decisions on tax and spend benefit people and businesses in Northern Ireland as they do in Great Britain.

The Committee addressed other important issues including the rights of UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK. Both sides agreed on the importance of continuing to support these citizens and welcomed the efforts made over the past year to do so, including additional funding provided by both sides to external organisations.

The Committee also received an update on the work of the Withdrawal Agreement Specialised Committees since the last meeting on 21 February 2022 and adopted the Withdrawal Agreement Annual Report for the year 2021 pursuant to Article 164(6) of the Withdrawal Agreement. The Committee adopted one Decision laying down arrangements relating to the Windsor Framework

The Committee also adopted two Recommendations:

- on market surveillance and enforcement,
- on Article 13(3a) of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland

Both the UK and EU made five Joint Declarations relating to the Windsor Framework:

- Joint Declaration No 1/2023
- Joint Declaration on the application of Article 10(1) of the Windsor Framework
- Joint Declaration on Article 13(3a) of the Windsor Framework
- Joint Declaration No 2/2023
- Joint Declaration on the VAT regime for goods not being at risk for the Union's internal market and on the VAT arrangements for cross border refunds

The UK made five Unilateral Declarations and the EU made Unilateral Declarations noting these:

- Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom Involvement of the institutions of the 1998 Agreement (Annex I to the Decision No 1/2023 laying down arrangements relating to the Windsor Framework)
- Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on market surveillance and enforcement - noted by the Unilateral Declaration by the Union
- Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on export procedures for goods moving from Northern Ireland to other parts of the United Kingdom - noted by the Unilateral Declaration by the Union

- Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on the democratic consent mechanism in Article 18 of the Windsor Framework - noted by the Unilateral Declaration by the Union

Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on strengthening enforcement action for goods moved in parcels from another part of the United Kingdom to Northern Ireland - noted by the Unilateral Declaration by the Union.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Update on Building Safety

**Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove):** [\[HCWS668\]](#)

On 14 March, I announced that 39 developers had signed the developer remediation contract. By signing the contract, they made binding commitments to fix or pay to fix life-critical fire safety defects in all buildings in England over 11 metres that they had a role in developing or refurbishing over the past 30 years. This amounts to an irreversible commitment to making safe at least 1,100 buildings at a cost of over £2 billion.

#### Update on Responsible Actors Scheme

Last week, I also told the House that there will be consequences for companies that do not sign the contract. I warned that they will be prohibited from commencing developments in England or gaining building control sign-off on their developments, unless they sign and adhere to the contract. I said that we will lay regulations this Spring to establish a Responsible Actors Scheme. The regulations will recognise the positive action of responsible developers and will make sure that eligible developers who do not sign and comply with the contract will be unable to be members of the Scheme, and therefore be subject to prohibitions. I will lay regulations that will, with Parliament's consent, bring the Scheme into operation before the Summer Recess.

Today, I am publishing the key features of the Responsible Actors Scheme on GOV.UK and placing a copy of the information in the libraries of both Houses. The key features document sets out how the Scheme will work, the likely eligibility criteria and membership conditions for the first phase of the Scheme, how developers will apply to join the Scheme and the prohibitions that will be imposed on eligible developers that fail to sign the contract and comply with its terms.

Developers who want to be part of the Scheme will need to sign the developer remediation contract and comply with its terms. In its first phase, the Scheme will focus on larger residential property developers and developers who developed multiple tall residential buildings known to have life-critical fire safety defects. Over time, I intend to expand the Scheme to cover even more of those who developed unsafe 11m+ residential buildings and should pay to fix them.

Eligible developers will be invited to join the Scheme by a statutory deadline or provide evidence that they do not in fact meet the eligibility criteria. Any eligible developer who

chooses not to join the Scheme, or who is expelled from the Scheme as a result of a material or persistent breach of its conditions, will be added to a list of developers who will not be permitted to carry out major development or secure building control sign-offs.

The message to those developers who have yet to sign the contract, their shareholders and investors could not be clearer. The Responsible Actors Scheme is coming. Only developers who behave responsibly will be trusted to build the homes of the future. Any eligible developers who fail to do the right thing will need to find a new line of work.

#### Update on signatories to the developer remediation contract

At the time of my statement of 14 March, 11 developers had yet to sign. I named those companies and called on their directors to reflect on their future and do the right thing.

Today, I can confirm that 4 of those 11 companies have since signed the contract:

Ballymore, Lendlease, London Square and Telford Homes. The 7 developers who have yet to sign the contract are: Abbey Developments, Avant, Dandara, Emerson Group (Jones Homes), Galliard Homes, Inland Homes and Rydon Homes. Some of those companies have told us that they remain committed to protecting leaseholders and taxpayers from having to pay, and claim that they will sign the contract in coming days.

As I made plain last week, I will write to local authorities and building inspectors to explain the consequences for those companies that remain non-signatories at the point that the regulations creating the Responsible Actors Scheme come into force. I will suggest action that local authorities may want to take to be prepared for implementation of the scheme, to ensure that any companies that do not wish to act responsibly do not profit from that behaviour – and that the public is protected as a result.

Given possible market sensitivities, I notified the London Stock Exchange about the key features document.