

**Daily Report****Monday, 22 May 2023**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 May 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:45 P.M., 22 May 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

■ Conditions of Employment: EU Law

Justin Madders:

[\[184678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to her Oral contribution on 11 May 2023, Official Report, in response to the Urgent Question on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, if she will publish the details of the correspondence she has received from hon. Members on that Bill on that matter.

Nigel Huddleston:

The information can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Consumers: Protection

Dean Russell:

[\[184530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of (a) consumer rights and (b) support available to consumers who purchase goods and services from a company that becomes insolvent.

Kevin Hollinrake:

In 2014 the Government asked the Law Commission to examine the protections for consumers in insolvency situations who have prepaid for goods and services. Its report was published in 2016 and found that the combination of existing law and chargeback rules provided important protection, and that substantial amounts could be refunded in this way.

The Government's response to the Commission's recommendations was published in 2018 and has already led to new guidance to insolvency office-holders on chargeback provisions.

The UK regime sets some of the highest standards of consumer protection in the world. The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill currently before Parliament establishes new tools to drive competition in digital markets, and boosts consumer rights and enforcement against unscrupulous businesses.

■ Defence: Exports

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[185377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what proportion of the global defence export market the UK accounted for in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020, (d) 2021 and (e) 2022.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[185378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what the total value of UK defence exports in actual prices was in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020, (d) 2021 and (e) 2022.

Nigel Huddleston:

The defence and security export statistics are published annually on GOV.UK.

To the questions:

185377: what proportion of the global defence export market the UK accounted for in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020, (d) 2021 and (e) 2022.

a) 19% b) 16% c) 6% d) 7% e) Not available (Source Official Stats 2018-2021)

185378: what the total value of UK defence exports in actual prices was in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020, (d) 2021 and (e) 2022.

a) £14bn b) £11bn c) £7.52 bn d) £6.64bn e) Not available (Source Official Stats 2018-2021)

The value of UK defence exports are based on orders received, and are not the value of actual exports.

■ Department for Business and Trade: Ministerial Boxes**Emily Thornberry:**[\[184020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how many ministerial red boxes belonging to (a) her Department, (b) the former Department for International Trade and (c) the former Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, have (i) been reported missing or lost or (ii) had their security features removed in order that they can be purchased for personal use by former ministers from 1 May 2018 to 30 April 2023.

Nigel Huddleston:

Two Ministerial red boxes from the Department for Business and Trade, Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy were reported missing between 1st May 2018 to 30th April 2023. No boxes had security features removed for personal use.

■ Environment Protection: Exports**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**[\[185374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the announcement on 11 November 2021 by her Department of the Clean Growth programme, how many businesses in England received support from that programme in each month in (a) 2021, (b) 2022 and (c) 2023 broken down by English region.

Nigel Huddleston:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to his previous question on 17 January 2023 to PQ UIN 119996.

■ EU Law**Sir John Hayes:**[\[183007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 April 2023 to Question 180243 on EU Law, whether her Department conducted audits to

assess the performance of the EU Better Regulation Initiative from 2010 until the UK's departure from the EU.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Department for Business and Trade is not aware of any audits conducted on the performance of this Initiative.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[183009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 April 2023 to Question 180243 on EU Law, whether her Department holds searchable IT archives setting out Regulatory Impact Analysis estimates for EU-sourced regulation.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Department for Business and Trade does not hold searchable IT archives and searchable documentation relating to Regulatory Impact Analysis estimates for EU sourced regulation. However, all available regulatory impact assessments should be publicly accessible on legislation.gov.uk, alongside the relevant piece of legislation.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[183010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 April 2023 to Question 180243 on EU Law, whether her department holds searchable IT archives employing the search term out of scope relating to changes to regulatory burdens that could not be reviewed due to its EU origin.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Department for Business and Trade does not hold searchable IT archives that could be searched in this way.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[183011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 April 2023 to Question 180243 on EU Law, whether her department holds searchable IT archives setting out historic submissions from interest groups providing cost-benefit estimates of EU legislation.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Department for Business and Trade does not hold searchable IT archives specifically setting out historic submissions from interest groups providing cost-benefit estimates of EU legislation.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Rules of Origin

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[185708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what recent estimate she has made of the proportion of goods manufactured in the UK that meet the rules of origin requirements of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Nigel Huddleston:

The opportunity to use the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) will depend on individual firms' supply chains and investment decisions, but will be additional to opportunities under a number of existing bilateral agreements with individual CPTPP member states.

Using CPTPP rules of origin, British businesses could take advantage of new export opportunities and trade more freely across the bloc. They could also help support UK efforts to diversify critical supply chains by deepening our trading links across the Asia-Pacific region.

■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries**Sarah Olney:**[\[185689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of a 10 per cent tariff on the import of vehicles on the UK's car manufacturing sector.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK Global Tariff sets out the UK's Most Favourite Nation tariffs. It applies to all imports of goods unless an exception applies, such as a Free Trade Agreement. The UKGT has been in place since 1 January 2021.

In setting tariffs on automotive goods, the Government took into account a number of market and economic factors as well as the interests of UK businesses, manufacturers, and consumers as well as on the views expressed through a public consultation in February 2020.

The Government's programme of trade agreements also supports the import of vehicles. We continue to engage with partners to address issues, including around rules of origin, as needed.

■ Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Bill**Luke Hall:**[\[184689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether her Department has made an estimate of the number of Statutory Instruments which will be necessary to implement the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Bill, once it receives Royal Assent, for delivery in 2024.

Luke Hall:[\[184690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, for what reasons the Statutory Instruments for the delivery of Neonatal Leave and Pay are not ready; and if she will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

[\[184691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what her Department's timeline is for laying the Statutory Instruments needed for the implementation of Neonatal Leave and Pay.

Luke Hall:

[\[184692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure the necessary Statutory Instruments for the delivery of Neonatal Leave and Pay are laid as quickly as possible.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Bill is currently progressing through Parliament and has not yet received Royal Assent. We are committed to introducing Neonatal Care Leave and Pay as quickly as possible, and work is already underway across Government to deliver these new entitlements.

We anticipate approximately seven statutory instruments will be necessary. These will be laid in due course following Royal Assent, subject to parliamentary time.

Luke Hall:

[\[184693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether she has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on cross-departmental work on implementing Neonatal Leave and Pay; and whether she is taking steps with the Chancellor to ensure that the relevant Statutory Instruments are laid without delay.

Luke Hall:

[\[184694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether she is taking steps to ensure that the measures in the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Bill can be delivered for the 2024-25 financial year.

Kevin Hollinrake:

We are committed to introducing Neonatal Care Leave and Pay as quickly as possible. Work is ongoing across Government to deliver these new entitlements.

Delivery requires updates to HMRC IT systems, support for employers and payroll providers to implement changes, guidance for employers and individuals, for Parliamentary consideration of a significant amount of secondary legislation, and to align with the start of a tax year.

These actions will take approximately 18 months following Royal Assent of the (Neonatal Care Leave and Pay) Bill. Therefore, delivery is planned for April 2025.

■ Taiwan: Arms Trade

Catherine West:

[\[185369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how many defence export licences have been issued for material for export to Taiwan in each of the last ten financial years.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>. These reports contain detailed information on export licences, including the destination, overall value, the type (e.g. Military, Other), and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

Currently this includes information up to 31 December 2022. Information covering 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 will be published in July 2023 and information covering 1 April to 30 June 2023 will be published in October 2023.

The Government assesses all export licence applications to all destinations against the [Strategic Export Licensing Criteria](#). We will not license the export of equipment where to do so would be inconsistent with these Criteria.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Civil Servants: Pay and Workplace Pensions****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[183663]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants have their (a) payroll and (ii) pensions managed by private limited company Shared Services Connected Ltd; what was the cost to the public purse of using this company in (i) 2020-21 (ii) 2021-22 and (iii) 2022-23; and whether he plans to take steps to administer the payroll and pensions of all civil servants in-house.

Alex Burghart:

[Holding answer 15 May 2023]: Shared Services Connected Ltd (SSCL) services are provided to approximately 260,000 civil servants across the Health and Safety Executive, Office for Nuclear Regulation, Ministry of Justice, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions and Cabinet Office. SSCL costs for all Independent Shared Services Centre Two (ISSC2) departments in calendar year 2020 were £171m and for calendar year 2021 were £206m. This change was due to a surge of short term and catch up volumes as a result of the COVID pandemic and project start ups.

2022 calendar year costs have not yet been published. SSCL are contracted to perform as-is services until October 2025. Future service provision, beyond this date, is currently being considered for the whole of the civil service.

This system saves duplication of effort across government departments, enabling them to focus work and resources on the British people's priorities.

The costs stated are for all services provided by SSCL which include HR, Finance, Recruitment and Procurement Services. Across all streams, they process approximately 6 million transactions per annum.

■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide

Ellie Reeves: [\[185388\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many domestic homicides there have been in each year since 2010.

Ellie Reeves: [\[185389\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many domestic homicides there have been in each year since 2010 where the offender has maintained parental control of children shared with the victim.

Jeremy Quin:

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

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Questions of 16 May are attached.

Attachments:

1. UK Statistics Authority [PQ185388_185389.pdf]

■ Prime Minister: Equal Pay

Imran Hussain: [\[185666\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish an ethnicity pay gap report for the Prime Minister's Office for financial year 2023-24 in line with the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance for employers published by the Department for Business and Trade on 17 April 2023.

Jeremy Quin:

The Prime Minister's Office is part of the Cabinet Office for management and staffing purposes.

Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting is voluntary. The Cabinet Office is working with other government departments to consider the details of the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance published in April. More generally the Civil Service is undertaking extensive work both centrally and within departments to promote diversity across its workplaces, including ethnicity.

■ Veterans: LGBT+ People

Tommy Sheppard: [\[185663\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer 162222 of 14 March 2023, on Veterans: LGBT+ People, if he will take steps to publish the Government's response to the independent review into LGBT veterans in a timely way manner once that review is published.

Johnny Mercer:

This Government is committed to understanding, acknowledging and where appropriate addressing the effect that the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality in the UK Armed Forces has had on veterans. In line with the terms of the Independent Review,

we will carefully consider the findings and then publish the report and the Government's response in due course.

DEFENCE

■ A400M Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[185205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to procure the Platform Universal Rigid Inflatable Boat Aerial Delivery system for the Royal Air Force's fleet of A400M aircraft.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) intends to tender for a universal boat delivery system (known as Large Boat Aerial Delivery) that will meet the current and future needs of the MOD. Potential solutions to meet this requirement will be met via competition.

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Luke Pollard:

[\[185431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of his Department's staff are working on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

James Heappey:

As of 17 May 2023, there are 179 members of staff assigned to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy team. This includes both civilian and military staff in the UK and overseas, as well as contractors providing specialist services e.g. interpreters and cultural advisors.

■ Chinook Helicopters: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[185516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department expects to take delivery of 14 new CH-47 extended range aircraft.

James Cartlidge:

The delivery schedule for the Chinook H-47 extended range aircraft is currently under review. A Review Note is planned to be submitted to the Investment Approvals Committee in late 2023.

■ Hercules Aircraft

John Healey:

[\[185493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether a full Ministry of Defence's Combined Operational Effectiveness Investment Appraisal was conducted on the decision to retire the Hercules C130 planes in 2023 before the Defence Command Paper was published in March 2021.

James Cartlidge:

A variety of evidence, including risk and operational impacts, was considered with the decision to retire C-130 aircraft in 2023. This built on the original investment decision and evidence to replace C130 with A400M.

HMS Prince of Wales**John Healey:**[\[185492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days HMS Prince of Wales was at sea in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021, (d) 2022 and (e) 2023.

James Cartlidge:

The number of days at sea that have previously been published for HMS PRINCE OF WALES are as follows:

2019	2020	2021	2022
57	30	101	98

HMS PRINCE OF WALES has been undergoing repairs throughout 2023 and will remain alongside in Rosyth until these repairs are complete, including undertaking other planned capability upgrade work concurrently. HMS PRINCE OF WALES is expected to return to her planned programme in Autumn 2023.

Military Aid**John Healey:**[\[185209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Military Aid to Civilian Authorities requests his Department (a) received and (b) in approved each month since January 2022.

James Heappey:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 November 2022 to Question 86646.

Attachments:

1. Military Aid [UIN 86646.docx]

Military Bases: Valuation**John Healey:**[\[185496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2021–22 published on 31 March 2022, what the value of the Defence Estate is as of 31 March 2023.

James Cartlidge:

Whilst there is no specific value attributed to the "Defence Estate", a record of the value of the Land and Buildings that comprise the Estate can be found within the Department's Annual Reports and Accounts.

The Annual Reports and Accounts for Financial Year 2022-23 are currently being finalised and will be published later this year. The most recent available figure for the value of these assets can be found in the Annual Report and Accounts for Financial Year 2021-22. For ease of reference this can be found on page 189 and the combined value of assets is recorded as £40.839 billion.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Data Protection**

John Healey:

[\[185476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2023 to Question 184569 on Ministry of Defence: Data Protection, how many individuals were affected by each of these personal data incidents; and what was the nature of each of these personal data incidents.

James Cartlidge:

It has not been possible to retrieve and review all of the necessary data in the time available. I will write to the right hon. Member with this information.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Equal Pay**

Imran Hussain:

[\[185686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if their Department will publish an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for financial year 2023-24 in line with the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance for employers published on 17 April 2023.

Dr Andrew Morrison:

As part of the Ministry of Defence Race Action Plan, Defence has committed to produce ethnicity pay gap reports, for both Defence Civil Servants and members of the Armed Forces. A report for the 2023-24 period will be produced in due course, following the end of that financial year.

■ **Type 83 Destroyers: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[185197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent progress his Department has made on the Type 83 destroyer programme.

James Cartlidge:

The Type 83 destroyer programme is currently ongoing and still in the pre-concept phase.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices

Sir Stephen Timms:

[\[184873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the role of apprenticeship intermediaries in improving the (a) number and (b) quality of apprenticeships available.

Robert Halfon:

The department has developed an employer-led apprenticeship system which allows employers to design the apprenticeships they need and directly access funding for the apprenticeships they want, when they want it. There are currently over 660 high-quality apprenticeship standards available for employers across every sector to access.

We want to make the apprenticeship system as simple to access as possible, especially for small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who will often have less capacity. That is why the department has removed the limit on the number of apprentices SMEs can employ and are making it simpler for them to set-up an apprenticeship service account and access funding and support. We are also introducing new enhanced advice via the GOV.UK website specifically for SMEs, including new peer-to-peer videos.

Intermediary organisations can play a beneficial role in helping employers in a sector or region understand and access the opportunities that apprenticeships present. For example, the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network is a group of almost 900 employers across the country, who are passionate about apprenticeships and are successful in inspiring other businesses to use high-quality apprenticeships and encourage young people to pursue apprenticeships as a vibrant career route.

Since November 2022 the department has been piloting SME apprenticeship pathfinders in four regions of the north of England, investing £750,000 per year to enable growth partners to reach and support SMEs to take their first steps on their apprenticeship journey successfully. This pilot will be running for two years, and we will begin the evaluation in 2024.

■ Asylum: Children

Stephen Morgan:

[\[185086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to ensure food vouchers are available for asylum-seeking children during school holidays.

Nick Gibb:

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are eligible for support under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act. The support provided usually consists of accommodation (with utility bills and council tax paid) and a weekly allowance to meet other essential living needs.

Asylum seekers with children also have access to free schooling, including free school meals (FSM).

Whilst FSM is not available to pupils outside of term time, pupils who are eligible for FSM are also entitled to a place on their Local Authority's Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which provides healthy food and enriching activities over the main holiday periods.

■ Children and Young People: Exercise

Stephen Morgan:

[\[185076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness of the Chief Medical Officer's guidance on recommended activity levels for children and young people among teachers and schools.

Nick Gibb:

To help children meet the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines, the Department has worked with sector organisations, such as the Youth Sport Trust and Women's Football Association, on an ongoing programme of communications activity to raise the profile of physical activity.

On 8 March 2023, the Department announced over £600 million across the next two academic years for the primary Physical Education and Sport Premium. The Premium can be used by schools to help provide access for pupils to at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the school day, as well as providing additional funding to support schools to ensure girls and boys have equal access to sport in school.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[185077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the role of physical activity in promoting mental wellbeing among children and young people.

Nick Gibb:

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines set out how regular physical exercise provides a range of physical and mental health benefits for children and young people.

On 8 March 2023, the Government announced multi million pound funding to support schools in providing more opportunities for pupils to be active by accessing high quality Physical Education and school sport. This funding will help pupils to meet the UK Chief Medical Officers' daily recommended amount of physical activity.

To support pupils to access more opportunities to be active outside of school and gain the mental wellbeing benefits of exercise, the Department has announced funding of up to £57 million to deliver phase three of the Opening School Facilities programme. This will allow schools to open their sport facilities outside of the core school day, at weekends and during holidays. The funding will be targeted to the

schools in the country's least active communities, where it will have the most positive impact.

■ Children in Care

Catherine West:

[\[185039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government is taking steps to help ensure children in care are not moved away from where they were born.

Claire Coutinho:

Local authorities have a statutory duty set out in Section 22(3) of the Children's Act 1989 to ensure that there is sufficient provision in their area to meet the needs of children in their care.

The department recognises that there are not enough of the right homes in the right places for children in care to live in. We want to reduce out of area placements, but sometimes circumstances mean it is the right decision for a child to be placed outside their home authority.

In response to the urgent calls from the Competition and Markets Authority and the Care Review to transform the way care is provided to children, the government is working to drive forward improvements at a national, regional, and local level to increase sufficiency and improve standards of care and regulations.

By 2027, we will see an increase in the availability of high-quality, stable, and loving homes for every child in care local to where they are from. To achieve this, we are supporting local authorities to increase care placements and ensure they meet children's needs, with £259 million capital funding for secure and open children's homes.

The department is also investing £10 million to develop Regional Care Co-operatives (RCCs) to plan, commission, and deliver children's social care placements. Through operating on a larger scale and developing specialist capabilities, the RCCs will be able to develop a wide range of places to better meet children's needs. This, in turn, should lead to improved placement stability and fewer out of area placements.

We are also seeking to rebalance the market through investing in foster care. The department has pledged to invest over £27 million over the next two years to deliver a fostering recruitment and retention programme, so that foster care is available for more children who need it.

■ Children in Care: Restraint Techniques

Steve McCabe:

[\[185207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of whether there is evidence of handcuffing of children in care during secure transportation.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is clear that restraint, which includes the use of handcuffs, in relation to looked-after children is only permissible in a very narrow range of circumstances,

and must always be necessary and proportionate. The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and supporting statutory guidance clearly sets out the law regarding the use of restraint where children are placed in children's homes, including in secure children's homes. This guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-homes-regulations-including-quality-standards-guide>.

Restraint is only permitted in certain instances, in order to prevent injury to any person including the child, to prevent serious damage to the property of any person including the child, or to prevent a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home.

Homes are required to record any incidents of restraint under Regulation 35. There is also a requirement under Regulation 40 for the Registered Person to inform Ofsted of any incident in relation to a child that they consider to be serious, which would usually include an incident of restraint. The department does not routinely collect data on the use of restraint.

In 2019, the government published guidance on reducing the need for restraint for those responsible for providing education, health, and social care to children and young people under 18 years of age with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties in these settings. This can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812435/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention.pdf.

Where local authorities have contract arrangements with transport services, restraint should only be used in very limited circumstances, in accordance with the guidance on the use of restraint and must always be necessary and proportionate. The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 will be reviewed as part of the government's response to the Care Review recommendations, Stable Homes, Built on Love. In this, we have committed to review care standards, and will not hesitate to revisit guidance on the use of restraint and strengthen the law in this area, if we find this is necessary.

■ Multi-academy Trusts

Andrew Rosindell:

[184902]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to increase the accountability of executive heads of multi-academy trusts.

Nick Gibb:

The Department requires a high level of accountability and transparency from academy trusts. Academy trusts' status as companies, charities and public sector bodies means they are all subject to rigorous accountability systems. The explicit responsibilities of trust executive leaders as Accounting Officers are set out in the Academy Trust Handbook.

Where non-financial or financial non-compliance or governance failure is identified, including by trust executive leaders, Regions Group or the Education and Skills

Funding Agency respectively will intervene in a way that is proportionate to the risk and preserves education provision. This can include issuing a trust with a Notice to Improve or, in the most serious cases, termination of the Funding Agreement.

To strengthen the support for executive head teachers and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), the Department is introducing a new Multi Academy Trust CEO Development programme. The Department has convened an expert panel across school leadership and business to codify the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of a CEO of a large trust into the new 'Multi Academy Trust Leadership Development: CEO Content Framework'. The document includes the need for robust internal structures for a trust's board to hold the CEO to account.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[184903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will make an estimate of the potential impact of multi-academy trusts on costs for schools in the 2021-22 financial year; and if she will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The primary responsibility for the oversight of academy trusts, and the schools within them, rests with the trustees of an academy trust. The Department requires a high level of accountability and transparency from academy trusts. Academy trusts' status as companies, charities, and public sector bodies, means they have a rigorous tri-partite scrutiny framework.

Academy trusts have the freedom to centralise functions to take advantage of economies of scale and obtain best value for money. Where academy trusts top slice from their academies' budgets to pay for these services, they must be transparent by disclosing the basis and value in their accounts. They must include additional disclosures in their annual accounts about the services they deliver centrally and the charging policy they apply. They must also identify the share against each academy.

Academy trusts have delivered strong financial health across the sector. The latest published data shows that in 2020/21, 97.3% of trusts had a cumulative surplus or a zero balance.

■ National Curriculum Tests

Mike Amesbury:

[\[185104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential effects of SATs on children's (a) mental health and (b) well-being.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[185105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, will he make an assessment of the impact of SATs on children's (a) mental health and (b) well being.

Mike Amesbury:

[185107]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has undertaken research on the potential effects of Standard Assessment Tests on children's mental health and well being.

Mike Amesbury:

[185108]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential effects of the Standard Assessment Tests on 10 May on children's mental health and well being.

Nick Gibb:

End of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum assessments, also known as Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), are an essential part of ensuring that all pupils master the basics of reading, writing and maths as set out in the National Curriculum and to prepare them for secondary school.

Although it is important that schools encourage pupils to do their best, this should not be at the expense of pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Research conducted by the UCL Institute of Education and published in 2021 found that there was 'little evidence to changes in [pupil] wellbeing around the time of Key Stage 2 tests, or that pupils in England become happier – either in general or regarding school – once these tests are over'.

The Department is committed to ensuring schools and colleges are safe, calm, and supportive educational environments which promote and support mental wellbeing.

The Department's senior mental health lead training available to all state schools and colleges by 2025 supports this commitment. More than 10,000 schools and colleges have received senior mental health lead training grants so far, which includes more than 6 in 10 state funded secondary schools, and a further £10 million provided this year means up to two thirds of state schools and colleges can benefit by April 2023.

This is in addition to record funding for pupils' mental health support through the NHS long term plan, and the £79 million increase announced in 2021, meaning more than 2.4 million pupils now have access in schools and colleges to a mental health support team. The number of teams will increase from 287 to over 500 by 2024. The Department has also recently brought together all its sources of advice for schools and colleges into a single site on GOV.UK, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders. The resources are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>.

Neither the Department nor the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), who are responsible for the development of the tests, have any current plans for a formal review of the SATs papers for 2023. STA will continue to engage with schools, unions, and other stakeholders to understand their views on the papers this year, and with regard to all aspects of primary assessment.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Stephen Morgan:

[184839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the expected impact on levels of participation in the National Tutoring Programme of changes in the subsidy rate in academic years (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

Nick Gibb:

Since the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) began in 2020, over three million courses have been started. The Government is investing more than £1 billion so that pupils can catch up through accessing high quality tuition.

The Department continues to monitor participation in the NTP in the 2022/23 academic year via the termly school census.

Statistics from the most recent census, which show the position at 19 January, are available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/national-tutoring-programme/2022-23>. The Department is supplementing data received from schools with insight from stakeholders and the Department's support desk to understand barriers to delivery faced by schools.

The Department will publish information for schools on arrangements for the programme for the academic year 2023/24 in due course. The Department remains committed to publishing statistics on participation in the programme throughout the next academic year.

■ Overseas Students: Visas

Stephen Morgan:

[185082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the adequacy of the support available to families moving to the UK on a student visa.

Robert Halfon:

As set out in the government's International Education Strategy and subsequent updates, the department is committed to working with the higher education sector to enhance the international student experience, and to ensure they have an enjoyable and valuable experience whilst in the UK. Details of the strategy are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-education-strategy-global-potential-global-growth/international-education-strategy-global-potential-global-growth>.

This includes working closely with organisations such as the UK Council for International Student Affairs, who offer a range of information and guidance for those travelling on a student visa. This information is available at: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>.

In addition, universities provide a range of dedicated support to their international students at pre-arrival, on-arrival and during their studies. This includes welcoming services, transitional support and visa advice.

As set out in Home Office guidance, international students and their families who come to the UK on a student visa are required to have money to support themselves for the duration of their studies. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>. Generally, to qualify for student support from Student Finance England, a person resident in England must have settled status or a recognised connection to the UK. This includes persons who are covered by the EU Withdrawal Agreement, have long residence in this country or who have been granted international protection by the Home Office. There are also requirements associated with ordinary residence in the UK.

■ Post-18 Education and Funding Review

Alex Sobel: [\[184841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to publish the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding.

Robert Halfon:

The Review of Post-18 Education and Funding was published in May 2019.

On 24 February 2022, the department published the Higher Education (HE) Reform Consultation, setting out reforms to the student loan system to put it on a fair and sustainable footing and a package of investment into the HE sector. The department also proposed a range of reforms to improve outcomes for students as a result of their courses and help them move into high-value employment.

The HE Reform Consultation closed on 6 May 2022. The department is now considering the views received and plans to publish a response to the consultation in due course.

■ Relationships and Sex Education: Adoption

Cat Smith: [\[185018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the review of relationships and sex education will seek to improve relationships education for children who have been adopted.

Cat Smith: [\[185019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the review of relationships and sex education will consult families of adopted children on the content of relationships education.

Cat Smith: [\[185020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the independent panel reviewing relationships and sex education will include a trauma specialist.

Nick Gibb:

On 8 March 2023, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced that the Department had brought forward the review of the relationships, sex and health

education (RSHE) statutory guidance. The review will cover the full scope of the statutory guidance and will involve working closely with stakeholders and experts to draw on the best available evidence. The review aims to improve the statutory guidance, which will in turn improve relationships education for all pupils.

On 31 March 2023, the Department announced further details of the review, including setting up an independent panel of experts to advise on what can be done to ensure that what is taught is appropriate, including introducing age restrictions:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-of-relationships-sex-and-health-education-to-protect-children-to-conclude-by-end-of-year>.

The Department will seek to gather evidence from a range of stakeholders over the coming months and will undertake a public consultation on the amended guidance in autumn 2023. The Department expects to publish the revised statutory guidance early in 2024. Families and representatives of adopted children will be able to contribute to the consultation process.

The Department is in the process of identifying the members of independent expert panel, which will inform the wider review of the RSHE statutory guidance. The Department expects the process to be completed shortly and will then make public more details of the panel and their work. The Department will seek to ensure that the views of a range of groups are represented in the review process, including adopted children and those who have experienced trauma.

■ School Rebuilding Programme

Bridget Phillipson: [185586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of completed projects under the school rebuilding programme.

Bridget Phillipson: [185587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish full details of the 1,015 nominations received in 2022 as part of the prioritisation of buildings for the Schools Rebuilding Programme.

Nick Gibb:

Of the 400 schools that have been selected for the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) since 2021, works have been started at 170 schools and four building projects have been completed. Works will start at the rest of the selected projects at a rate of approximately 50 per year over the next five years.

1,105 nominations were received for the SRP in 2022. The full list is available on GOV.UK here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-schools-in-the-programme>.

■ **Schools: Buildings**

Bridget Phillipson: [\[185265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to publish the results of its questionnaire to schools, further education colleges and local authority maintained nurseries on the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete on their premises.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[185267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of schools that have now responded to a questionnaire issued by her Department on the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete on their premises.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[185276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have reported the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete on their estates.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has sent the questionnaire on reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) to all responsible bodies, asking them to provide information on RAAC in their estates. Responses from the questionnaire allow the Department to better understand the prevalence of RAAC across the education estate and ensure the correct support is in place to meet responsible bodies' needs.

The Department continues to receive responses for all schools with blocks covered by the scope of the questionnaire. Many responses are partially complete as responsible bodies are carrying out further investigation. Therefore, an estimate cannot be given at this time.

The questionnaire remains open and the Department is actively encouraging responsible bodies to respond and update their responses as more information becomes available.

Identifying RAAC can be difficult, so all reports of suspected RAAC are investigated by structural engineers commissioned by the Department and, where needed, site surveys are undertaken to confirm its presence.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[185585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2023 to Question 163895 on Schools: Buildings, how many school buildings with significant safety issues that could not be managed with local resources were provided with additional support in the last five years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[185588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many representations her Department has received from bodies responsible for the safety and maintenance of school buildings in their care about urgent and severe buildings condition needs that they have unable to resolve in each year since 2015.

Nick Gibb:

Where the Department is alerted to significant safety issues with a building that cannot be managed with local resources, additional support is provided on a case by case basis. In the last five years, the Department has provided financial support to 104 schools where the urgent building issue cannot be managed locally and threatens school closure. Support was provided for a range of issues, including structural concerns and general condition issues, such as roofing and boiler failures.

Responsible bodies can contact the Department to seek support on an array of capital issues to ascertain what support, including funding, might be available to them. This does not necessarily mean that the responsible body is not able to resolve the issue independently but may be seeking financial support through existing capital programmes or other advice and guidance to support their plans.

Schools: Festivals and Special Occasions**Alex Sobel:**[\[185093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing Muslim students to take additional time off school during Eid.

Nick Gibb:

Schools must authorise a pupil's absence if it is on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

The Department does not define which specific days schools should authorise for religious observance, though generally, it may be a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their workplace to mark the occasion. The Department advises schools to seek advice from the relevant religious body if they are in doubt.

Parents may apply to the school for a leave of absence that is linked to a religious day. Unlike days that the religious body have exclusively set apart for religious observance, such leave is authorised at the discretion of the school.

Schools and Local Authorities may consider taking further steps to manage the effect of such absence, including setting term dates around days for religious observance, working with local faith groups to develop guidance on absence for religious observance, taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days, and providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions for this reason.

Schools: Sports**Stephen Morgan:**[\[185078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that children from under-served communities are supported to take part in school sport.

Stephen Morgan:

[185079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities have opportunities to take part in physical education and sport within schools.

Nick Gibb:

Physical education (PE) is a foundation subject at all four Key Stages, and it is a vital part of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils to access. Schools are expected to develop a sporting curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, during PE lessons and in extracurricular sporting activity.

On 8 March 2023, the Government committed over £600 million in funding over the next two years for primary schools, including special schools to provide high quality PE and school sport to all pupils. £57 million up to March 2025 was additionally announced to deliver phase three of the Opening School Facilities Programme which will support schools in low socio-economic areas to open their sports facilities in the evenings, during weekends and in the holidays.

The Department funds two other programmes to support pupils access to PE and school sport. The Girls Your Time initiative, worth up to £980,000 up to March 2024, is increasing opportunities for girls aged 8 to 16 to access competitive sport and sport leadership opportunities. The Inclusion 2024 grant, which is worth up to £900,000 up to March 2024, is providing practical support to schools to increase opportunities for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to engage in sport and physical exercise.

Stephen Morgan:

[185080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her Department's estimated timeframe is for releasing the new School Sport and Activity Action Plan.

Stephen Morgan:

[185081]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to enable children and young people to contribute to the development of the new School Sport and Activity Action Plan.

Nick Gibb:

The update to the School Sport and Activity Action Plan will be published this summer and will build on the Government's Physical Education (PE) and School Sport announcement on 8 March 2023. This confirmed funding for the PE and Sport Premium and School Games Organisers for an additional two academic years.

The Action Plan has been informed by data collected from over 100,000 pupils and young people annually through the Sport England's Active Lives Survey. This survey collects data on pupils' behaviours and attitudes to sport and physical activity. The Department has also worked with a wide range of sector organisations and schools who share insight from teachers, parents, and pupils.

■ Schools: Uniforms

Darren Jones:

[185061]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the statutory guidance provided to schools on the costs of school uniforms.

Nick Gibb:

The statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms came into force in September 2022. The Department is assessing the effect of the guidance through continued engagement with key stakeholders, including via correspondence received by the Department from parents, head teachers, and uniform suppliers.

Stephen Morgan:

[185083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to help reduce potential cost barriers to accessing branded school uniform for asylum seeking children.

Nick Gibb:

New statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms came into force in September 2022 which requires schools in England to ensure that their uniforms are affordable. The guidance states that branded items should be kept to a minimum, and any branded items should be low cost or long lasting. It also states that schools should make second hand uniform available for parents to acquire. Schools must have regard to this guidance when developing and implementing their uniform policy. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>.

The Department is not taking any additional steps specifically for asylum seeking children to reduce potential cost barriers to them accessing branded school uniform.

The pressures placed on local education and children's services infrastructure relating to asylum seeking children should be managed through existing processes and funding allocations.

■ Secondary Education: Teachers

Andrew Rosindell:

[184901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to increase the number of planning, preparation and assessment periods provided for teachers in secondary schools for (a) updating work schemes and (b) implementing the latest pedagogical thinking.

Nick Gibb:

Head teachers and trust leaders decide how much Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time they provide for their teachers.

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which sets out the statutory framework for teachers' pay and conditions for maintained schools in

England, sets a minimum requirement of 10% of a teacher's timetabled teaching time as PPA time. There is no upper limit on PPA time.

While academies are not required to comply with the requirements set out in the STPCD, anecdotal evidence suggests that the vast majority do. The STPCD can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>.

■ Shipbuilding: Training

Mr Kevan Jones:

[185196]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to convene a network of excellence for shipbuilding training providers.

Robert Halfon:

The department has convened the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce to explore the industry's skills needs and make recommendations for how to resolve shortages. The Taskforce brings together a wealth of expertise. It is Chaired by the Hon. Captain Dr Paul Little, and its membership includes individuals from defence, leisure, commercial and workboat building, as well as trade unions, academics and educators.

The Taskforce has been working at pace since it first met in July 2022 and is currently drafting an independent report that will set out its recommendations. It plans to publish this in autumn. My right hon. Friends, the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Defence, both met with the Taskforce in February to launch National Apprenticeships Week and discuss progress in identifying these recommendations. I also attended the Shipbuilding Inter-Ministerial Group meeting in April where I shared progress that had been made by the Taskforce to prioritise the most impactful recommendations.

One of the Taskforce's recommendations is expected to call on the department to establish a network of excellence for shipbuilding training providers. The Taskforce has identified examples of best practice in shipbuilding skills provision, such as South Devon College and City of Glasgow College. It is considering how to encourage more providers to reach this standard.

To ensure its proposals are supported by wider industry, the Taskforce is currently testing its recommendations with stakeholders, including employers, industry bodies, and representatives of sectors with similar skills requirements.

The Taskforce's report will be independent, and the department will collaborate across Whitehall and the devolved governments to consider its recommendations and develop a response. We recognise the expertise and world-leading practice that exists in institutions across the UK and are delighted that the Taskforce has highlighted this.

■ Teachers: Qualifications

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[184946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department spent on National Professional Qualifications in the academic year 2021-22; and how much it is projected to spend in (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[184950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department spent on each National Professional Qualification in the academic year 2021-22; and how much she plans to spend on each such qualification in (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's financial records are maintained per financial year, as opposed to per academic year which is in line with Government Accounting Standards.

As such the confirmed and projected pro-rata spend for the four years covering the academic years 2021/22 to 2023/24, including all capital and programme spend, is as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND
2021/22	£16.3 million
2022/23	£37.8 million
2023/24	£62.3 million (projected)

These figures cover all direct payments for the delivery of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), as well as payments made as part of the Targeted Support Fund offer, which is an additional financial incentive paid directly to schools to support teachers in primary schools and the smallest secondary schools and 16-19 settings to undertake NPQs.

The Department does not track or forecast spend on individual NPQs and it is important to retain budget flexibility to cater for year on year changes.

■ Teachers: Training

Dean Russell:

[\[185145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to train teachers on (a) autism and (b) other neuro-diverse conditions.

Claire Coutinho:

The department has transformed the support and training available to support teachers and leaders at every stage of their career to deliver improved outcomes for young people across the country.

The golden thread of professional development begins with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) followed by a new two-year induction programme based on the Early Career

Framework (ECF), which are designed to support trainees and newly qualified teachers to meet the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level. This includes the requirement in Standard 5, that all teachers must have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils including, where appropriate, those identified as being neurodivergent or as having other special educational needs.

We have publicly committed to reviewing the ITT core content framework and ECF alongside each other into more closely combined frameworks. We will explore how to better support new teachers to meet the needs of pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

For experienced teachers and leaders, a range of specialist and leadership National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are available. NPQs are designed to support professionals to hone and develop their existing skills, helping them to become more effective inside and outside the classroom, and ensure they support all pupils to succeed in both mainstream and specialist settings.

In March 2023, as part of the Improvement Plan for SEND and Alternative Provision, the department announced plans to introduce a new leadership NPQ for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). This new NPQ will equip SENCOs with the knowledge, practical skills, and leadership expertise to shape their school's approach to supporting children with SEND.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

■ Alternative Fuel Payments: Homelessness

David Warburton:

[\[185041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent steps his Department has taken to facilitate access to the Alternative Fuel Payment for people without a permanent address.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government has been engaging with key stakeholder groups who represent those households without a permanent address. The Government is keen to support these households to ensure they can receive energy bills support. Officials are working to establish whether there is a robust method for these households to provide proof of eligibility, whilst protecting public funds, so they can claim the AFP support.

■ Alternative Fuel Payments: Houseboats

Simon Lightwood:

[\[185463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department plans to announce details of an alternative fuel payment for people who live on houseboats as continuous cruisers.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government has been engaging with key stakeholder groups who represent those households without a permanent address. The Government is keen to support these households to ensure they can receive energy bills support. Officials are working to establish whether there is a robust method for these households to provide proof of eligibility, whilst protecting public funds, so they can claim the AFP support.

■ Climate Change Cabinet Committee: Public Appointments**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[185501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to appoint a temporary Chair for the Committee on Climate Change at the end of June; and when he expects the new Chair to be in position.

Graham Stuart:

The tenure of the current Climate Change Committee Chair, Lord Deben, will end on the 10 June. The Government has worked with devolved administrations to agree the appointment of an interim Chair who will then take on the role while the appointment of the new permanent Chair is finalised. The timing for the appointment is dependent on the appointment process.

The Chair role is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and both the interim Chair appointment and the recruitment process for a permanent Chair are being conducted in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[185502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many applications his Department has received for the position of Climate Change Committee Chair.

Graham Stuart:

The advertisement for the new Chair of the Climate Change Committee has now closed. The Department received 64 applications.

The role is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the role was advertised in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[185503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he has had recent discussions with (a) candidates and (b) potential applicants for the role of Climate Change Committee Chair.

Graham Stuart:

The Chair role is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the recruitment process is being conducted in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments. The Code prescribes ministers as the appointing authority and says that they should be assisted in their decision-making by an Advisory Assessment Panel. Ministers have not met candidates or potential applicants for this role but, in line with the Code, they have been engaged in the planning process for the

appointment and will be given an opportunity to meet candidates at an appropriate point in the process.

■ **Climate Change Committee**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[185229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what was the reasons his Department extended the application deadline for the position of Climate Change Committee Chair to 1 May 2023.

Graham Stuart:

The Chair of the Climate Change Committee plays a critical role in steering and developing the overall work of the Committee. Therefore, the quality and diversity of the applications to this role is critical. Close to the application deadline, the Department made the decision to extend the deadline to ensure the highest quality field of applicants.

The role is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and this approach is in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments.

■ **Construction and Renewable Energy: Finance**

Geraint Davies: [\[184786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the budget for allocation round five of the contracts for difference scheme to help meet (a) increased construction costs and (b) Government targets for the rollout of renewable energy.

Graham Stuart:

National Grid Electricity System Operator (NG ESO) runs the auction process for Contracts for Difference (CfD) Allocation Rounds and is currently assessing the eligibility of all CfD Allocation Round 5 applicants. Once the Department has received the final valuation of eligible participants, the Secretary of State will consider any budget uplift for the round, taking into account decarbonisation targets and the cost to bill-payers.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

Henry Smith: [\[185178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of grid constraints on the ability to charge electric vehicles in rural areas.

Andrew Bowie:

Ofgem is responsible for regulating electricity network companies to deliver their infrastructure. As part of the recent electricity distribution network price control, of the £22.2bn allowed, Ofgem has allowed networks £3.1bn for network upgrades. This will

ensure that low carbon technologies, such as electric vehicle charge points, can be installed across Great Britain, including in rural areas.

Henry Smith:

[185179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the impact of giving Ofgem responsibility for delivering a net-zero economy on the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Andrew Bowie:

The Government has published a draft Strategy & Policy Statement for energy policy, making clear Ofgem's role in promoting our net zero targets. The recent amendment by the House of Lords to Ofgem's decarbonisation duty is being considered.

Of the £22.2bn allowed as part of the current electricity distribution network price control, set by Ofgem, £3.1bn has been allocated for network upgrades to allow for the installation of low carbon technologies, like electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The role out of charging infrastructure is also being supported by the government's Rapid Charging Fund and the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund.

■ Energy

Caroline Lucas:

[184799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what analysis his Department has undertaken of the comparative cost to consumers of (a) an electricity system with nuclear as part of the energy mix and (b) a system based on variable renewables alone; and if he will place a copy of this assessment in the House of Commons Library.

Amanda Solloway:

The "Modelling 2050 – Electricity System Analysis" publication,^[1] presents aggregated outputs for thousands of power sector scenarios in 2050 and shows that a range of different technology mixes can achieve Net Zero at similar costs (Figure 11). This work did not look at a renewable only scenario (e.g. wind, solar, and tidal) as this cannot ensure security of supply.

^[1]<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modelling-2050-electricity-system-analysis>

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Munira Wilson:

[185375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate his Department has made of the number and proportion of households that are (a) eligible for and (b) have not submitted an application to the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund.

Amanda Solloway:

The Department has estimated there are around 900,000 households who are eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) across Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Figures on the number of households who have applied for the EBSS AF were published on 11th May and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-support-scheme-alternative-fund-gb-ni-and-alternative-fuel-payment-alternative-fund-applications-made-by-customers>.

Munira Wilson:

[185376]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate he has made of the number of heat network customers who are eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund and were incorrectly informed by his Department that they were ineligible because they had received £400 in support through their electricity supplier.

Amanda Solloway:

The Department has estimated that there are approximately 31,000 UK households who are part of a heat network who are eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding. The Government do not have any figures for the number of these households who were incorrectly informed that they were ineligible for the scheme. Application numbers for the scheme were released on 11th May and can be located here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-support-scheme-alternative-fund-gb-ni-and-alternative-fuel-payment-alternative-fund-applications-made-by-customers>.

■ **Energy: Environment Protection**

Fleur Anderson:

[185133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent steps the Government has taken to reduce wait times for new green energy projects to connect to the national grid.

Andrew Bowie:

The Government is supporting industry led workstreams to release network capacity and reduce connection timescales, including the Electricity System Operator's Five Point Plan to accelerate transmission connections and the Energy Network Association's Three Step Plan for distribution. The Government is also working with Ofgem and the network companies to further reform the connection process, and will publish details in the summer in a Connections Action Plan.

■ Waste: Recycling

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[185504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department have set targets for the proportion of waste that is (a) recycled and (b) reused.

Graham Stuart:

The Department's target for the proportion of waste recycled is 70%, as set out in the Greening Government Commitments. There is no specific target for the proportion of waste to be reused.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Geraint Davies:

[\[184787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the output of offshore wind.

Graham Stuart:

The Government has set a world leading ambition of up to 50GW of offshore wind by 2030 including up to 5GW of floating wind. As set out in the Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan published on 30 March 2023, actions to increase deployment of offshore wind include a new £160m fund for floating offshore wind and legislation to streamline the consenting process.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[185644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of how the cost of any difference in the usage of utilities by workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme can be (a) accounted for and (b) passed on to workers; and if she will publish further guidance for employers on the usage of utilities by workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme.

Mark Spencer:

While individual farm businesses are responsible for charging seasonal workers for their usage of utilities, approved scheme operators must comply with requirements outlined in the sponsor guidance. This includes ensuring farm businesses with whom they have placed workers do not impose additional, unnecessary charges on workers, whether directly or indirectly. The new team within the Home Office compliance network will focus specifically on farm businesses in this sector and ensure sponsors are adhering to this guidance and fulfilling their sponsorship responsibilities.

■ Big Nature Impact Fund**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[184625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many applicants have received funding from the Big Nature Impact Fund as of 11 May 2023.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[184626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the average amount awarded to applicants is through the Big Nature Impact Fund.

Trudy Harrison:

The Big Nature Impact Fund is being designed as a public-private fund for nature which will unlock significant private investment into nature projects, such as new tree planting and restoring peatlands. Managed by Federated Hermes and Finance Earth, the fund will invest in projects which will aid small business growth and job creation as well as soak up carbon emissions and support cleaner air and water. The Fund is in the process of being set up as a legal entity.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Ministerial Boxes**Emily Thornberry:** [\[184029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many ministerial red boxes belonging to her Department have (a) been reported missing or lost or (b) had their security features removed in order that they can be purchased for personal use by former ministers from 1 May 2018 to 30 April 2023.

Mark Spencer:

The department has no record of any ministerial boxes being lost or going missing between 1 May 2018 to 30 April 2023 nor have any boxes had security features removed for personal use. It is a long standing convention under successive administrations that Ministers may pay to retain boxes as a memento of their time in their role. Alternatively former Ministers are able to purchase new boxes from the relevant provider as a memento.

■ Environment Agency: Managers**Ruth Jones:** [\[184189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she last met the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State has regular meetings with the Chief Executives of key arm's length bodies including the Environment Agency.

■ EU Law: Internet

Caroline Lucas:

[\[184800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the number of laws listed on the retained EU law dashboard has decreased from 1,781 to 1,671; and which laws were removed in the latest iteration of the dashboard.

Mark Spencer:

The retained EU law dashboard is intended to be iterative and updated on a rolling basis. The recent updates to Defra's numbers reflect the extensive work carried out across the Department on further REUL analysis. For example, some items have been removed from the dashboard as there is now legal clarity that they are not classified as REUL, within scope of the Bill, or they have been reallocated to the relevant Department.

■ Flowers

Fleur Anderson:

[\[185408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to improve wildflower (a) populations and (b) biodiversity in (i) farmland, (ii) woods, (iii) parks, (iv) towns and (v) cities.

Trudy Harrison:

In England we have set four legally binding targets for biodiversity including to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030 then to reverse declines and restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat, such as wildflower meadows, by 2042. We have set out our plan to deliver on these ambitious targets, along with our other environmental targets, in the revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23) published 31 January 2023.

In May 2022, Natural England launched five nature recovery projects spanning nearly 100,000 hectares, which will see the creation and restoration of wildlife-rich habitats, corridors and stepping-stones. For example, the Cambridge Nature Network aims to develop a network of resilient wildlife rich habitats, including wildflower meadows, covering 9,200 ha in and around the City of Cambridge.

Countryside Stewardship, and its predecessor Environmental Stewardship, offers a number of grants to help improve wildflower populations including restoring wildlife habitats, creating and managing woodlands. We have approximately 40,000 live agreements under our stewardship schemes. Countryside Stewardship offers different options to create and restore wildflower habitats, including options for the management, restoration and creation of species rich grassland. These schemes are complemented by our new Sustainable Farming Incentive, which encourages farming in a more environmentally sustainable way and Landscape Recovery which funds longer-term, larger-scale, bespoke projects to enhance the natural environment.

The Green Infrastructure Framework launched by Natural England in January 2023 will help local planning authorities and developers to create or improve green infrastructure, which can include wildflower planting as well as other natural features.

We are supporting grassland creation and restoration, including through our Green Recovery Challenge Fund. For example, Plantlife's 'Meadow Makers' project, which was awarded over £700,000 in the first round, restored 500 hectares of species-rich grassland at over 100 sites across seven landscapes.

Each year Defra coordinates Bees' Needs Week, to promote and celebrate action to help pollinators thrive. The Bees' Needs Champions Awards recognises individuals and groups who have taken positive action, such as restoring wildflower meadows and creating urban pollinator-friendly habitats.

■ Government Departments: Environment Protection

Kerry McCarthy: [\[185500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to publish the Greening Government Commitments Annual Report 2021 to 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

The Greening Government Commitments annual report for the 2021 to 2022 financial year is due to be published in 2023.

■ Hunting

Patrick Grady: [\[185015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure that fox hunts take place in compliance with the law.

Patrick Grady: [\[185016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps to protect rural communities from anti-social behaviour by hunts.

Trudy Harrison:

The Hunting Act 2004 makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal with dogs except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions in the Act, and completely bans hare coursing. Those found guilty under the Act are subject to the full force of the law. Enforcement of the Hunting Act is an operational matter for the police.

Since the introduction of the Act, many hunt organisations across the country have worked hard to adapt their activities towards trail hunting, which is intended to retain important traditions as part of the fabric of rural life.

■ Palm Oil: Animal Feed

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[185551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment the Government has made of the percentage of palm-derived ingredients used for animal feed in the UK that originate from sustainable palm oil.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government has not made this assessment. However, the Government is committed to supporting the sustainable production, import and use of commodities, including palm oil. The Government established the UK Roundtable on Sourcing Sustainable Palm Oil in 2012, bringing together British businesses and supporting them to shift to sustainable palm oil supply chains. In 2021, 72% of all palm and palm kernel oil imports into the UK were certified sustainable, up from 16% in 2010.

Wanting to go further, the UK Government has introduced world-leading due diligence legislation through the Environment Act to help tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. This new law will make it illegal for larger businesses operating in the United Kingdom to use key forest risk commodities produced on land illegally occupied or used. We ran a consultation from 3 December 2021 to 11 March 2022 to seek views on the details of regulations that will implement the Environment Act provisions, to ensure that these are designed effectively. The Government published a summary of responses to this consultation on 1 June 2022 and is committed to implementing due diligence provisions at the earliest opportunity through secondary legislation.

The Government will continue to work in partnership with countries which produce palm oil and other stakeholders, to incentivise sustainable palm oil production.

■ Pesticides: EU Law

Caroline Lucas:

[\[184804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Retained EU Law Bill, what assessment she has made of (a) the need to maintain the current standards on pesticides as a minimum and (b) concern from the investment industry over pesticide-related biodiversity loss; and if she will make a statement.

Mark Spencer:

Our pesticide regulatory system is one of the most robust in the world. Pesticides are only authorised following a thorough scientific risk assessment that concludes all safety standards are met, including environmental requirements. Pesticides that pose unacceptable risks are not authorised. This Government will not compromise these standards.

Defra has been clear in its commitments to uphold and not weaken environmental, animal welfare and other key protections. That is why our approach has always been to keep REUL, unless there is a good reason to either remove it from the statute book or reform it. That approach is now also reflected in the legislation, as the recently

tabled Government amendment will mean that REUL is retained unless it is specifically cited in the revocation schedule.

We are clear in our commitment to halting the decline in biodiversity by 2030 as outlined in the Environment Act. The development and implementation of policies on sustainable pest management will contribute to achieving this.

■ Rainforests: Environmental Land Management Schemes

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[184628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy for temperate rainforest initiatives to become eligible to participate in the Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes from 2024.

Trudy Harrison:

Recognising the success of Countryside Stewardship, we have decided to evolve the scheme instead of developing a new 'Local Nature Recovery' scheme. Both Countryside Stewardship and the new Landscape Recovery scheme support temperate rainforest.

There are five woodland options in Countryside Stewardship, including a woodland improvement option (WD2) which is designed to help restore plantations on ancient woodland sites, enhance priority habitats, enhance priority species and improve resilience to climate change through continuous cover forestry. We plan to open a new round of applications for woodland management in early 2024. We will continue to develop this offer as we evolve Countryside Stewardship.

Landscape Recovery round two opened on 18 May and will focus on net zero, protected sites and habitat creation. Landscape scale projects which will create and enhance temperate rainforest are eligible to apply.

■ Recreation Spaces: Greater London

Feryal Clark:

[\[185156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to protect access to (a) green spaces and (b) Greenways in (i) Enfield North constituency and (ii) London.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government recognises the importance of providing access to the outdoors for people's health and wellbeing and is working to ensure this is safe and appropriate. We committed in our Environmental Improvement Plan to work across government to help ensure that everyone lives within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space.

The Government is delivering a number of policies to protect access to green spaces including in urban areas. Examples of these include:

- Delivering the £9m Levelling Up Parks Fund to improve green space in over 100 disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the UK.

- The launch of the Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles and Standards for England in January 2023 which shows what good green infrastructure looks like and will help local authorities, developers and communities to improve provision in their area.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies will identify locations where action for nature recovery would be particularly beneficial, encouraging the creation of more green spaces, including in urban areas.
- Implementing a number of rights of way reforms which will streamline the process for adding new or lost footpaths to the rights of way network.

Local highway authorities are responsible for the management and maintenance of existing public rights of way and are required to keep a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to plan improvements to the rights of way network in their area. This must include an assessment of the local rights of way including the condition of the network.

In Enfield, Natural England is working with the Council in developing its local plan to create high quality places that tackle climate change, the nature emergency, inequalities, and promote health and well-being. This will also help Enfield to embed Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards into the plan and supporting documents.

In addition Enfield has been awarded £500,000 from the Landscape Recovery Scheme to support schemes to restore nature, reduce flood risks and boost biodiversity include creating hundreds of hectares of woodlands and grassland, wetlands and restore rivers and expanding the Enfield Chase Restoration Project.

■ Special Protection Areas: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[185629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 April 2023 to Question 177891 on Marine Protected Areas: Northern Ireland, if she will outline what specific steps her Department is taking with relevant authorities in Northern Ireland to accelerate the establishment of two marine Special Protection Areas in East Coast and Carlingford Lough.

Trudy Harrison:

My officials are working with the authorities in Northern Ireland to ensure all the necessary steps required by the relevant legislation have been carried out. The Secretary of State will then consider the merits of classifying these two sites as Special Protection Areas.

■ **Trees: Conservation**

Julian Knight: [\[185008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding her Department is providing for research into ways to increase tree numbers outside of woodlands.

Trudy Harrison:

Over this Parliament, we will have invested over £6.5 million in research into trees outside woodlands, including agroforestry. This includes a partnership with the Tree Council, Natural England and five local councils, testing and developing innovative and sustainable new ways to increase tree cover outside woodlands. The first phase has planted more than 121,000 trees and demonstrated ways to reduce costs of establishment. Phase 2 will further research the effectiveness of tree planting methods and approaches in non-woodland areas, so that more, healthier trees can be planted in these areas in future. This work has informed the approaches funded through Coronation Woods, announced to mark the King's Coronation, which will see tree planting in community orchards, small areas of woodland, and 'tree handouts' – supplying trees to local residents to plant in areas of their choosing. The Trees Outside Woodland project will evaluate the effectiveness of this scheme as part of its programme of research.

We are collaborating on the £15.6 million multidisciplinary Future of UK Treescapes programme which is funding several projects investigating Trees Outside of Woods. Separately, five of the tests and trials for our new environmental land management schemes on farms are exploring approaches to agroforestry. This includes the Organic Research Centre working with 250 farmers to look at the incentives and advice required for farmers to incorporate agroforestry practices. Interim Findings show that awareness is an issue and that incentives need to reflect the long-term nature of the commitment.

■ **UK Internal Trade: Labelling**

Mr David Jones: [\[185510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Foreign Secretary's appearance before the Sub-Committee of the House of Lords European Affairs Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland on 16 May 2023, if she will set out the legal basis for the planned all-UK not for EU labelling regime.

Mark Spencer:

The legal basis for the "Not for EU" label requirements in Great Britain, confirmed in the Command Paper, will be set out in due course, following consultation with the Scottish and Welsh governments. This requirement will not come into force until October 2024.

Mr David Jones:

[\[185512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has conducted any consultation on the proposed introduction of not for EU labelling across the UK.

Mark Spencer:

We have engaged closely with industry about these arrangements and will continue to do so in advance of changes taking effect in October 2024. We have met with businesses and trade bodies, through weekly forums along with separate bespoke engagements, to discuss these proposals. We will support businesses in adapting to these new arrangements.

Mr David Jones:

[\[185513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will ensure that any legislative proposals for the Not for EU labelling scheme are produced in sufficient time for them to be scrutinised by Members.

Mark Spencer:

Yes, sufficient time will be given to Members to consider any forthcoming legislation.

Mr David Jones:

[\[185514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Not for EU labelling regime will apply to goods produced in Northern Ireland for sale in (a) Great Britain and (b) Northern Ireland.

Mark Spencer:

The requirement for a “Not for EU” label will not apply to goods produced in Northern Ireland and sold in either Great Britain or Northern Ireland.

■ **Water: Sewage**

Jim McMahon:

[\[185362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May to Question 183788 on Water: Sewage, which overflows cause the most harm to businesses.

Rebecca Pow:

The [Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan](#) was published in August 2022, alongside an [Impact Assessment](#) which considers costs and benefits of the final targets to businesses, the public, wider society and government spending where applicable.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[185051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the Taliban's ban on female aid workers on the UK's humanitarian and development work in Afghanistan.

Leo Docherty:

Afghan women are vital to the delivery of humanitarian and development operations in Afghanistan. They have access to populations their male colleagues cannot reach, providing critical life-saving support to women and girls. FCDO is supporting partners to adapt programmes and find solutions that enable women to play an inclusive role in the design, delivery and monitoring of assistance, and ensure that Afghan women and girls can access aid in an impartial and equitable manner.

■ Cambodia: Elections

Catherine West: [\[185373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision by the Cambodian Electoral Commission to bar the opposition party from that country's General Elections; and whether he has raised this with the Cambodian government.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are disappointed by the decision of the Cambodian Electoral Commission to reject the Candlelight Party's election registration. We understand that the Candlelight Party will appeal this decision and the British Embassy in Phnom Penh will follow developments closely. The Embassy has been engaging a wide range of opposition parties, including the Candlelight Party, in the run up to the national election in July. Our Ambassador regularly raises our support for open democratic space at the highest levels with the Cambodian authorities. Our Embassy in Phnom Penh will continue to monitor the situation as Cambodia heads towards the elections.

■ China: Solar Power

Catherine West: [\[185329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on the use of Chinese-made solar panels in the UK sourced from companies using unethical supply chains.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Foreign Secretary and his officials are in regular contact with relevant Ministers and departments on matters of national security and foreign policy. The Government is committed to supporting UK businesses to engage with China in a way that reflects the UK's values. For example, last year we introduced new guidance on the risks of

doing business in Xinjiang, enhanced export controls and announced the introduction of financial penalties under the Modern Slavery Act. This year, the Procurement Bill will enable public sector contracting authorities to reject bids and terminate contracts with suppliers which are known to use forced labour themselves or anywhere in their supply chain. Additionally, the UK's main solar industry trade association is leading the industry's response by developing and piloting the Solar Stewardship Initiative to further develop a responsible, transparent and sustainable solar value chain.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Corporate Governance**

Emily Thornberry:

[185215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May to Question 184326 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Corporate Governance, on which dates did the two meetings of his Department's Board in financial year 2021-22 take place.

David Rutley:

The FCDO Supervisory Board met twice during the financial year 2021-22: on 16 June 2021 (chaired by the Rt Hon Dominic Raab) and on 25 March 2022 (chaired by the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss). This information is available on page 104 of the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1095304/FCDO_Annual_Report_2021_2022_Accessible_290722.pdf

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Equal Pay**

Imran Hussain:

[185684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if their Department will publish an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for financial year 2023-24 in line with the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance for employers published on 17 April 2023.

David Rutley:

The FCDO is liaising with Civil Service HR colleagues and other government departments to work through the details of the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance that was published on 17 April 2023. In line with Gender Pay Gap Reporting, the Civil Service is looking to develop a consistent methodology to produce the data and Ethnicity Pay Reports. The outcomes of this work will inform whether we are able to publish a report for 2023/2024. More generally the Civil Service is undertaking extensive work both centrally and within departments to promote diversity across its workplaces, including ethnicity.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ministerial Boxes**

Emily Thornberry:

[185546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2023 to Question 184022 on Foreign, Commonwealth

and Development Office: Ministerial Boxes, how many times the decision was taken that a Minister in his Department could keep their red box as a memento of their time in their role between 1 May 2018 and 30 April 2023.

David Rutley:

This information is not centrally held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Ministerial red boxes are purchased by the minister if they wish to keep one and are never gifted for free. As I [Minister Rutley] stated in my previous reply, there is no explicit requirement for the FCDO to record instances where security features have been removed in order that they can be purchased for personal use by former ministers.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Tim Loughton: [\[184868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the plans to reply to the letter of 13 April on his visit to Armenia in May from the Hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham.

Leo Docherty:

As noted in my [Minister Docherty] letter to the Member for East Worthing and Shoreham of 13 April, I am due to visit Armenia during the week commencing 22 May, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with him and the wider All Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia in due course.

■ **Nigeria: Oppression**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[185034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to help tackle the persecution of and violence against (a) Christians and (b) other minorities in Nigeria.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Insecurity is undermining freedom of religion or belief for all communities in Nigeria. I [Andrew Mitchell] raised the effects of rising insecurity on communities with Nigerian President-elect Tinubu, in December 2022. At a federal level, we have provided technical assistance for the establishment of the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, which helps tackle intercommunal violence. The UK is also funding peacebuilding projects in several Nigerian states which support community reconciliation by training peace ambassadors and faith leaders. Helping Nigeria tackle violence against civilians will remain a focus of the UK-Nigeria Security and Defence Partnership. The UK Government will continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to assist affected communities and implement long-term solutions.

■ South Sudan: Peace Negotiations

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[185716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) financial and (b) diplomatic support the Government is providing to help keep the peace process in South Sudan on track.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Poor implementation of South Sudan's peace agreement is driving violence and a humanitarian crisis. On 8 May, I [Minister Mitchell] met with the South Sudanese Minister of Presidential Affairs and emphasised the need for immediate, tangible action on the peace process. The UK also raises concerns about lack of progress at the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council, and through Troika (UK, US, Norway) or Troika and EU statements. The UK funds peacebuilding programmes to address the root causes of subnational conflict in South Sudan and funds the placement of technical experts in both the ceasefire (Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring & Verification Mechanism) and peace agreement implementation (Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission) monitoring mechanisms.

■ Turkey: Elections

Feryal Clark:

[\[185723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 27 April to Question 181634 on Turkey: Earthquakes and of 3 May to Questions 182972, 182973, 182974 and 182975 on Turkey: Elections, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) safe passage to polling stations, (b) the security and safety of the electoral processes and (c) the conclusions of the election observation missions in the recent Turkish election.

Leo Docherty:

We have noted the preliminary findings of the independent election observation missions in the recent Turkish Presidential and Parliamentary elections. We commend the example set by Turkish people with their high turn-out at the ballot boxes, in Turkey and abroad. We will continue to monitor and communicate with organisations like the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) regarding their plans and assessments for the second round of the Presidential election on 28 May.

■ Ukraine: Food

Stephen Doughty:

[\[184997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure the continuance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Leo Docherty:

Over 30 million tonnes of grain and other foodstuffs have been exported through the Black Sea Grain Initiative since it started on 1 August. It is a positive that Russia has

dropped its deadline of 18 May and the deal will now continue until the next official deadline of 18 July, we urge Russia to abide by this commitment. The UK has been a leading voice on the international stage in calling Russia out for destabilising the deal and will continue to hold Russia to account if it continues to use food as a weapon.

■ UN Commission on the Status of Women

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[185185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of the delegates in the official UK Government delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women 67 were (a) women and (b) men.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UN Commission on the Status of Women 67 (CSW67) was held in New York between 6 and 17 March. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad as Minister of State for the UN, led the UK delegation, supported by Ambassador Barbara Woodward, the UK Permanent Representative to the UN.

The official level joint FCDO-Government Equalities Office delegation of 12 people included 9 women. MPs and peers formed the UK parliamentary delegations, with 18 delegates in total. Of this, there were 17 women, including Baroness Northover, Dame Maria Miller MP, Baroness Hodgson of Abinger CBE, Caroline Nokes MP and 1 man, Elliot Colburn MP.

■ Western Sahara: Armed Conflict

Navendu Mishra: [\[185142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps his Department has taken to help resolve the conflict in the Western Sahara.

David Rutley:

The UK supports UN-led efforts to reach a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, based on compromise, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We strongly support the work of Staffan de Mistura, Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, and regularly engage key partners to encourage constructive engagement with the political process. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon reiterated the UK's position to Morocco's Foreign Minister at the 4th UK-Morocco Strategic Dialogue on 9th May. Dame Barbara Woodward, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, discussed the UK's position with her Moroccan counterpart on 18th April.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Allergies

Dr Matthew Offord:

[184068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to create the role of a national allergy tsar within the NHS.

Helen Whately:

The Government has no plans to appoint a national allergy Tsar.

There is an established Clinical Reference Group (CRG) responsible for providing national clinical leadership for specialised immunology and allergy services. The group's membership includes clinicians, commissioners, public health experts, patients and carers and is chaired by the National Speciality Advisor Dr Claire Bethune.

Information about the CRG can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/blood-and-infection-group-f/specialised-immunology-and-allergy-services/>

■ Asbestosis: Health Services

Wera Hobhouse:

[185381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to (a) support people affected by and (b) protect future generations against the impacts of asbestosis.

Neil O'Brien:

There is no cure for asbestosis, as the damage to the lungs is irreversible. The National Health Service may recommend pulmonary rehabilitation for people with asbestosis or, for more severe cases, oxygen therapy if they have low levels of oxygen in their blood. People with chronic respiratory diseases, such as asbestosis, are one of the groups offered vaccinations under the national influenza vaccination programme.

In Great Britain the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 are in place to protect workers from asbestos exposure. These regulations require duty holders to assess whether asbestos is present in their buildings, the condition it is in and to draw up a plan to manage the risk associated with asbestos including removal if it cannot be safely managed in place.

■ Asthma: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon:

[184660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in England are awaiting spirometry asthma assessments; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for those assessments.

Jim Shannon:

[\[184661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what financial support his Department is providing to NHS trusts to help clear backlogs of asthma assessments.

Helen Whately:

Published data is not available on the number patients in England awaiting spirometry asthma assessments. NHS England is investing in additional diagnostic capacity for respiratory pathways as part of the £2.3 billion 2021 spending review capital investment in diagnostics.

Community Diagnostic Centres are being established to deliver additional, digitally connected, diagnostic capacity in England, enabling an accurate and fast diagnosis on a range of clinical pathways including people with chronic respiratory disease.

■ **Audiology: Private Sector**

Alex Sobel:

[\[185102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of NHS audiology appointments outsourced to private companies.

Helen Whately:

Hearing services are locally commissioned and any outsourced provisions data is held by local National Health Service commissioners.

■ **Bowel Cancer: Health Services**

Patrick Grady:

[\[185014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve outcomes for bowel cancer patients.

Helen Whately:

NHS England have been working with Cancer Alliances to facilitate the prioritisation and implementation of treatment-focussed recommendations from clinical audits and Getting It Right First Time reports that will make the biggest impact in terms of improving survival outcomes and reducing inequalities. This work was piloted in 2022/23 in lung cancer, and in 2023/24 this work is now expanding to cover three new tumour sites where there is an existing clinical audit: prostate, breast, and bowel.

■ **Brain Cancer: Clinical Trials**

Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[185190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to improve access to industry clinical trials amongst patients with glioblastoma.

Will Quince:

In March 2021 the Government published 'Saving and Improving Lives: The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery' setting out ambitions to reform clinical research

delivery in the United Kingdom. This sets out how we will improve access to clinical trials in all areas, including glioblastoma. This will include enhancing the use of data to support recruitment and improving processes to make study set-up and delivery faster, more efficient and more innovative, so that clinical research participation is more accessible than ever.

Lord James O'Shaughnessy has also been commissioned to independently review commercial clinical trials to provide recommendations that will improve access to them. We expect this will be published in the coming weeks.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[184100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS workforce strategy will include provisions for NHS Trusts in England to hire the additional cancer workforce needed to meet the ambition for 75 per cent of cancer patients to be diagnosed at stage I or II by 2028 as set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Helen Whately:

The Government has committed to publishing the Long Term Workforce Plan shortly. This will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals required in future years, taking full account of improvements in retention and productivity. The plan will cover the whole of the NHS workforce.

Matt Vickers:

[\[185170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure waiting times for cancer treatment are reduced.

Helen Whately:

To support elective recovery and reduce waiting times, including for cancer treatment, the Government has worked with NHS England to publish the delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlogs in elective care in February 2022. To deliver this plan, the Government plans to spend more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to help drive up and protect elective activity, including cancer diagnosis and treatment activity.

This will further be supported by the additional £3.3 billion of funding in each of the next two years announced at the Autumn Statement to support the National Health Service, enabling rapid action to improve emergency, elective and primary care performance towards pre-pandemic levels. NHS England continues to actively support those trusts requiring the greatest help to cut cancer waiting lists and the Department is working with NHS England to make further improvements.

■ Cancer: Screening

Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[185191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) improve the early diagnosis of rare cancer and (b) establish efficient pathways for patients to access relevant clinical research opportunities.

Helen Whately:

NHS England's comprehensive Early Diagnosis strategy is based on six core strands of activity, from raising awareness of cancer symptoms and encouraging people to come forward, to implementing targeted interventions for particular cancer types that we know have previously experienced later stages of diagnosis.

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network (CRN) supports patients, the public and health and care organisations across England to participate in high-quality research, thereby advancing knowledge and improving care.

The CRN is comprised of 15 Local Clinical Research Networks and 30 Specialties who coordinate and support the delivery of clinical research by region and therapy area.

■ Carers

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[185307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a national carers passport scheme.

Helen Whately:

The Department has no plans to assess the potential merits of introducing a national carers passport scheme. In partnership with Carers UK and Carers Trust, the Department funded a project in 2017/18 to provide resources and guidance to support the development of local Carer Passport schemes. The resources and guidance were launched in 2018 and remain active.

■ Carers: Stockport

Navendu Mishra:

[\[185341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) practical and (b) financial support the Government plans to provide to unpaid carers in Stockport constituency.

Helen Whately:

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

In 2023/24, £327 million has been earmarked in the Better Care Fund to provide short breaks and respite services for carers, as well as additional advice and support.

The Government continues to provide financial support to unpaid carers through Carer's Allowance, the Carer Element in Universal Credit and through other benefits.

■ Children: Hospices

Alicia Kearns:

[\[185136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS England Children's Hospice Grant will be continued beyond 2023-24.

Helen Whately:

NHS England determines the best use of its financial settlement to deliver services. Funding arrangements for children's hospices beyond 2023/24 have not yet been agreed. Palliative and end of life care is commissioned locally by integrated care boards in response to the needs of their local population.

■ Clinical Trials

Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[185189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many participants were recruited to industry-sponsored clinical trials in each of the National Institute for Health and Care Research's Local Clinical Research Networks in (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20, (d) 2020-21 and (e) 2021-22.

Will Quince:

A table showing the number of participants recruited to industry-sponsored clinical trials in each of the National Institute for Health and Care Research's Local Clinical Research Networks in 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 is attached.

Attachments:

1. Attachment [FORMATTED TABLE PQ 185189 attachment (1).docx]

■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Breast Cancer

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[182244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many community diagnostic centres in England offer mammography services; and whether any community diagnostic centres provide routine mammogram screening as part of the breast screening programme.

Helen Whately:

As at March 2023, two community diagnostic centres (CDCs) in England provide mammography services, one CDC offers routine breast screening under the breast screening programme, and two CDCs provide both mammography services and breast screening.

Additional activity delivered by CDCs represents a small proportion of overall mammography services provided by the National Health Service in England. This is generally provided through other NHS infrastructure including dedicated mobile units.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Alex Sobel: [\[185090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to extend the offer of two Covid-19 vaccinations to people aged five on or before 31 August 2022 and over beyond 30 June 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government continues to be guided by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) on who should be offered COVID-19 vaccinations. On 27 January 2023 the Government accepted the advice of the JCVI that the primary course vaccination offer move to a more targeted offer during vaccination campaigns to those at higher risk of severe COVID-19. Therefore, the primary course offer will end with the close of the 2023 spring booster programme, planned for 30 June 2023 in England.

As we live with the virus without restrictions on our freedoms, we will continue to ensure the most vulnerable are protected through a targeted seasonal vaccination offer for those most at risk. At this time the Department does not have plans to extend the offer of two COVID-19 vaccinations to children aged five years old on or before 31 August 2022 and over beyond 30 June 2023. However, an offer will remain in place for those who are at higher risk of COVID-19 and we will continue to be guided by the JCVI on future eligibility.

Gareth Bacon: [\[185134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS England plans to purchase AstraZeneca's COVID antibody treatment AZD3152 to treat immunocompromised individuals who are unable to receive vaccines; and when he expects AZD3152 to be made available to patients.

Will Quince:

Subject to the medicine becoming licensed for use in Great Britain, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will evaluate AZD3152 through its technology appraisal programme and will aim to issue guidance for the National Health Service as close as possible to licensing. NICE has been in discussion with the manufacturer and is preparing for the evaluation of the medicine. If it is recommended as clinically and cost effective by NICE, the NHS in England will be under a statutory requirement to fund it for eligible patients, in line with NICE's recommendations.

There are no plans for the NHS to fund the medicine routinely ahead of it achieving a licence and an associated positive technology appraisal recommendation from NICE.

■ Defibrillators

Jonathan Gullis: [\[185147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to mandate the location of defibrillators in all businesses and newly built homes.

Jonathan Gullis: [\[185148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a comparative assessment of the availability of defibrillators by postcode and the sudden cardiac arrest incident rate in regions of the UK.

Jonathan Gullis: [\[185149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the availability of defibrillators indifferent regions of the UK.

Jonathan Gullis: [\[185150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of defibrillators in each English region.

Jonathan Gullis: [\[185151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, If he will make it his policy to create a publicly accessible national database of defibrillators: and whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of such a database.

Helen Whately:

The Government has no plans to bring forward legislative proposals to mandate the location of defibrillators in all businesses and newly built homes and the Department has made no assessment.

We do not hold information on the number of defibrillators in each English region. NHS England along with partners have developed The Circuit, a national defibrillator network database. The Circuit provides a national database of where defibrillators can be found so that ambulance services can identify the nearest defibrillator at the time of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. The Circuit is live in in all ambulance services across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Government has agreed to provide funding of £1 million to design a grant scheme for the expansion of automated external defibrillators that expands the number and accessibility of publicly supported access to defibrillators. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate that defibrillators will be placed in areas where they are most needed, such as places with high footfall, longer emergency medical response times, vulnerable people or due to the nature of activity at the site.

■ **Defibrillators: Finance**

Wendy Morton: [\[184828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the press release entitled Number of defibrillators to be increased with new funding, published by his Department on 29 December 2022, when his Department plans to invite interested parties to bid for this grant funding.

Wendy Morton: [\[184829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2023 to Question 146994 on Defibrillators: Public Places, what his Department's estimated timeline is for completing the procurement processes for the £1 million fund to expand defibrillator access in the community.

Helen Whately:

The Department is currently in the pre-procurement stage in its process of determining a selected partner for the Automated External Defibrillator Fund. The Department will publish shortly an invitation for organisations to bid for the fund through GOV.UK. It is anticipated that a contract will be awarded to a supplier to expand defibrillator access in the community by August 2023.

■ **Defibrillators: Greater London**

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[185709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many public defibrillators are operational in each London Boroughs.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[185710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many public defibrillators have been deployed in Greater London in (a) the last six months b) the last 12 months, (c) the last 18 months and (d) since 2010.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[185712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on (a) trends in the level of and (b) the nature of incidents of vandalism of public defibrillators in each London borough in (i) the last six months, (ii) the last 12 months, (iii) the last 18 months and (iv) since 2010.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[185714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the extent to which instructions for usage on public defibrillators can be readily understood by members of the public; and if he will take steps to make those instructions easier to understand.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not held centrally and no assessment has been made. The Government has agreed to provide funding of £1 million to design a grant

scheme for the expansion of automated external defibrillators that expands the number and accessibility of publicly supported access to defibrillators. As part of the criteria for the process of determining a selected partner for the Automated External Defibrillator Fund, the Department will ensure public defibrillators can be readily understood by members of the public. Successful grant bidders will be encouraged to train or facilitate the training of the local community in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

■ Dementia: Diagnosis

Dan Carden:

[185713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the dementia diagnosis rate in (a) Liverpool Walton constituency and (b) England.

Helen Whately:

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

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust has recently introduced the Diagnosing Advanced Dementia Mandate tool to improve diagnosis of dementia within local care homes.

■ Dental Services

Dean Russell:

[185143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that prevention is central to NHS dental care.

Neil O'Brien:

Prevention is crucial to the work of the health and social care system, including in dentistry, and everyone has a role to play. The Office for Health Improvements and Disparities (OHID) has published an evidence-based toolkit, 'Delivering Better Oral Health - an evidence-based toolkit for prevention', for dental practice teams to support preventive advice and treatment for their patients available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention>

Water fluoridation is a safe public health intervention to improve the oral health of both adults and children and helps to tackle inequalities. The Health and Care Act will make it simpler to expand water fluoridation schemes across England. We announced funding to begin expansion, subject to consultation, across the North-East of England.

We know that good oral health in the early stages of childhood is likely to lead to better long-term dental health. There is good evidence for the effectiveness of daily supervised toothbrushing programmes in schools and early year settings, particularly in deprived areas. Such schemes can be commissioned by local authorities or the National Health Service and exist across the country.

Following the implementation of 'Our plan for patients', we are planning to announce additional reforms of the NHS Dental System shortly.

■ Dental Services: Children

David Warburton: [\[185040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to local NHS dental services for children in (a) England and (b) Somerton and Frome constituency.

Neil O'Brien:

From 1 April 2023 responsibility for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population, including for children, has been delegated to integrated care boards (ICBs) across England. NHS England has published an accompanying Assurance Framework which sets out its approach to providing assurance that commissioning functions are carried out safely and effectively by ICBs.

In September 2022, we announced 'Our plan for patients' which sets out how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to NHS dental for patients of all ages, whilst making the National Health Service dental contract more attractive to dental practices. These changes have been implemented, including through regulations that came into effect on 25 November 2022. NHS England is holding further discussions with the British Dental Association and other stakeholders for plans for additional reforms of the NHS Dental System coming shortly.

In circumstances where a guardian or parents are unable to access an urgent dental appointment for their child directly through a NHS dental practice, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

■ Dental Services: South West

Darren Jones: [\[185059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of dentists not currently providing NHS services who could do so following the changes he is seeking to make to the dental contracts in (a) Bristol and (b) the South West.

Neil O'Brien:

No estimate has been made.

■ Dental Services: Stockport

Navendu Mishra:

[\[185462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of dentists not currently providing NHS services who would be able to do so following the changes he is seeking to make to the dental contracts in (a) Stockport constituency and (b) Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Neil O'Brien:

No estimate has been made.

■ Diabetes: Health Services

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[185125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) address the backlog in NHS England's diabetes service, (b) promote greater integration of diabetes services with other NHS services, (c) promote greater co-ordination of diabetes services with other NHS services and (d) improve diabetes services.

Helen Whately:

To address the backlog in NHS England's diabetes service, in 2022/23, £36m was allocated to integrated care boards (ICBs) to support the recovery of routine diabetes care. In addition, the 2023/24 'NHS Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance' asked that ICBs update plans for the prevention of ill-health including a continued focus on diabetes in their joint forward plans.

On 17 May 2023, the Government launched a call for evidence to inform the Major Conditions Strategy on how best to prevent, diagnose and manage six groups of major conditions, including diabetes.

■ Earwax: Medical Treatments

Matt Vickers:

[\[185169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure the provision by the NHS of safe and free earwax removal services.

Neil O'Brien:

In line with recommendations provided by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), ear wax removal services are provided on the National Health Service for patients with a clinical need for ear wax removal. Integrated care boards are responsible for the arrangement of ear wax removal services for their respective populations.

■ Electronic Cigarettes: Sales**Gareth Johnson:**[\[184940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Crackdown on illegal sale of vapes, published on 9 April 2023, whether his Department has made an assessment of the efficacy and readiness of the vaping industry to share intelligence on non-compliant products.

Neil O'Brien:

No assessment has been made. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) within the Department is currently designing the detailed scope of the new illicit vaping enforcement squad. We will provide further details, including on data and intelligence gathered, in due course.

■ Evusheld**Julian Knight:**[\[185004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to fast-track the approval of the Evusheld vaccine.

Will Quince:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent, expert body responsible for developing authoritative, evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. The Government asked NICE to evaluate Evusheld for the prevention of COVID-19 through its technology appraisal programme in August 2022. NICE has been able to expedite the evaluation of Evusheld and released its final draft guidance on 5 May following a consultation on its draft recommendations earlier this year. NICE has unfortunately been unable to recommend Evusheld as a clinically and cost effective use of NHS resources, citing a lack of clinical evidence of its effectiveness against currently circulating variants. NICE has not yet published its final guidance.

■ Familial Hypercholesterolaemia: Screening**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[185306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the early identification of people with familial hypercholesterolaemia in (a) Leicestershire and (b) the UK.

Helen Whately:

NHS England are collaborating with Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's Integrated Care Board to implement an agreed model of a nurse-led, assessment and genetic testing service to increase the early identification of people with familial hypercholesterolaemia in Leicestershire. Once established, clinics will be held in primary care venues across Leicestershire with an allocated familial hypercholesterolaemia Specialist Nurse.

NHS England is reviewing the decision of the National Screening Committee on screening for familial hypercholesterolaemia and is considering how best to address the committee's outstanding concerns. This work will be supported by an ongoing child parent screening pilot which is being implemented through the Academic Health Sciences Networks.

The Department has been supporting local areas with the recovery of the NHS Health Check programme, which includes an assessment of cholesterol. We are progressing a programme of modernisation which includes the development of a digital NHS Health Check that will include home cholesterol testing and enable more people to benefit.

■ General Practitioners: Enfield

Feryal Clark:

[184538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS GPs there were in the London Borough of Enfield in each year since 2010.

Neil O'Brien:

The following table shows the number of doctors in general practice in London Borough of Enfield from 2015 to 2022. Data before September 2015 is not included because of a change in the data collection methodology.

DATE	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE, FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE), LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD
September 2015	162
September 2016	155
September 2017	155
September 2018	166
September 2019	173
September 2020	167
September 2021	175
September 2022	169

Source: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/general-and-personal-medical-services>

Notes:

1. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. 1 would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that

they worked half time. In general practitioner in Training Grade contracts 1 FTE = 40 hours and in this table these FTEs have been converted to the standard wMDS measure of 1 FTE = 37.5 hours for consistency.

2. Figures shown do not include staff working in Prisons, Army Bases, Educational Establishments, Specialist Care Centres including Drug Rehabilitation Centres, Walk-In Centres and other alternative settings outside of traditional general practice such as urgent treatment centres and minor injury units.
3. Data from September 2015 onwards was collected using a new methodology and should therefore not be directly compared with data from before September 2015. Figures from September 2015 should be treated with caution as the data submission rates under the new methodology from practices were appreciably lower than for subsequent reporting periods. This means that the reported figures for the early years of the collection may be lower than the true picture. In September 2015, which was the first extract from the new Workforce Minimum Data Set, only three of four Health Education England regions submitted data.
4. Data includes estimates for practices that did not provide fully valid staff records.
5. Practices in the London Borough of Enfield were identified using the National Statistics Postcode Lookup.

■ General Practitioners: Incentives

Darren Jones:

[185057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an impact assessment of the change to the National Clinical Impact Awards on academic medical doctors who are not employed under the NHS consultant contract.

Will Quince:

The Government has not undertaken a specific impact assessment of the change to the National Clinical Impact Awards (NCIA) scheme on academic medical doctors who are not employed under the National Health Service consultant contract. Clinical academics and academic general practitioners remain eligible to apply for awards, providing they meet the minimum eligibility criteria set out in the NCIA guidance and are employed on the equivalent academic contracts.

An equality impact assessment was conducted ahead of the reforms in 2022, and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-the-national-clinical-excellence-awards-scheme/outcome/reforming-the-national-clinical-excellence-awards-scheme-equality-impact-assessment>

■ General Practitioners: Lung Diseases

Jim Shannon:

[184659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take steps to provide GP practices with increased funding to improve (a) spirometry testing capacity and (b) care for patients with respiratory conditions.

Neil O'Brien:

NHS England published its delivery plan for recovering access to primary care and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/delivery-plan-for-recovering-access-to-primary-care-2/>

The delivery plan sets out actions to make available an extra £385 million funding in 2023/24 to employ 26,000 more direct patient care staff and deliver 50 million more appointments by March 2024. Diagnosis for spirometry testing and respiratory conditions is also being incentivised within the Quality Outcomes Framework for 2023/24.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Mental Health Services

Florence Eshalomi:

[185469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May to Question 184237 on Genito-urinary Medicine: Mental Health Services, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of ensuring that sexual health and HIV are factors considered in the context of improving the physical wellbeing of people who experience mental health issues.

Maria Caulfield:

We have no current plans to make a specific assessment.

■ Health Services: Children

Siobhain McDonagh:

[184878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has been made on implementing the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to ensure that children with learning disabilities (a) have their needs met by eyesight, hearing and dental services, (b) are included in reviews as part of general screening services and (c) are supported by accessible ongoing care.

Siobhain McDonagh:

[184879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children with learning disabilities have had their needs met by (a) eyesight, (b) hearing and (c) dental services since the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan commitment in January 2019.

Neil O'Brien:

The NHS Long Term Plan made a commitment that autistic children and young people, and those with a learning disability, or both in special residential schools

should have access to dental, sight and hearing checks. In order to progress this commitment, NHS England has commenced individual proof-of-concept programmes covering the three sensory checks since 2021. These seek to pilot and evaluate a sight, hearing and oral health service model in special residential schools in England.

The outcomes from the specific proof-of-concept programmes are being collated for each of the sensory workstreams. The findings will inform decisions about the scope, funding and delivery of any commissioning planning for future sensory check delivery for children and young people in special residential schools.

As part of these programmes more than 690 children and young people have received a hearing check, over 70 children received an oral health check and over 10,900 children and young people have received an eye test.

■ Heart Diseases: Young People

Patricia Gibson: [\[185345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional funding his Department has provided for research into cardiac risk in young adults in the last 12 months.

Will Quince:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including cardiac risk in young adults. It is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

■ HIV Infection: Health Services

Steve Brine: [R] [\[184958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has had recent discussions with the (a) UK Health Security Agency, (b) British HIV Association and (c) other representatives of people with HIV on taking steps to encourage people who are living with HIV to seek medical care.

Neil O'Brien:

As part of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) Action Plan, we committed to optimising access to treatment and retention and re-engagement in HIV care. As part of the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group, which drives forward the implementation of the Plan, we established a retention and re-engagement in care Task and Finish subgroup including UK Health Security Agency, British HIV Association and other key stakeholders who will provide advice on how to increase the number of people retained and re-engaged in care and receive effective medical care. The Implementation Steering Group will be considering the advice and, if needed, take appropriate action to ensure we meet our Action Plan's objectives.

■ HIV Infection: Pregnancy

Steve Brine:

[R] [\[184959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the level of diabetes in pregnant women with HIV.

Maria Caulfield:

All pregnant women receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan, which is a series of facilitated conversations in which the person actively gets involved to explore the management of their health and well-being, taking into account individual needs and requirements, including pre-existing health conditions.

Further to this, NHS England have developed 14 Maternal Medicine Networks across England, to ensure that all women with chronic and acute medical problems around pregnancy, including diabetes, have access to specialist management and care from physicians and obstetrics.

With relation to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the Specialised Adult HIV Service Specification sets out the requirements for service providers to support the appropriate management of people living with HIV, including pregnant women with HIV, through referral to and liaison with primary care for management of non-HIV care needs. Service providers are required to ensure that pathways are in place for access to other specialties.

■ HIV Infection: Prescription Drugs

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[185507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of making pre-exposure prophylaxis available as part of plans to make prescription medications accessible directly in community pharmacies.

Neil O'Brien:

No specific assessment has been made. As part of the HIV Action Plan, we committed to supporting the system to continue to improve access to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention drug pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for key population groups.

A PrEP Access and Equity Task and Finish group was established in 2022 as part of the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group comprised of key delivery partners and sector stakeholders. The task and finish group has delivered recommendations on improving PrEP delivery for key population groups which are currently being considered.

■ Huntington's Disease

Hilary Benn:

[\[185490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on the development of NICE guidelines for Huntington's Disease.

Will Quince:

The Department and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence officials are currently discussing the possible development of a guideline on Huntingdon's disease through the established topic selection arrangements. This entails consideration of factors such as the burden of disease, the evidence base and variation in practice.

■ **Infant Mortality: Greater London**

Seema Malhotra: **[184993]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of (a) stillbirth and (b) neonatal death rates in (i) Feltham and Heston constituency, (ii) the London Borough of Hounslow, (iii) the area covered by the NHS NW London Integrated Care Board and (iv) Greater London.

Maria Caulfield:

The published data from the North West London Integrated Care Board is available at the following link:

<https://timms.le.ac.uk/mbrace-uk-perinatal-mortality/>

The Government's maternity safety ambition is to halve the 2010 rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths and brain injuries that occur during or soon after birth and to reduce the preterm birth rate from 8% to 6% by 2025.

The Government has multiple approaches to improving maternity safety including clinical improvements like the expanded Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle, as well as improving learning through the maternity investigation programme which currently sits in the Healthcare Safety Investigations Branch.

■ **IVF: LGBT+ People**

Tracey Crouch: **[184938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's estimated timescale is for bringing into force the removal of the financial burden for In-Vitro Fertilisation for female same-sex couples in England.

Maria Caulfield:

Funding decisions for health services in England, including In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), are made by integrated care boards (ICBs) and are based on the clinical needs of their local population. We expect the removal of the additional financial burden faced by female same-sex couples when accessing IVF treatment to take effect during 2023.

■ Life Expectancy

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[185509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of when healthy life expectancy will have increased by five years compared to 2019.

Neil O'Brien:

Our ambition is to improve healthy life expectancy by five years by 2035 and reduce the gap between areas where it is highest and lowest by 2030. We will publish a Major Conditions Strategy which will aim to alleviate pressure on the health system, as well as support the Government's objective to increase healthy life expectancy and reduce ill-health related labour market inactivity.

■ Long Covid: Unemployment

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[185508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential impact of long covid on trends in the number of people who are not in work; and what recent steps his Department has taken to help tackle long covid.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department regularly discusses long COVID and its impact across Government and with a range of external stakeholders. NHS England has invested £314 million to support the assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of people with post-COVID-19 syndrome.

There are 90 post assessment services to support adults and 14 services for children and young people with post-COVID-19 conditions and to direct them into appropriate care pathways. The Government has invested £50 million for research projects into the long-term impacts of COVID-19 infection.

■ Lung Diseases: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon:

[\[184657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in the UK have been affected by the reduction of spirometry testing in primary care; and what steps his Department is taking to address that issue.

Jim Shannon:

[\[184658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients with respiratory conditions receive timely and accurate assessments.

Jim Shannon:

[\[184662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that patients with chronic respiratory conditions receive (a) timely and (b) accurate (i) assessments and (ii) treatment.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not held centrally. Diagnosis for spirometry testing and respiratory conditions is being incentivised within the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) for 2023/24. NHS England is investing in additional diagnostic capacity for respiratory pathways as part of the £2.3 billion 2021 spending review capital investment in diagnostics.

Community Diagnostic Centres are being established to deliver additional, digitally connected, diagnostic capacity in England. This provides patients with a coordinated set of diagnostic tests in the community, in as few visits as possible, enabling an accurate and fast diagnosis on a range of clinical pathways including people with chronic respiratory disease.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Tony Lloyd:

[\[184294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the email of the 8 of March 2023 from the hon. Member for Rochdale on sexual offences in Greater Manchester.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 18 May 2023]: I replied to the hon. Member on 18 May 2023.

■ **Menopause: Clinics**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[184670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many menopause clinics are available through the NHS in England; and where these clinics are located.

Maria Caulfield:

This information is not held by NHS England. The menopause is a priority area within the Women's Health Strategy, and the Government and National Health Service are implementing an ambitious programme of work to improve menopause care so all women can access the support they need. 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.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[184671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of menopause clinics through the NHS in England.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. Menopause clinics are not commissioned by NHS England, they are commissioned by integrated care boards and implemented as local services. Integrated care boards have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services that meet the needs of their whole population.

Mental Health Services: Location**Dan Carden:**[\[185711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people in England live within one hour's drive of a memory service.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Mould: Health Hazards**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[184920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of hospitalisations which were attributed to household mould inhalation in each of the last three years.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 18 May 2023]: This information is not held in the format requested.

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) does not hold data on hospitalisations following household mould exposures or inhalations as they are difficult to define or prove causality. Most reasons for healthcare presentation from household mould exposures would be exacerbation of pre-existing asthma and hypersensitivity pneumonitis and/or rhinitis. Invasive disease following such exposures is likely to be very rare in non-immunocompromised individuals and would follow overwhelming exposure.

UKHSA currently routinely reports invasive fungal disease from bloodstream infections in our annual English Surveillance Programme for Antimicrobial Utilisation and Resistance (ESPAUR) report which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-surveillance-programme-antimicrobial-utilisation-and-resistance-espaur-report>

In addition, UKHSA has recently published data on invasive fungal disease associated with COVID-19 in peer-reviewed literature, available at the following links:

<https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/JCM.02136-20>

[https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453\(21\)00665-4/fulltext](https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453(21)00665-4/fulltext)

Musculoskeletal Disorders: Waiting Lists**Neil Coyle:**[\[185599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to implement the framework on reducing waiting times for musculoskeletal

treatments set out in the report by NHS England entitled An improvement framework to reduce community musculoskeletal waits while delivering best outcomes and experience, published on 10 January 2023.

Helen Whately:

Integrated care systems are responsible for commissioning musculoskeletal services for their local populations.

■ **Neurology: Medical Treatments**

Cat Smith:

[\[185609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people affected by neurological conditions have access to appropriate (a) treatment and (b) support.

Helen Whately:

As set out in the NHS England Roadmap for integrating specialised services within integrated care systems, integrated care boards (ICBs) have, from April 2023, delegated responsibility for the commissioning of specialised neurosciences services. Integrating the commissioning of neurosciences services with ICBs will allow local systems to simplify and strengthen care pathways with other services through effective local partnerships, ensuring continuity for patients and improved health outcomes.

NHS England has also established the Neuroscience Transformation Programme, a multi-year, clinically-led programme aimed at improving specialised adult neuroscience services in England and developing a new model of integrated care for neurology services.

To support systems to understand the priorities in neurology care and improve service quality, NHS England has developed the RightCare Progressive Neurological Conditions Toolkit. The Toolkit supports improvements to pathways for progressive neurological patients, ensuring that commissioners focus on quicker and more accurate diagnoses and increasing the availability of neurorehabilitation, reablement, and psychosocial support.

■ **Obesity: Children**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[184921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity.

Neil O'Brien:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 January 2023 to Question 119899.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Children

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[185275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the results of the independent evaluation of the NHS England Special Schools Eye Care Service; and what clinical data will be published on the eye care history of relevant children.

Neil O'Brien:

The NHS Long Term Plan made a commitment to ensure that children and young people with a learning disability and/or autism in special residential schools have access to sight checks in school. To fulfil that commitment, NHS England commenced a proof-of-concept programme in 2021, piloting sight testing and the dispensing of glasses in special schools.

NHS England are currently considering the independent evaluation of this programme and will set out next steps for how the eye care needs of people with learning disabilities should be commissioned shortly. Decisions about publication of data will be taken in due course.

■ Paramedical Staff: Training

Feryal Clark:

[\[184539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to update the NHS cervical screening programme guidance to allow paramedics to train as cervical screening sample takers.

Helen Whately:

NHS England has given approval for advanced paramedics working within primary care to be trained to take cervical screening samples. This is on the basis that paramedics working in primary care, who can demonstrate that cervical sample taker training is relevant to their role and practice, should be able to undertake the NHS Cervical Screening Programme recognised cervical sample taker training. This was intended to be used as a flexible use of the professional workforce and utilised in line with need. Sample Taker Training guidance is due to be updated to reflect the inclusion of paramedics in the sample taking process.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Valerie Vaz:

[\[185537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing free prescriptions for immunosuppressants for transplant patients.

Neil O'Brien:

There are no plans to provide free prescriptions for immunosuppressants for transplant patients. Approximately 89% of prescription items are currently dispensed free of charge in community pharmacies and there is a wide range of exemptions

from prescription charges already in place for which transplant patients may meet the eligibility criteria and be in receipt of free prescriptions.

In addition, those on a low income can apply for additional support through the NHS Low Income Scheme. This provides both full and partial help with a range of health costs, not just prescription charges. Those who do not qualify for low-income help, may benefit from the purchase for prescription pre-payment certificate. This caps the cost of prescriptions at £111.60 per year, helping people to get all the medicines they need for just over £2 a week.

■ Prescriptions: Mothers

Kate Osamor:

[\[185322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of maternity exemption certificates amongst (a) NHS staff and (b) pregnant women.

Maria Caulfield:

We promote maternity exemption certificates to professionals and patients to ensure both groups are aware of the entitlement. Healthcare professionals, such as midwives and general practitioners (GPs), apply for maternity exemption certificates on behalf of the patient and ensure that individuals are aware of the entitlement. We are working with NHS Business Services Authority on communications to ensure that midwives, GPs and other Health Care Professionals are aware of their obligation and information is provided to expectant mothers. The certificates are also promoted through social media, online resources, media releases and through healthcare bulletins.

■ Protective Clothing: China

Angela Rayner:

[\[184826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 May to question 172423 on Protective Clothing: China, whether his Department has made an estimate of potential usable energy generation from incineration of the items of Personal Protective Equipment disposed of since September 2022.

Will Quince:

The Department has not made an estimate of potential usable energy generation from incineration of the items of Personal Protective Equipment disposed of in China since September 2022.

■ Protective Clothing: Contracts

Nick Smith:

[\[185225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2023 to Question 184346 on Protective Clothing: Contracts and with reference to the National Audit Office report entitled Investigation into the management of PPE contracts published 30 Mar 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies

of that report's findings that not all due diligence checks on companies not were completed before contracts were awarded for personal protective equipment procurement.

Will Quince:

The 2022 National Audit Office (NAO) refers to an 'eight stage due diligence process', a term used by the NAO to describe a structured process of checks and due diligence on potential suppliers of personal protective equipment (PPE) which formalised the checks quickly put in place by the cross-Government PPE procurement cell and which evolved in March and April 2020. The final step was the introduction of a central clearance board on 4 May 2020 to perform checks previously performed by the Department's Accounting Officer to add an extra level of assurance that the deal met our requirements. From the start all suppliers were evaluated by officials on financial standing, technical compliance and ability to perform the contract.

■ **Radiology: Vacancies**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[185064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of consultant paediatric interventional radiology posts in (a) London, (b) the South East and (c) the UK.

Helen Whately:

There are no specific Consultant Paediatric Radiologist posts in the South East region or London. Paediatric Interventional Radiology is supported by Adult Interventional Radiologists, Paediatric Radiologists and General Surgeons as part of their overarching role.

■ **Stem Cells: Transplant Surgery**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[184918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to support patients receiving a stem cell transplant with the cost of living.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 18 May 2023]: NHS England does not provide any specific cost of living support for patients receiving stem cell transplantation, however, trusts can exercise discretion to provide accommodation and/or other support depending on local and individual patient circumstances. Depending on a patient's financial circumstances, they may be eligible for financial support with travel costs via the NHS Low Income Scheme and Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme.

With regards to the Healthcare Travel Scheme, the regulations provide that the amount payable should be calculated by reference to the cost of travelling by the cheapest means of transport which is reasonable having regard to the person's age, medical condition or any other relevant circumstance.

People with long-term health conditions or disabilities, including those requiring stem cell transplants, may be entitled to financial support to contribute towards their extra costs such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Entitlement to PIP is assessed on the basis of the needs arising from a health condition or disability, rather than the health condition or disability itself. Recipients of extra costs disability benefits, such as PIP, will receive a £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment in the summer. They may also be entitled to up to £900 of Cost of Living Payments if they are a member of a household receiving a means tested benefit.

■ Stomach Cancer: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon: [\[184783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his Department's policies of trends in the number of people diagnosed with stomach cancer in from 2019.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made. Trends in cancer diagnosis and care will form part of the Government's considerations as it drafts the forthcoming Major Conditions Strategy.

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme

Ben Everitt: [\[185165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to review the eligibility criteria for the Vaccine Damage Payment.

Maria Caulfield:

There are currently no plans to review the eligibility criteria for the vaccine damage payment scheme.

HOME OFFICE

■ Action Fraud

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[185518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average time taken to investigate cases at Action Fraud.

Tom Tugendhat:

Action Fraud is the national reporting service for fraud but is not responsible for investigations. Reports submitted to Action Fraud are considered by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) and evaluated to assess the information available which could assist an investigation.

The NFIB currently aims to review every report for vulnerability within 72 hours of it being received on the NFIB technology platform. All allegations where viable lines of

enquiry are identified should be disseminated to the appropriate force within 7–28 days of reporting, depending on the level of information and evidence available.

We are working with City of London Police to refresh and upgrade the current Action Fraud service. Improvements include using automation within NFIB to increase its effectiveness.

■ Animal Experiments

Catherine West:

[185037]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to reintroduce the ban on animal experimentation.

Tom Tugendhat:

Animal testing of cosmetics for consumer safety has been banned in the UK since 1998 and this remains in force.

On 17 May 2023 the Government announced it is going further by banning, with immediate effect, licences to test ingredients exclusively used in the production of cosmetics for the purposes of worker safety.

The Home Secretary has issued a Written Ministerial Statement, which can be found here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-05-17/hcws779>.

■ Asylum

Rachael Maskell:

[905052]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to create safe routes for asylum seekers to enter the UK.

Robert Jenrick:

The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary through our resettlement schemes, with around half a million having used our global and country-specific routes since 2015.

These schemes have provided safe and legal routes for people from anywhere in the world to come here, and as part of the Illegal Migration Bill we have committed to introduce to an annual quota decided by this House and in consultation with local authorities to determine that number.

In keeping with most other countries around the world, we do not allow asylum claims from abroad. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – the fastest route to safety.

■ Asylum: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell:

[185396]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason asylum seekers from Afghanistan are required to find their own accommodation in the UK; and if she will

make it her police to set up an equivalent scheme for Afghans to the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Robert Jenrick:

The UK has made an ambitious and generous commitment to help relocate some of the most at-risk people in Afghanistan. So far, we have brought approximately 24,500 vulnerable people to safety, including thousands of people eligible for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

We do not want to see Afghan families already in the UK in bridging accommodation for any longer than is necessary. That is why we have been working across government to support families into settled accommodation so that they can fully integrate into their local communities, feel safe and independent, and rebuild their lives in the UK.

The government has established the “Find Your Own” accommodation pathway which empowers Afghan families to source their own accommodation. Council support staff in hotels will work closely with households to help them navigate the pathway.

■ **Asylum: Applications**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[905049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on reducing the backlog of asylum applications.

Robert Jenrick:

We are streamlining and modernising the end-to-end asylum casework process, extending the asylum questionnaire to Iranians and Iraqi nationals, and increasing the number of asylum decision makers by over 48% since July 2022.

The Home Office has already reduced the legacy asylum backlog by over 13,800 cases and we are on track to clear the backlog by the end of 2023.

■ **Asylum: Employment**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[185183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of right to work applications made by asylum seekers were accepted in 2021-22.

Robert Jenrick:

This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Asylum: Finance**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[185182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how her department calculates the weekly allowance received by asylum seekers on aspen cards.

Robert Jenrick:

The level of the allowance given to those supported under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 ("the 1999 Act") is generally reviewed each year to ensure it meets an asylum seeker's essential living needs. Reports on the reviews are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers>.

■ **Asylum: Sudan****Mohammad Yasin:****[185383]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase the speed at which asylum applications are processed for people from Sudan.

Robert Jenrick:

We are carefully monitoring the situation in Sudan.

We are taking immediate action to clear the backlog of 92,601 initial asylum decisions relating to claims made before 28 June 2022 ("legacy claims") by the end of 2023.

We are increasing the number of caseworkers to 2,500 by September 2023, streamlining interviews where one is required and simplifying guidance.

■ **Disinformation****Christian Wakeford:****[905046]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on countering foreign disinformation in the UK.

Suella Braverman:

Countering foreign disinformation – which seeks to subvert and undermine the UK's democracy, prosperity, and security – is vital.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology holds overall responsibility for countering disinformation and is the convening department that coordinates cross-government capabilities.

The Home Office works closely with DSIT and others in the coordinated effort to protect the UK.

The National Security Bill - currently making its way through this House - will further strengthen our ability to counter hostile state threats.

■ **Drugs: Misuse****Julian Knight:****[185010]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to review the drug classification of (a) monkey dust and (b) other synthetic cathinones.

Chris Philp:

On 10 May 2023, I commissioned the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to conduct an updated harms assessment of synthetic cathinones, currently class B, including those sold under the street name ‘monkey dust’. I have asked that this assessment includes consideration of whether certain synthetic cathinones are significantly more harmful than others and may therefore merit a separate approach in terms of classification.

The Government has a statutory duty to consult the ACMD prior to making any changes to classification under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Once their report is published, I will carefully consider the ACMD’s expert advice to inform the Government’s decision on how best to tackle misuse of these drugs, including the appropriate classification.

■ **Hate Crime: Transphobia**

Elliot Colburn: [\[184853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle the rise in transphobic hate crime.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government takes all forms of hate crime seriously. We expect the police to investigate these hateful attacks and make sure the cowards who commit them feel the full force of the law.

We also welcome the apparent greater willingness to report hate crimes to the police and that the police are better at identifying them. That helps to explain the increase seen in hate crime.

Our absolute priority is to get more police into our streets, cut crime, protect the public and bring more criminals to justice. We are supporting police by providing them with the resources they need. This has included the recruitment of 20,000 extra police officers.

The Government has also worked with the police to fund True Vision, an online hate crime reporting portal, designed so that victims of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report. The Government also funds the National Online Hate Crime Hub, a central capability designed to support individual local police forces in dealing with online hate crime. The Hub provides expert advice to police forces to support them in investigating these offences.

Alex Cunningham: [\[184963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle transphobic hate crime.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government takes all forms of hate crime seriously. We expect the police to investigate these hateful attacks and make sure the cowards who commit them feel the full force of the law.

We also welcome the apparent greater willingness to report hate crimes to the police and that the police are better at identifying them. That helps to explain the increase seen in hate crime.

Our absolute priority is to get more police into our streets, cut crime, protect the public and bring more criminals to justice. We are supporting police by providing them with the resources they need. This has included the recruitment of 20,000 extra police officers.

The Government has also worked with the police to fund True Vision, an online hate crime reporting portal, designed so that victims of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report. The Government also funds the National Online Hate Crime Hub, a central capability designed to support individual local police forces in dealing with online hate crime. The Hub provides expert advice to police forces to support them in investigating these offences.

Stephen Farry:

[\[185174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the Government's strategy is for tackling the increase in transphobic hate crime.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government takes all forms of hate crime seriously. We expect the police to investigate these hateful attacks and make sure the cowards who commit them feel the full force of the law.

We also welcome the apparent greater willingness to report hate crimes to the police and that the police are better at identifying them. That helps to explain the increase seen in hate crime.

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Crispin Blunt:

[\[905050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to tackle the rise in transphobic hate crime.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government takes all forms of hate crime seriously. We expect the police to fully investigate these hateful attacks and make sure the cowards who commit them feel the full force of the law.

The Government is committed to reducing all crime, including hate crime, which is why we have successfully recruited more than 20,000 extra police officers.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[905056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to tackle increases in transphobic hate crime.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government takes all forms of hate crime seriously. We expect the police to fully investigate these hateful attacks and make sure the cowards who commit them feel the full force of the law.

The Government is committed to reducing all crime, including hate crime, which is why we have successfully recruited more than 20,000 extra police officers.

■ **HM Passport Office**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[185188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve access to priority appointments at the Passport Office; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

Appointments for urgent passport services are released up to three weeks in advance to help meet the needs of the small proportion of customers who need a passport sooner than ten weeks. Appointment capacity is at normal levels.

■ **Illegal Migration Bill**

Stephen Kinnock: [\[185602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the equality impact assessment for the Illegal Migration Bill, dated 26 April 2023, was not published until 10 May 2023.

Robert Jenrick:

The equality impact assessment was published following the completion of internal review processes.

■ **Immigration Removal Centres: LGBT+ People**

Siobhain McDonagh: [\[184790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many LGBTQI+ people are in immigration detention in the UK.

Robert Jenrick:

The management of and support for detained individuals that identify as LGBTQI+ is set out in published guidance. [Detention Services Order 2/2016 'Lesbian, gay and bisexual detainees in the detention estate'](#), and [Detention Services Order 11/2012 'Care and Management of Transsexual Detainees'](#). Each set out how individuals with

these particular protected characteristics should be safeguarded and treated in detention.

The Home Office does not hold central data on the number of LGBTQI+ residents in immigration detention. It is not incumbent upon a detained individual to declare their sexuality. Consequently, even a manual trawl of cases will not necessarily be representative of the true number of LGBTQI individuals detained during any period.

The Home Office does however publish statistics on people in immigration detention in the ' [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release\(opens in a new tab\)](#) '. The number of people in detention at the end of each quarter are in table Det_D02 of the ' [Detention detailed datasets\(opens in a new tab\)](#) ', where the data can be broken down by current place of detention. The latest data relate to as at the end of December 2022.

Data as at the end of March 2023 is scheduled to be published in late May 2023.

■ Immigration: Organised Crime

Aaron Bell:

[\[905054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress the National Crime Agency has made on tackling organised immigration crime.

Tom Tugendhat:

Mr Speaker, this Government has pledged to tackle Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) as a priority to save lives, deter illegal migration and disrupt the people-smuggling gangs responsible for the dangerous Channel crossings.

Since 2015, the UK's dedicated OIC taskforce has achieved more than 1,400 arrests (both in the UK and overseas), with suspects sentenced to more than 1,300 years in prison (61)

■ Knives: Crime

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[905058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle knife crime.

Chris Philp:

Tackling knife crime is a priority for this government. We are pursuing a robust twin-track approach, combining tough enforcement with programmes that divert young people away from crime.

Since 2019, we have invested £340m in the areas most affected by violence, funding our 'Grip' hotspot policing programme and Violence Reduction Units to tackle the root causes of serious violence.

On 18 April, we launched a 7-week consultation on proposed legislation to tackle knife crime and particularly the use of certain types of large knives and machetes in crime.

■ **Metropolitan Police: Criminal Investigation**

Matt Vickers: [\[185171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that serving Metropolitan Police officers who are under investigation are not on operational duties.

Chris Philp:

Decisions on whether to suspend a police officer are taken independently of government by Chief Constables. Prior to suspending an officer, Chief Constables must, by law, have considered temporary redeployment to either alternative duties or an alternative location as to an alternative to suspension.

■ **Migrants: Domestic Abuse**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[185692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of support available for migrant victims of domestic abuse.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[185693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish its response to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's second report into migrant survivors Safety before status: the solutions published in December 2022.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[185694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that migrant victims of domestic abuse are aware of the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession whilst their DVILR application is considered.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[185695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support migrant victims of domestic abuse in the UK.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for this Government. Information on support for victims, including guidance on the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC), can be found on the [Domestic abuse: how to get help](#) page on GOV.UK. Further advice and support can be accessed through Government's ['Enough' Campaign](#).

The DDVC allows for eligible migrant victims to apply for the lifting of the no recourse to public funds condition associated with their leave, enabling the victim to access welfare benefits while their application for indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse is made and considered. The DDVC has operated since 2012 and is widely known throughout the specialist domestic abuse sector.

We recently announced that we are providing a further £1.4 million in 2023/ 24 to continue to fund the Support for Migrants Victim scheme, ensuring we maintain

support for migrant victims of domestic abuse regardless of their immigration status. This support includes accommodation, subsistence, legal advice and counselling.

The Home Office is grateful to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for publishing the 'Safety Before Status: The Solutions' report and to the Commissioner's team and external partners for researching the vital issue of support for migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

We will continue to engage with the Commissioner's office on recommendations set out in the report, and across government. We have already begun to take forward work that stems from some of the recommendations.

We are giving detailed consideration to the findings of this research and considering the wider policies affecting migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Our official response will be published as soon as is practicable.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[185696]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to support victims of domestic abuse.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Tackling domestic abuse is a government priority. It is unacceptable and preventable, an issue which blights the lives of millions. In March 2022 the Government published the ambitious Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan which invests over £230 million of cross-Government funding into tackling this heinous crime including over £140 million for supporting victims of which £47 million will be ringfenced for community-based services to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In March 2023, the Government announced that it was partnering with Women's Aid Federation to trial a £300,000 'flexible fund' in England and Wales in 2023/4. Payments to victims in Wales will be facilitated by Welsh Women's Aid. Launched on 10 May, the 'flexible fund' will make direct cash payments of £250 to victims and survivors (£500 to those with children and/or are pregnant) to help remove barriers to leaving an abusive relationship.

Controlling or coercive behaviour does not stop at the point of separation. Indeed, it can persist and often increase as the perpetrator seeks to retain control over the victim. The Domestic Abuse Act amended the definition of 'personally connected' which removed the 'living together' requirement for the controlling or coercive behaviour offence. On 5 April 2023, the Government extended the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship to remove the co-habitation requirement (section 68). Updated guidance on controlling and coercive behaviour has also been published on GOV.UK.

■ Passports

Dame Diana Johnson:

[185232]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications were made between 1 January and 31 March 2023.

Robert Jenrick:

The data requested is due to be released shortly. Once published, it will be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

■ **Passports: Applications**

Deidre Brock: **[184830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department last reviewed the list of accepted occupations for passport application and photo countersignatories; and whether she plans to increase the number of accepted occupations on that list.

Robert Jenrick:

His Majesty's Passport Office policy on who can act as a referee is kept under review as part of the general programme of work to transform and modernise the passport application process. Any changes to the policy would be announced to Parliament and reflected in published HM Passport Office guidance.

The list of recognised professions can be found online. This is not a definitive list, and any alternatives a customer provides must be considered. [Countersigning passport applications and photos: Accepted occupations for countersignatories - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/accepted-occupations-for-countersignatories).

Deidre Brock: **[184831]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has provided to passport applicants who do not know anyone who meets the criteria for photograph counter-signatories.

Robert Jenrick:

His Majesty's Passport Office engages with customers on a case by case basis where they tell us they do not know anyone who meets the criteria for acting as an acceptable counter-signatory. Published HM Passport Office guidance provides advice to passport examiners in considering exercising discretion in these cases. [Confirming ID: referees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/confirming-id-referees)

Customers can call the Passport Adviceline if they have questions about a passport application.

Mr Laurence Robertson: **[185186]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent delays in processing passport applications; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

Between January and April 2023, 99.5% of customers using the standard UK service received their passport within the published processing timeframe of ten weeks.

Mr Laurence Robertson: **[185187]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve waiting times for passport applications; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

Between January and April 2023, 99.5% of customers using the standard UK service received their passport within the published processing timeframe of ten weeks.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[185230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications took longer than three weeks to process in the first quarter of 2023.

Robert Jenrick:

Across January to March 2023, 94.6% of standard UK passport applications were processed within three weeks.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[185231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications took longer than ten weeks to process in the first quarter of 2023.

Robert Jenrick:

Across January to March 2023, 99.6% of standard UK passport applications were processed within ten weeks.

■ Police: Defibrillators**Jonathan Gullis:**[\[185152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of police cars carry a defibrillator.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not hold the information.

Decisions on the placement of defibrillators in police vehicles would be an operational matter for local Chief Officers to decide based upon local priorities in conjunction with their Police and Crime Commissioner.

■ Police: Training**Dean Russell:**[\[185144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of levels of police participation in Domestic Abuse Matters training in (a) Watford and (b) England.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Domestic Abuse Matters training, developed by the College of Policing, in collaboration with SafeLives, with input from Women's Aid and Welsh Women's Aid, aims to improve the police response to domestic abuse and to achieve national consistency in the service police forces provide to people experiencing domestic abuse.

The majority of police forces in England and Wales have undertaken the Domestic Abuse Matters training in their force to date, including Hertfordshire Police who are the force for Watford.

We have also funded the development of a new module of the training that is targeted at officers investigating domestic abuse offences to enable further improvement in police responses to domestic abuse incidents.

Feryal Clark: [\[185451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of levels of police participation in Domestic Abuse Matters training in (a) Enfield North constituency, (b) the London Borough of Enfield and (c) London.

Chris Philp:

The Domestic Abuse Matters training, developed by the College of Policing, in collaboration with SafeLives, with input from Women's Aid and Welsh Women's Aid, aims to improve the police response to domestic abuse and to achieve national consistency in the service police forces provide to people experiencing domestic abuse.

The majority of police forces in England and Wales have undertaken the Domestic Abuse Matters training in their force to date, including the Metropolitan Police who are the force for the London Borough of Enfield.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Sir Geoffrey Cox: [\[184922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan citizens have been granted resettlement under Pathway 2 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme to date; what discussions she has held with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on its processes for assessment of Afghan citizens under that scheme; what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the UNHCR's processes; and if she will take steps to encourage the UNHCR to expedite its consideration and referral of cases to that scheme of vulnerable Afghan nationals based in Pakistan.

Robert Jenrick:

The latest [Immigration System Statistics, year ending December 2022](#) (published on 23 February 2023), show that since their first arrivals in 2021, the Afghan schemes – the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) - have resettled a total of 21,387 people.

Under the scheme's second pathway, which opened in 2022, we have now begun to receive the first referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of vulnerable refugees who have fled Afghanistan for resettlement to the UK. The latest Immigration statistics show that we have now welcomed the first people to the UK under Pathway 2.

We anticipate receiving referrals from UNHCR for up to 2,000 refugees during the first year of pathway 2, although this number will be kept under review.

UNHCR refer those who qualify as refugees in need of resettlement. They have access to detailed case information – which is gathered during interviews conducted

during the different stages of resettlement processing – and they have a detailed knowledge of the circumstances refugees face in host countries.

If UNHCR consider that an individual should be referred to the UK for resettlement, they will send the Home Office a Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) which confirms that the individual has been determined by UNHCR to be a refugee and details the reasons why that person is in need of resettlement.

■ Refugees: Rwanda

Alan Brown:

[\[185023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2023 to Question 180360 on Refugees: Rwanda, whether her Department has set a provisional upper limit for the number of refugees who can be resettled from Rwanda.

Robert Jenrick:

More details on the resettlement of refugees as part of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership will be set out in due course.

■ Refugees: Sudan

Dan Jarvis:

[\[185274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to introduce a designated relocation scheme for Sudanese refugees.

Robert Jenrick:

The UK has a proud history of supporting refugees. Since 2015, we have offered a place to just under half a million men, women and children seeking safety in the UK using our global and country specific routes.

The UK continues to welcome refugees through our existing resettlement schemes which include the global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship and the Mandate Resettlement Scheme. The UK is proud to have welcomed Sudanese nationals through both our UK Resettlement Scheme and Community Sponsorship in 2021 and 2022.

While our safe and legal routes are some of the most generous anywhere, we cannot accommodate everyone who wants to come to the UK, and we are not able to open a bespoke route for every situation. The UK has no plans to introduce a designated scheme for Sudanese refugees.

■ Visas: Ukraine

Deidre Brock:

[\[184832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Ukrainian crew members working on cruise ships in the UK will be eligible to apply to one of the visa schemes for Ukrainian nationals, including the Ukrainian Extension Scheme.

Robert Jenrick:

Both the Ukraine Extension Scheme and the Ukraine Family Scheme can be applied for by Ukrainian nationals in the UK, who meet the eligibility criteria – which can be found on GOV.UK ([UK visa support for Ukrainian nationals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-support-for-ukrainian-nationals)).

Ukrainian nationals seeking to travel to the UK for sanctuary must use either Homes for Ukraine, or the Ukraine Family Scheme.

Individuals are able to contact an independent Immigration Adviser registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) for advice relevant to their own circumstances. Further guidance is available on GOV.UK ([Find an immigration adviser: Search for an adviser - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser)).

JUSTICE■ **Homicide: Offenders****Ellie Reeves:****[185634]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders were serving (a) sentences for manslaughter and (b) life sentences for manslaughter as of 17 May 2023.

Edward Argar:

Published prison population data for the period requested is currently unavailable and is exempt under future publication rules. Prison population data, which will provide some of the data requested up to and including 30 June 2023, will be available at the end of July 2023.

■ **Judges****Julian Knight:****[185012]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of people able to apply to become a judge.

Mike Freer:

The Ministry of Justice, as a member of the Judicial Diversity Forum (JDF), works closely with the judiciary, the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), the Legal Services Board (LSB) and the three legal professions on actions to expand the pool of candidates ready to apply for a judicial career.

The JDF published its priorities and actions for 2023 in December 2022:

<https://judicialappointments.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/JDF-Priorities.pdf>

which includes actions we are taking as a Department. This includes support for lawyers from groups under-represented in the judiciary through the Pre-Application Judicial Education programme and reviewing the application processes and barriers for non-traditional lawyers, such as legal academics and in-house lawyers. On 11 May, a Statutory Instrument was laid, which subject to parliamentary approval, will extend the eligibility of Chartered Institute of Legal Executive (CILEX) lawyers, with

seven years' post qualification experience to apply directly to the judicial offices of Upper Tribunal Judge, Deputy Judge of the Upper Tribunal and Recorder.

■ **Prison Officers: Crimes of Violence**

Andrew Rosindell:

[184906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce attacks on prison officers.

Damian Hinds:

We will not tolerate any violence against prison officers – staff must be able to expect a safe work environment. Prisoners who are violent towards staff will face the full consequences of their actions and will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. As of 28 June 2022 the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act has doubled the maximum penalty to up to two years' imprisonment for those who assault emergency workers, including prison officers.

To protect staff and prisoners in very serious assaults, we are rolling out PAVA – a synthetic pepper spray – for use by prison officers in the adult male estate. Staff are able to use the PAVA spray where there is serious violence or an imminent or perceived risk of it.

We have rolled out a next generation Body Worn Video Camera solution which has increased the availability across public sector prisons from 6,000 to over 13,000 cameras, enabling every band 3-5 officer on shift to wear one. The cameras will provide high-quality evidence to support prosecutions against prisoners who commit assaults.

■ **Prison Officers: Retirement**

Andrew Rosindell:

[184904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential (a) impact of the prison officer retirement age on safety in prisons and (b) merits of aligning the retirement age of prison officers with police officers.

Damian Hinds:

We highly value our hardworking prison officers and take very seriously the safety of all staff working within prisons, whatever their age. The Ministry continues to review and roll out new safety equipment and provide new skills to prison officers to deal with challenging situations and reduce the risk of assault.

The pension age in all public sector pension schemes is set under legislation by HM Treasury and the merits of any review in pension age would be for them to consider. I am committed to listening to and working with officers, staff and trade unions on a range of issues.

■ Prisoners' Release: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[185394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison leavers had an origin address in Wales by prison establishment in 2022.

Damian Hinds:

3,609 of the 46,804 prison leavers in 2022 had an identified origin address in Wales. The breakdown by establishment is shown in the table below.

The figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

To prevent the disclosure of individual information, figures totalling five people or fewer have not been included (denoted by *).

PRISON	COUNT
Altcourse	31
Ashfield	*
Askham Grange	*
Berwyn	537
Birmingham	*
Brinsford	*
Bristol	14
Brixton	*
Bronzefield	*
Buckley Hall	*
Bullingdon	*
Cardiff	1046
Channings Wood	*
Doncaster	*
Dovegate	*
Downview	*
Drake Hall	17
East Sutton Park	*

PRISON	COUNT
Eastwood Park	213
Elmley (Sheppey Cluster)	*
Erlestoke	*
Exeter	*
Five Wells	*
Ford	*
Forest Bank	*
Foston Hall	*
Frankland	*
Garth	*
Grendon/Spring Hill	*
Guys Marsh	*
Hatfield	*
Haverigg	6
Hewell	*
High Down	*
Highpoint (North and South)	*
Hindley	*
Hull	*
Humber	*
Huntercombe	12
Isis	*
Isle of Wight	*
Kirkham	10
Lancaster Farms	*
Leeds	*

PRISON	COUNT
Leicester	*
Leyhill	20
Littlehey	*
Liverpool	8
Maidstone	*
Manchester	*
Moorland	*
Mount	*
Northumberland	*
Norwich	*
Nottingham	*
Oakwood	24
Parc	559
Pentonville	*
Portland	*
Prescoed	134
Preston	*
Ranby	*
Risley	15
Rye Hill	*
Send	*
Stafford	10
Standford Hill (Sheppey Cluster)	*
Stocken	*
Stoke Heath	6
Styal	42

PRISON	COUNT
Sudbury	*
Swansea	688
Swinfen Hall	*
Thameside	*
Thorn Cross	12
Usk	58
Wakefield	*
Wandsworth	6
Wayland	*
Wetherby	*
Whatton	13
Winchester	*
Wymott	*
Total	3609

■ Prisoners: Mental Health

Anna McMorris:

[185703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on improving the mental health of people in prisons.

Damian Hinds:

Ensuring that people have access to timely and effective mental healthcare that is tailored to their needs is a top priority for this Department and I have regular discussions with both Minister O'Brien and Minister Caulfield about our shared interests.

Our ongoing commitment to work closely with health agencies to strengthen services is reflected in the new National Partnership Agreement on Health and Social Care in England, which was published on 23 February 2023. This new agreement sets out a shared priority workplan to deliver safe, decent and effective care that improves physical and mental health outcomes for people in prison and those subject to statutory supervision by the probation service in the community.

Following the publication of the national mental health needs analysis of all prisons, commissioned by NHS England and produced by the Centre for Mental Health, NHS England have, in collaboration with justice agencies, refreshed the mental health service specification for health and justice settings.

■ Prisoners: Safety

Anna McMorris: [\[185701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, steps he plans to take to improve the safety of people in prisons.

Damian Hinds:

Ensuring the safety of staff and prisoners whilst in custody is a key priority and we continue to do everything we can to improve the safety outcomes of everybody in the prison estate.

The Prisons Strategy White Paper sets out our vision for prisons of the future, including our ambitious plans to make prisons safer for staff and prisoners.

The right actions to improve safety fundamentally centre on supporting prisons to maintain key safety interventions. We have implemented a strengthened case management approach for prisoners who are assessed as at risk of suicide and self-harm as well as implemented one-to-one key work.

We have announced additional investment in our workforce, expansion of the prison estate and access to healthcare that are vital for delivering safer prisons. Between October 2016 and December 2022, the number of full-time equivalent officers at band 3-5 increased by 3,677. This means staff can provide more one-to-one support for prisoners and better monitor risk to prevent harm.

We have also invested £100 million to improve security in prisons by clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel crime and violence behind bars.

■ Prisoners: Women

Anna McMorris: [\[185702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to increase the safety of women in prisons.

Damian Hinds:

Ensuring the safety of staff and prisoners whilst in custody is a key priority and we continue to do everything we can to improve the safety outcomes of women in prison.

The Prisons Strategy White Paper, published in December 2021, set out our approach for women's prisons; one which is trauma responsive, recognises the distinct nature of women's experience in custody, and provides the appropriate levels of support, particularly for pregnant women and those with young children. In January 2023 we published our Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-25, which set out our priorities for delivering the aims of the strategy, including better outcomes for women in custody.

Women in prison often face complex issues including mental health, self-harm, trauma, and separation from children. We are investing up to £14 million to support improvements in safety in women's prisons between 2022-25.

We set up a Women's Estate Self-Harm Task Force in April 2020 to help reduce levels of self-harm. To date, the Taskforce has:

- o recruited psychologists to support women with the most complex needs;
- o developed bespoke selection and assessment criteria for staff in women's prisons and developed bespoke staff training for staff working with female prisoners which is being rolled out across the women's estate;
- o implemented a gender-specific Offender Management in Custody model to provide each woman with dedicated support; and
- o jointly commissioned a review of health and social care in the women's estate with NHS England to better understand the health needs in the women's estate.

■ Prisons: Dogs

Ellie Reeves:

[\[185387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many sniffer dogs work across the prison estate; and what the annual cost to the public purse of the use of those dogs is.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Prisons: Staff

Anna McMorris:

[\[185704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to increase prison staffing levels.

Damian Hinds:

HMPPS have recruitment and retention activity underway for all sites with a current or future need. At the end of March 2023, there were 22,288 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) band 3-5 prison officers in post – an increase of 655 FTE (3.0%) prison officers compared to 31 December 2022. Since March 2022, we have also streamlined the recruitment process with average time for hiring and training prison officers falling month on month.

But recruitment is only part of the solution, we are also focusing on improving retention across the Prison Service. To increase retention rates, we have introduced a retention framework – and for new prison officers, New Colleague Mentors (NCMs) have been introduced to support the wellbeing of new colleagues in establishments across the estate. Over 150 NCMs have been funded and recruited to date. Early indications show the positive impact of NCMs in improving retention overall.

Finally, an increase in prison officer pay has also had a positive impact for increasing and retaining prison officer staffing levels. The 2022/23 prison service pay award

delivered at least a 4% award to all staff, with additional investment of a £3,000 increase in 'Band 3' prison officer pay. The starting salary for a Band 3 prison officer on a 39-hour/week national contract is now £30,702. Initial exit interview data since July 2022, has shown that pay and reward has become less likely to be referred to as a main reason for leaving the Prison Service.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[185474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information the Government holds on the average time between (a) a landlord making an application to court for the eviction of a tenant and (b) the court hearing taking place in England in the latest period for which information is available; and whether it is his policy that this average time period should change as a result of the Renters (Reform) Bill.

Mike Freer:

The MOJ Publishes quarterly statistics for all possession claims by mortgage, social and private landlords which includes median timeliness from claim to order.

These figures are published up to March 2023 here –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics>.

The MOJ will work closely with DLUHC to manage any impacts of the Renters (Reform) Bill on the court possession process.

■ Probate: Standards

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[185472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reason the target for the maximum time within which responses should be made to Probate applications was changed from eight to 16 weeks; and how many applications have been outstanding for more than 16 weeks.

Mike Freer:

The service standard for a grant of probate has not been increased to 16 weeks but our messaging to applicants has changed to reflect the longer waiting times that a minority of cases can wait for their grant.

For case received in December 2022, the average percentage of cases taking longer than 16 weeks to issue was 40%.

The average time taken from receipt of all documents required to the issue of the grant was 6.5 weeks in October to December 2022, compared to 7 weeks in the same period in 2021.

■ Reoffenders

Andrew Rosindell: [\[184907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress he has made on implementing the key findings from the 2016 Farmer Review on cutting the cycle of re-offending.

Damian Hinds:

The report of Lord Farmer's review, *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*, commissioned in 2016, was published on 10 August 2017. It made 19 recommendations designed both to improve and to standardise the provision of family services across the prison estate in England and Wales.

All of the recommendations have been actioned and all but one linked to new training already embedded as part of our core business.

The changes we have implemented include the introduction of a secure social video calling service in all prisons; a Families Performance Metric for prisons; and additional HMPPS funding to strengthen prisons' communication with prisoners' families

■ Reoffenders: Convictions

Steve Reed: [185280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of serious further offence notifications that have resulted in a conviction in 2021-22 broken down by original offence type.

Steve Reed: [185281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of serious further offence convictions by offence type and region in each year since 2010.

Steve Reed: [185282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish a breakdown of the number of serious further offence convictions by the type of index sentence in each year since 2010.

Steve Reed: [185283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish a breakdown of the number of Serious Further Offence convictions by (a) the type of index sentence and (b) offence type in each year since 2010.

Steve Reed: [185284]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the names of every offender who has committed a Serious Further Offence since 2010.

Damian Hinds:

Figures on the number of serious further offence notifications that have resulted in a conviction for 2021/22 will be published in October 2023. Figures will be accessible using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics>

Figures are published based on the date of SFO notification (charge) to HMPPS. The lag between the date of publication and the conviction figures is to allow time for most cases to complete the criminal justice process.

In respect of the number of serious further offence convictions by offence type and region in each year since 2010, I refer the honourable Member for Croydon North (Steve Reed) to the answers I gave on 20 January 2023 to Question UIN 125451 and on 3 February 2023 to Question UIN 132490.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-17/125451>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-25/132490>

The table below sets out the total number of notifications – that is, where an offender subject to probation supervision has been charged with a qualifying serious further offence (SFO) – which resulted in a conviction for an SFO, by index sentence, for notifications submitted to NOMS/HMPPS between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2014.

The latest figures for 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2021 were published in October 2022 and can be found in in Table 2 of the ‘Serious Further Offence Annual Tables’ which can be accessed by the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-october-to-december-2020>

INDEX SENTENCE	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Community Supervision	205	153	151	151	147
Determinate Prison Sentence	102	100	100	118	116
Life Licence	6	4	2	0	7
IPP	0	0	0	1	4
Total	313	257	253	270	275

1. Time period for conviction data relates to the date of SFO notification to HMPPS not the date of conviction.
2. Index sentence refers to the sentencing disposal imposed by the court which led to probation services supervision of the offender
3. The data only includes convictions for serious further offences that have been notified to the national SFO Team, HMPPS.
4. The data provided are provisional subject to change when any outstanding cases are concluded at court.

5. Conviction data also includes cases where the offender committed suicide or died prior to the trial, where the judicial process concluded that they were responsible.

6. The data for April 2010 to March 2014 has been updated and may differ to the original publication due to data cleansing, re-categorising and re-grouping.

7. Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording systems, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

8. A basic SFO scheme was introduced in 2003 but data was not captured accurately. An electronic case management system was introduced in 2009/10, which recorded all SFOs referred to the central SFO Review Team, but even then, it was a couple of years since we had assurance that local areas were referring all SFO cases to the SFO Review Team to be recorded on the case management system.

9. The list of offences that qualify as SFOs has changed since 2009.

In respect of the number of serious further offence convictions by index sentence and offence type in each year since 2010, I refer the honourable Member for Croydon North (Steve Reed) to the answers I have given to Questions UIN 185282 and 185281.

The Ministry of Justice publishes the number of offenders convicted of a serious further offence but do not expect to publish the names, due to the personal nature of the information. Personal data relating to offenders can only be released if to do so would not contravene any of the principles set out in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Serious further offences are incredibly rare, with fewer than 0.5% of offenders supervised by the Probation Service going on to commit serious further offences but each one is investigated fully so we can take action where necessary. We have also injected extra funding of more than £155 million a year into the Probation Service to deliver tougher supervision, reduce caseloads and recruit thousands more staff to keep the public safer.

On Wednesday 29 March 2023, we announced the introduction of the Victims and Prisoners Bill. As part of this, Ministers will be given the power to veto the release of the most dangerous offenders, including murderers, rapists and terrorists - putting public protection back as the overriding focus of the parole process. The Bill will also legislate for a new release test for the Parole Board making it clear that public safety is the only priority when making release decisions – to stop a balancing exercise taking into account prisoners' rights.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Buildings: Leeds**

Hilary Benn: [\[185488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he expects the planned remediation of Magellan House to take place.

Hilary Benn: [\[185489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether Homes England has had recent discussions with the Magellan House Residential Management Company Limited in Leeds on the remediation plan for the building and Building Safety Fund support.

Lee Rowley:

The remediation of Magellan House is currently planned to commence in September. Homes England have been in regular contact with the Magellan House Residential Management Company Limited throughout the process of their application to the Building Safety Fund and their most recent meeting took place on 17 May 2023.

■ Flats: Fire Prevention

Ruth Cadbury: [\[185247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of residential buildings 11 metres or below that require remediation work in (a) the London Borough of Hounslow, (b) London and (c) England.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[185248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what evidential basis his Department uses to estimate the number of residential buildings below 11 metres that require remediation work.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[185249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what (a) financial and (b) legal support his Department offers leaseholders living in residential buildings below 11 metres that require remediation work.

Lee Rowley:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [172424](#) on 29 March 2023.

■ Housing: Construction

Helen Morgan: [\[185442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the recent withdrawal of L&G Capital from the MMC sector, what recent assessment he has made of the viability of that sector.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to increasing the number of MMC homes and is supporting the sector through our £1.5 billion Levelling Up Home Building Fund and providing funding for up to 19,000 MMC homes through the Affordable Homes Programme.

Housing: Portsmouth**Stephen Morgan:**[\[185072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of housing overcrowding in Portsmouth.

Stephen Morgan:[\[185073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to reduce housing overcrowding in Portsmouth.

Stephen Morgan:[\[185074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the prevalence of damp and mould in social housing in Portsmouth.

Stephen Morgan:[\[185075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the prevalence of damp and mould in social housing in Portsmouth.

Feryal Clark:[\[185444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of housing overcrowding in (a) Enfield North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Enfield.

Feryal Clark:[\[185445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to reduce housing overcrowding in (a) Enfield North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Enfield.

Feryal Clark:[\[185446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the prevalence of damp and mould in social housing in (a) Enfield North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Enfield.

Feryal Clark:[\[185447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the prevalence of damp and mould in social housing in (a) Enfield North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Enfield.

Navendu Mishra:

[185460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the numbers of people living in overcrowded housing in Stockport constituency.

Rachel Maclean:

We assess levels of damp and overcrowding by tenure through the English Housing Survey, which can be found [here](#). Local level data will be held by the local authority in question.

Everyone deserves a decent home - one that is free from dangerous damp and mould and overcrowding - which is why we committed to reducing the number of non-decent rented homes by 50% by 2030. We are reviewing the Decent Home Standard and are committed to introduce the standard to the private rented sector for the first time.

We also continue working towards our ambition of delivering 300,000 new homes per year to help create a more sustainable and affordable housing market. Over 2.2 million additional homes have been delivered since April 2010.

I also refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN [181418](#) on 24 April 2023.

■ **Housing: Sales**

Alex Sobel:

[184840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a blind bidding system for purchasing houses.

Rachel Maclean:

In last year's Levelling Up White Paper, we committed to improving the availability of upfront property information in a digital format. We will set out further steps in due course.

■ **Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom**

Kim Leadbeater:

[184865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of funding for the Inter Faith Network on community cohesion, and if he will make a statement.

Dehenna Davison:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN [183570](#) on 15 May 2022.

■ **Planning Permission: St Albans**

Daisy Cooper:

[185334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answers of 15 May 2023 to Questions 184227 and 184229 on Planning Permission:

St Albans, when he plans to respond to the request of Keep Chiswell Green of 8 May 2023 that he recovers planning appeals (a) 5/21/3194, Land North of Chiswell Green Lane: APP/B1930/W/22/3312277 and (b) 5/22/0927, Land South of Chiswell Green Lane: APP/B1930/W/22/3313110.

Rachel Maclean:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Questions UIN [184229](#) on 15 May 2023.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Evictions**

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[185433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will make an estimate on the proportion of evictions issued due to rent increases in (a) 2018, (b) 2020 and (c) 2022.

Rachel Maclean:

The data requested is not held centrally.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

Tim Farron:

[\[185214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help improve access to the private rental sector for Afghans in hotels under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

Seema Malhotra:

[\[185263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of Afghan refugees living in hotels to secure properties in the private rental market.

Seema Malhotra:

[\[185264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of his Department's communications on explaining the availability of support for Afghan refugees to landlords in the private sector.

Felicity Buchan:

The Home Office is the department responsible for the ACRS and ARAP schemes, including for providing tariff funding for local authorities. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is supporting cross-Government work to help Afghans into private rental sector accommodation where possible, and Government is providing £35 million of additional funding to local authorities for this purpose.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[185184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to support local councils to find appropriate accommodation in cases where Ukrainian families or individuals previously hosted under the Homes for Ukraine scheme are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Felicity Buchan:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [169421](#) on 28 March 2023.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Public Appointments

Alex Norris: [\[185416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much was spent on the recruitment process for levelling up directors.

Alex Norris: [\[185417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, on what date the recruitment process for levelling up directors commenced.

Alex Norris: [\[185418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, on what date his Department decided not to proceed with the appointment of levelling up directors.

Alex Norris: [\[185419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many civil servants worked on the recruitment process for levelling up directors.

Alex Norris: [\[185420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he made an assessment of the potential impact of not proceeding with the recruitment of levelling up directors before that decision was made.

Dehenna Davison:

Further to the answer given to Question UIN [180045](#) on 24 April 2023, the former Second Permanent Secretary led an external recruitment process which was advertised publicly on the [Civil Service Jobs](#) website.

I refer the Hon Member to Question UIN [93486](#) on 20 December 2022 and to the answer to Question UIN [18235](#) 6 on 2 May 2023.

■ Renters (Reform) Bill: Impact Assessments

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[185473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason his Department has not published a full assessment of the potential economic impact of the measures in the Renters (Reform) Bill; and if he will publish (a) an

assessment of and (b) all other information held by his Department on the potential economic impact of the Bill before the Second Reading.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[185475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason the Renters (Reform) Bill does not give tenants of social landlords the right to (a) request permission to keep a pet and (b) access residential landlord redress schemes.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[185477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason he has not included provision in the Renters (Reform) Bill to provide landlords with access to a redress scheme for complaints against tenants, on a similar basis to the redress scheme for tenants with complaints against landlords set out in Part 2 of that Bill.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[185478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether under the provisions of the Renters (Reform) Bill a landlord will be able to make the giving of consent to keeping a pet subject to enforceable conditions.

Dan Carden: [\[185631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to provide additional funding to local authorities to help enforce the measures set out in the Renters Reform Bill.

Rachel Maclean:

The Renters (Reform) Bill had its First Reading in the House of Commons on 17 May. I refer the Hon Member to the Written Ministerial Statement ([HCWS778](#)) and to the [published guide to the Bill](#).

We have submitted our Impact Assessment for review by the Regulatory Policy Committee. This is a significant document and they now need time to scrutinise it. We will publish it once that process has finished. I look forward to discussing these issues during the passage of the Bill.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Enfield

Feryal Clark: [\[185158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many households were placed in temporary accommodation outside of their local borough in (a) Enfield North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Enfield in (i) 2018. (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2022.

Navendu Mishra: [\[185459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many households were placed in temporary accommodation outside of their local borough in (a) Stockport constituency and (b) Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council in (i) 2018 (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2022.

Felicity Buchan:

Tables on households in temporary accommodation at local authority level, including those placed out of area, are available at the following [link](#).

The Department does not collect temporary accommodation numbers at constituency level.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY**■ Biology: Research**

Chi Onwurah: [\[185544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps she is taking to support synthetic biology research.

Chi Onwurah: [\[185545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps she is taking to support the commercialisation of synthetic biology research in the UK.

George Freeman:

The Science and Technology Framework published on 6th March identified engineering biology as one of the technologies that are most critical for the UK. The framework outlines the Government's approach to supporting the growth of these critical technologies in the UK, for example through investing in R&D, addressing skills shortages, financing innovative companies, examining regulations and standards, and a raft of other measures. Much of this will be done through grants and programmes issued by this Department via UKRI, such as the £250 million in March that we announced to fund new technology missions, including missions on engineering biology.

■ Misinformation: General Elections

Darren Jones: [\[185058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment her Department has made of the potential risks of deepfake (a) audio, (b) photo and (c) video content to the conduct of future UK general elections.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to ensuring that people have access to accurate information. We are taking steps to promote trusted news sources to tackle the spread of disinformation and combat attempts to artificially manipulate the information environment. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology Counter Disinformation Unit responds to periods of acute disinformation risk, including UK general elections.

The Government regularly meets with a range of social media platforms to aid our understanding of the spread of misinformation and disinformation on their services, including artificially manipulated media, and the range of steps they are taking to

address this. This work includes encouraging platforms to ensure that their Terms of Service (ToS), policies and enforcement are fit for purpose, whilst still respecting freedom of expression.

The National Security Bill will give the UK more tools to tackle these threats, including a new offence of foreign interference. The foreign interference offence is a priority offence in the Online Safety Bill and as such will require digital platforms to proactively take action against a wide range of state-sponsored disinformation and state-linked online interference, including digitally manipulated content where this has the aim of interfering with UK elections.

■ Science: Laboratories

Chi Onwurah:

[\[185591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether she is taking steps to help ensure the availability of suitable, affordable lab space for UK science start ups across the country.

George Freeman:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my Hon. Friend the Member for Scunthorpe on 30th March 2023 to Question [171597](#).

TRANSPORT

■ Active Travel: South West

Luke Pollard:

[\[185385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much (a) capital and (b) revenue funding for active travel was allocated to the South West for the (i) 2023-24 and (ii) 2024-25 financial years (A) before and (B) after March 2023.

Mr Richard Holden:

The majority of capital and revenue funding for dedicated active travel schemes has not been allocated for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years.

Three South West councils (Cornwall and Bath, North East Somerset, and Plymouth) are part of a three-year £13.9m Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot Programme that commenced in 2022. Allocations under this pilot programme are expected to be published shortly.

■ Aviation: Fuels

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[185202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will introduce an industry-funded price support mechanism to help secure private investment in UK sustainable aviation fuel plants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[185203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help develop a UK Sustainable Aviation Fuel industry; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is driving the demand for sustainable aviation fuel in the UK by mandating its use from 2025, with at least 10 per cent of jet fuel to be from sustainable sources by 2030 and is seeking to develop a SAF industry in the UK. The Government is supporting production plants with funding but recognises that there are barriers to investment.

In April, the Government published an independent evaluation by Phillip New on developing a UK sustainable aviation fuel industry. In response to the report's recommendations, the Government has committed to work in partnership with industry on options to increase future revenue certainty of UK SAF plants and on actions for stabilising the UK feedstock market. If required, following that work, the Department for Transport will consult on policy options in the summer.

■ **Bus Services: Exhaust Emissions**

Simon Lightwood:

[\[185467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which local transport authorities (a) applied for and (b) were successful in applying for funding from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme.

Mr Richard Holden:

We are committed to supporting the introduction of 4,000 zero emission buses and achieving an all zero-emission bus fleet across the entire UK. Across the UK, an estimated 3,400 zero emission buses have been funded since February 2020. The ZEBRA scheme will support an estimated 1,342 zero emission buses.

The following local transport authorities have received funding through the ZEBRA scheme:

- Blackpool Council
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
- City of York Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Kent County Council
- Leicester City Council
- Norfolk County Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council

- Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council
- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- Warrington Borough Council
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority

In October 2021 the Government announced that Milton Keynes Council had been awarded funding from the ZEBRA scheme to introduce 56 electric buses and charging infrastructure. The buses were due to be operated by bus operator Arriva. In November 2022 Arriva informed Milton Keynes Council that they could no longer support the existing ZEBRA proposal. Arriva and Milton Keynes Council then worked to develop revised proposals for the Department to consider. After the reviewing the revised proposals ministers decided not to provide funding to Milton Keynes Council for the project.

The following local transport authorities applied to the ZEBRA scheme but did not receive funding:

- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council
- East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Southampton City Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Tees Valley Combined Authority
- Torbay Council
- Transport North East
- Warrington Borough Council
- West Sussex County Council & Surrey County Council
- Worcestershire County Council

■ Bus Services: Fares

Simon Lightwood:

[185465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the £2 bus fare cap scheme on bus patronage.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department has published interim evaluation findings for the £2 Bus Fare Cap ([Evaluation of the £2 bus fare cap - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-2-bus-fare-cap)). Key findings from the first month of the scheme include:

- There were high levels of awareness, with around 7 in 10 survey respondents reporting being aware of the scheme.
- Around a third of survey respondents felt that the scheme was having a positive impact on their disposable income they have for other spending or saving.
- Overall, 10% of respondents reported using the bus more since the fare cap scheme was introduced.

The findings are from the early stages of the scheme and it has not yet been possible to draw conclusions about the extent to which any changes in patronage are due to the fare cap scheme as opposed to other factors. However, findings are broadly aligned with external evidence including survey research from Transport Focus in March 2023 which found that 11% of respondents reported using the bus more as a result of the fare cap scheme, and the evaluation is ongoing and will provide further findings on the impact of the scheme as it progresses.

■ Bus Services: Passengers**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[185327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 17 February 2020 to Question 13938 of that session, what recent estimate he has made of the average number of passengers on a public service bus route.

Mr Richard Holden:

The average bus occupancy in England for 2021/22 was 9.5. This was an increase on the previous year, when it was 5.7. Both of these figures are impacted by movement restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, the average bus occupancy had remained steady in England at about 12.5 from 2017/18 to 2019/20.

■ Buses: Procurement**Simon Lightwood:**[\[185464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government is taking steps to incentivise the procurement of British-built buses through the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme.

Mr Richard Holden:

We are committed to supporting the introduction of 4,000 zero emission buses and achieving an all zero-emission bus fleet across the entire UK. Across the UK, an estimated 3,400 zero emission buses have been funded since February 2020. The ZEBRA scheme will support an estimated 1,342 zero emission buses, with 731 buses ordered so far.

Orders for zero emission buses will be placed by local transport authorities or bus operators. UK bus manufactures are well placed to secure orders for zero emission buses from the ZEBRA scheme.

Of the 731 zero emission buses ordered so far, 454 orders have been placed with UK based manufacturer Wrightbus and 59 with UK based manufacturer Alexander Dennis Ltd.

■ **Cars: Lighting**

Feryal Clark:

[\[185441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a minimum level of brightness car lights must have when driving at night.

Mr Richard Holden:

This is already the case. Before cars can be sold or registered in the UK, they must demonstrate that the lighting system meets a range of lighting system performance requirements. Lamps must also be maintained throughout the life of the vehicle - which is checked at each MoT.

■ **Cycleways: High Speed 2 Line**

Valerie Vaz:

[\[185536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of constructing a cycle lane alongside the HS2 line from London to Birmingham.

Huw Merriman:

The Government commissioned a study of cycling opportunities along the spine of HS2 corridor in 2013 and this was published in 2018 National cycleway feasibility study associated with HS2 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

■ **Driving Tests: Greater London**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[185181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of driving test appointments available in (a) the London Borough of Southwark and (b) London.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) recognises there is a high demand for learners who are wanting to take their car practical driving test.

The DVSA has a 24-week forward booking window and tests are not available to book beyond this. As the booking service is live, test appointments can also become available to book through other candidates cancelling, or rescheduling, their test.

As of 15 May 2023, there were 6,402 car practical driving tests booked, and 297 car practical driving tests available within the next 24-weeks at the three centres that serve the London Borough of Southwark.

Within London, as of 15 May 2023, there were 79,109 car practical driving tests booked, and 4,390 car practical driving tests available within the next 24-weeks.

As a result of the measures already taken by the DVSA, overall, since April 2021, an estimated 813,000 additional car test slots have been created. On average, the DVSA is creating approximately 35,300 extra car test slots each month.

Actions already being taken to make this possible include asking all those qualified to conduct tests but who do not do so as part of their current day job to return to conducting tests, conducting out of hours testing, such as on public holidays and weekends, asking recently retired driving examiners to return, and recruiting more than 300 driving examiners across Great Britain.

■ **Electric Cables: Theft**

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[185199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many instances of cable theft affecting train services have been reported in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what steps the Government is taking to help reduce this number; and if he will make a statement.

Huw Merriman:

The British Transport Police (BTP) recorded 214 incidents of live cable theft in 2022-2023.

The Government recognises the disruption that can be caused by cable theft and strongly supports BTP's engagement with the rail industry, and operational activities to tackle it. The BTP-led National Infrastructure Crime Reduction Partnership works to problem solve, disrupt and reduce all aspects of metal and infrastructure crime across the UK. BTP also have dedicated disruption teams which proactively target metal crime hotspots. The Force conducts a national training programme to upskill police forces and partners across the UK to tackle metal crime.

■ **Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[184796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the progress of trial schemes for e-scooters; and what plans he has to introduce legislation on e-scooters before those trials expire in 2024.

Huw Merriman:

Rental e-scooter trials were launched in July 2020 across England. The Department for Transport commissioned an independent evaluation of the e-scooter trials, covering data up to December 2021. The evaluation examines how and why rental e-

scooters are used, and by whom, as well as safety, mode shift, environmental and wider social impacts.

The Department published the findings report of the national evaluation of e-scooter rental trials in England on 15 December 2022.

The findings have already been used to inform updates in guidance and regulation of the e-scooter trials and will continue to be used to inform policy development. These include:

mandatory unique identification numbers for all rental e-scooters, to allow members of the public to differentiate trial from non-trial e-scooters; and

increased guidance and encouragement for operators to provide helmets and incentivise their use.

The Government plans to introduce legislation for private and rental e-scooter use when parliamentary time allows and will consult on regulations in due course.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Cheshire

Mike Amesbury:

[\[185636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any ground investigations for HS2 have been carried out in (i) Weaver Vale (ii) Cheshire; and whether it is his policy to publish the evidence resulting from HS2 ground investigations.

Huw Merriman:

HS2 Ltd has previously undertaken ground investigations to increase the understanding of geological risks associated with settlement across the HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg scheme. Further ground investigations will be carried out as the scheme progresses. HS2 Ltd has recently published their 'Crewe to Manchester: Understanding the Ground Risk across the Cheshire Plain' report on the GOV.UK website on 3 March 2023.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[185638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the presence of brine on (a) levels of subsidence and (b) ground condition on the HS2 route in (i) Weaver Vale constituency and (ii) Cheshire.

Huw Merriman:

HS2 Ltd has reviewed the ground conditions, the associated risks, and the appropriate mitigation measures for the HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg scheme as it passes across the Cheshire Plain in areas of former salt mining and other areas where salt mining is ongoing. Their assessment is published in the 'Crewe to Manchester: Understanding the Ground Risk across the Cheshire Plain' report published on the GOV.UK website on 3 March 2023.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[185640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of salt caverns on the safety of the ground along the HS2 route in (a) Weaver Vale constituency and (b) Cheshire.

Huw Merriman:

HS2 Ltd has reviewed the ground conditions, the associated risks, and the appropriate mitigation measures for the HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg scheme as it passes across the Cheshire Plain in areas of former salt mining and other areas where salt mining is ongoing. Their assessment is published in the 'Crewe to Manchester: Understanding the Ground Risk across the Cheshire Plain' report published on the GOV.UK website on 3 March 2023.

■ Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[184909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of low traffic neighbourhoods on levels of congestion.

Mr Richard Holden:

Responsibility for traffic management on local roads, including the implementation of low-traffic neighbourhoods, rests with local traffic authorities. They have a statutory duty, under the Traffic Management Act 2004, to manage their networks with the aim of 'securing the expeditious movement of traffic', including the reduction of congestion and other disruption.

■ M3

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[\[185719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the M3 westbound speed limit is 50mph at Junction 2; and for what reason the carriageway is reduced to one lane at that junction.

Mr Richard Holden:

There is only a single lane coastbound through M3 Junction 2. The speed limit is permanently reduced to 50mph to allow slow moving vehicles, such as heavy goods vehicles and vehicles towing trailers, to safely move into and out of lane 3 either side of the junction.

The traffic flows at this junction are unusual with a very low traffic flow through the junction on the M3 but with very high traffic flows joining the coastbound M3 from the M25. The layout of the junction allows these uneven traffic flows to be accommodated with the minimum of delays for road users of both motorways.

■ Motorcycles: Noise

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[185000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2020 to Question 105392 on Motorcycles: Noise, whether his Department plans to publish its research into whether noise enforcement can be made more effective using acoustic camera technology; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Richard Holden:

The results of the Department's initial research into the use of a prototype noise camera for the detection of excessively noisy vehicles was published in August 2021. This research showed that the technology demonstrated some potential but required further development to be suitable for enforcement.

Further trials were commissioned in 2022, which included the assessment of the latest noise camera technology on a test track and at the roadside. Roadside trials were undertaken at four sites between October 2022 and February 2023. The Department is currently reviewing the outcomes of the trial before considering any next steps and will publish the final research report in due course.

■ Motorways: Safety Measures

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he will he plans to end the use of Smart Motorways.

Mr Richard Holden:

I refer the Honourable lady to the statement made to the House on 17 April 2023.

■ Official Cars: Carbon Emissions

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[185226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what percentage of the Government car fleet is ultra-low emission vehicles.

Mr Richard Holden:

38% of the operational fleet of the Government Car Service are classed as Ultra Low Emission vehicles (ULEV).

■ Refugees: Motor Vehicles

Alex Sobel:

[\[185092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to provide support to refugees who wish to register their vehicles in the UK.

Mr Richard Holden:

My Department recognises the difficult circumstances of Ukrainians arriving here fleeing the conflict. As such, to support the registration of Ukrainian vehicles we have permitted some temporary modifications to be accepted in certain circumstances

where a Ukrainian visa holder vehicle requires Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA), such as the use of beam deflector stickers. Specific agency personnel have also been assigned to support Ukrainians who wish to register their vehicle. The Department continues to explore options for how it can further support the Ukrainian community, I will keep this House and the Ukrainian community in the UK updated on this work.

■ Roads: Active Travel

Ruth Cadbury: [\[185411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer given on 10 May 2023 to Questions 184394 to 184396, if he will ask National Highways to undertake an assessment of the adequacy of provision for walking, cycling and horse-riding along and across the corridors of the strategic road network.

Mr Richard Holden:

National Highways already undertakes periodic research to explore customer views on its walking, cycling and horse-riding provision on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The Route Strategies undertaken during each Road Period gather views from all stakeholders on any needs and requirements for walking cycling and horse-riding provision that interacts with the SRN.

TREASURY

■ Bank Cards: Fees and Charges

Harriett Baldwin: [\[185584\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to review the Interchange Fee Regulation in the United Kingdom for domestic interchange fee caps.

Andrew Griffith:

As set out in the 'Edinburgh Reforms' package, the Interchange Fee Regulation 2015 is due to be reviewed as part of Tranche 3 of the Future Regulatory Framework Review implementation programme.

This prioritisation reflects the fact that the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) is currently undertaking market reviews into card fees, including aspects of interchange fee policy. The government continues to monitor the reviews with interest and will consider, following the outcomes of the reviews, whether there are implications for legislative change.

■ Capital Gains Tax: Income Tax

Stephen Kinnock: [\[185616\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of equalising capital gains tax with income tax rates.

Victoria Atkins:

As set out in the Government's response to the Office of Tax Simplification's report on Capital Gains Tax (CGT) on 30 November 2021, substantial reforms to CGT rates and allowances would involve a number of wider policy trade-offs and so careful thought must be given to the impact that they would have on taxpayers, as well as any additional administrative burden on HMRC.

The Government will continue to keep the tax system under review to ensure it is simple and efficient.

Central Bank of the Russian Federation: Freezing of Assets

Pat McFadden: [\[184931\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of the frozen assets of the Russian Central Bank in the UK.

Pat McFadden: [\[184932\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many assets of the Russian Central Bank assets the Government has frozen.

Pat McFadden: [\[184933\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a breakdown by quantity and type of the Russian Central Bank assets frozen assets in the UK.

Gareth Davies:

In conjunction with our partners, we have blocked access to 60% of the Russian Central Bank's foreign currency reserves globally. Under the Russia sanctions regime, the Russian Central Bank's assets are not subject to an asset freeze but have been immobilised in the UK as a result of a prohibition on the provision of financial services in respect of these assets. HMT is working closely with relevant authorities to map where these assets are held in the UK.

Child Benefit

Richard Burgon: [\[185392\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the real terms (a) percentage change and (b) change in pounds sterling of child benefit allowance for a (a) first child b) second child since 2010.

John Glen:

The Government has increased Child Benefit rates in line with inflation for four consecutive years and, from April 2023, rates were increased by the September 2022 rate of CPI (10.1%), to support families with the elevated cost of living. The Government took the difficult decision to limit increases to Child Benefit 2011 and 2019 to control welfare expenditure and to help place the public finances on a sustainable footing.

The Government publishes annual data on benefit rate changes. This includes data on the uprating history and real CPI value of Child Benefit, including rates for first children and additional children: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/abstract-of-statistics-for-benefits-national-insurance-contributions-and-indices-of-prices-and-earnings>.

■ Development Aid

Afzal Khan: [\[184842\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of increasing Official Development Assistance funding for the Prosperity Fund.

John Glen:

The cross-government Prosperity Fund operated between 2016 and 2021 to promote the inclusive economic growth needed to reduce poverty in partner countries, whilst contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The Fund was closed on the 31 March 2021, with residual programming and funding instead moving to the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

UK remains a champion for the international development agenda and a major donor globally. In 2022 the UK was the third largest development donor in the G7 as a percentage of Gross National Income, spending nearly £12.8 billion on aid. UK ODA, together with our business, trade, civil society, research and technology expertise, continues to support some of the world's most vulnerable people and contributes to our prosperity and security by addressing key global challenges and strengthening our international partnerships.

■ Electronic Funds Transfer

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[185691\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to protect consumers who have been caused financial hardship by misdirected electronic payments; and what steps his Department are taking to help consumers seek recompense.

Andrew Griffith:

The Government is taking action to help people who are tricked into making a payment by a fraudster. The Government is legislating in the Financial Services and Markets Bill to enable the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) to mandate reimbursement to victims of Authorised Push Payment scams in relation to any payment system within its regulatory perimeter. We are confident that this will result in more consistent and comprehensive reimbursement outcomes, ensuring victims are not left out of pocket through no fault of their own.

In cases where a payment is misdirected due to an error by the payer, the payer's payment service provider must, by law, make reasonable efforts to recover the funds involved in the erroneous payment. Moreover, the payment service provider of the

mistaken payee must co-operate with the payer's payment service provider in its efforts to recover the funds.

The Government has worked with the PSR to tackle misdirected payments at the source, by supporting the rollout of Confirmation of Payee checks. These confirm whether the name of a payee's account matches the name and account details provided by a payer. In 2022 the PSR issued a direction which will require the vast majority of firms to rollout Confirmation of Payee, increasing coverage from 92% to 99% of all payments by October 2023.

■ Help to Save Scheme

Sir David Evennett:

[185528]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have benefitted from a Help to Save account in each of the last three years.

Andrew Griffith:

Information about Help to Save accounts is published in the Annual Savings Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-savings-statistics-2022>.

The most recent publication shows data on Help to Save accounts up until the end of March 2022. This data will be updated in the next edition of the Annual Savings Statistics, due to be published on 22nd June 2023.

The relevant information can be found in the Workbook "Help to Save tables: June 2022" in the monthly total statistics tab. This tab shows the number of Help to Save accounts that have been opened in each month. It also shows the total number of individuals who have made a deposit into their account in each month.

■ Members: Correspondence

Patricia Gibson:

[185361]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to respond to the correspondence of 8 February 2023 and 24 March 2023 from the hon. Member for North Ayrshire and Arran on money laundering regulations.

Gareth Davies:

I would like to reassure the hon. Member that her letter is receiving urgent attention and will be responded to imminently.

■ Money Laundering: Cryptoassets

Alun Cairns:

[184961]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (a) what progress the Financial Conduct Authority has made in its registration process for cryptoasset businesses under the Money Laundering Regulations, (b) how many applications are currently being reviewed under that process, (c) how long he expects approvals to take on average under that process and (d) what recent assessment he has made with the FCA of the challenges it may face in that process.

Andrew Griffith:

The FCA has a clear process for evaluating cryptoasset firms' applications to ensure they meet the minimum Anti Money Laundering/Counter Terrorist Financing standards for operating in the UK. This involves assessing the fitness and propriety of the individuals running the firms and the adequacy of their systems to prevent criminal financial flows.

The FCA has received over 300 applications for registration and approved and registered 41 firms; 223 were either refused or withdrew their application, 29 submissions were rejected and 23 applications are under assessment as of the 28th April 2023. The cryptoasset firms that were refused were unable, in the FCA's view, to meet the required Anti Money Laundering/Counter Terrorist Financing standards.

The FCA has a statutory deadline of 3 months to make a decision on an application, starting from the receipt of the application or the last piece of information required for a decision. The average processing time of applications can be affected by the number of firms in each situation, and it can vary significantly over time. The FCA strives to be fair to firms that are close to meeting the standards and not to expending disproportionate effort on those that are far from meeting them. Firms can make necessary changes based on feedback and reapply when ready.

HMT and FCA officials remain in regular contact to discuss any challenges associated with the application process; both for the FCA and firms. Our joint priority remains the adoption of a risk-based and robust approach which strikes the appropriate balance between ensuring high levels of AML compliance and consumer protection while harnessing the innovation of cryptocurrency for the future prosperity of the UK.

■ Mortgages: Hornsey and Wood Green**Catherine West:****[185390]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of trends in the numbers of households in Hornsey & Wood Green constituency that have fallen into arrears with their mortgage payments in the last (a) six and (b) 12 months.

Andrew Griffith:

Mortgage arrears nationally remain at historically low levels for the last six and twelve months.

Where mortgage borrowers do fall in financial difficulty, Financial Conduct Authority guidance requires firms to offer tailored support. This could include a range of measures depending on individual circumstances.

The Government has also taken a number of measures aimed at helping people to avoid repossession, including Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loans for those in receipt of an income-related benefit, and protection in the courts through the Pre-Action Protocol, which makes it clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders.

■ National Insurance: Investment Income

Stephen Kinnock:

[185617]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of applying national insurance deductions to investment income.

Victoria Atkins:

National Insurance contributions (NICs) are made on employment and self-employment income. The Government currently has no plans to extend NICs to other forms of income, however the Government does keep all taxes under review.

■ Pensioners: Taxation

Alan Brown:

[185382]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 9 May 2023 to Question 183125 on Pensioners: Taxation, when he plans to publish that data for 2023-24.

Andrew Griffith:

The updated statistics referred to in answer to Question 183125 (Table 2.1 – Number of individual income taxpayers) will be published on 29th June 2023, including new projections for 2023-24. The announcement for these statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/income-tax-liabilities-statistics-tax-year-2020-to-2021-to-tax-year-2023-to-2024>

Updates on HMRC statistics announcements can be found on the HMRC statistics page 'Schedule of updates for HMRC's statistics', where any changes to the publication date will also be announced. A link to this page can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schedule-of-updates-for-hmrCs-statistics>

■ Retail Trade: VAT

Bob Blackman:

[185234]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Department's Tourism Recovery Plan: Update on Delivery, published in March 2023, what assessment he has made of the impact of the removal of the VAT-free shopping scheme on businesses.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government engaged with varied stakeholders and produced analysis on the cost of VAT-free shopping before withdrawing the previous scheme.

Our analysis, which took increased tourist spending into account, found that introducing worldwide VAT-free shopping would come at a fiscal cost of £2 billion each year.

Furthermore, the OBR's assessment of the previous VAT-free shopping scheme showed that its withdrawal would have a limited behavioural effect on decisions to visit, or spend, in the UK.

■ Sanctions

Kate Osamor: [\[185308\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish his Department's guidance to Ministers in 2021 on issuing special licenses to persons or organisations for activities otherwise prohibited by sanctions.

Kate Osamor: [\[185309\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish his Department's guidance to Ministers on issuing special licenses to persons or organisations for activities otherwise prohibited by sanctions.

Gareth Davies:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation, part of HM Treasury, has an established framework for the circumstances in which decisions relating to licensing applications can be delegated to Officials. Following the Treasury's Written Ministerial Statements of 30 March 2023, the Treasury laid the current framework in the Libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords. We will now do the same with the version in operation in 2021.

■ Sanctions: Russia

John McDonnell: [\[184789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications (a) crown servants, (b) contractors and (c) their family members have submitted to the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation under Regulation 64 of the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 since 1 August 2022; and how many times that Office has granted an application under General Licence INT-2022-1845976 in that period.

Gareth Davies:

In the period between the 1 August 2022 – 19 August 2022, OFSI did not receive any applications from crown servants, contractors, and their family members under the Russia Regulations.

■ Stocks and Shares: Taxation

Stephen Kinnock: [\[185619\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a four per cent tax on share buyback.

Andrew Griffith:

Share buybacks are already subject to taxation in the form of Stamp Taxes on Shares (STS).

The Government also has a number of carefully designed rules in place to that ensure that any returns that arise as part of a buyback are treated consistently with the policies and principles that underpin the broader tax system.

■ Treasury: Equal Pay

Imran Hussain:

[\[185669\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if their Department will publish an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for financial year 2023-24 in line with the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance for employers published on 17 April 2023.

Gareth Davies:

We are currently considering the best way to approach Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting in the Civil Service.

Although Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting is voluntary, HM Treasury is keen to publish a report.

In conjunction with the HR expert services team for the Civil Service and other government departments, we are working through the details of the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance that was published on 17 April 2023.

In line with Gender Pay Gap Reporting, departments are looking to develop a consistent methodology to be used to produce the data.

The outcomes of this development work will inform whether we are able to publish a report for 2023/2024.

■ Wealth: Taxation

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[185615\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a one to two per cent wealth tax on assets over £10 million.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK system is designed to ensure among other things that the richest in our society pay their fair share on their wealth and assets, with the tax system taxing wealth across many different economic activities, including acquisition, holding, transfer and disposal of assets and income derived from assets. These tax levers generate substantial revenue, including Inheritance Tax revenues of £7 billion, Capital Gains Tax revenues of £18.1 billion and property transaction taxes of £17.3 billion in 2022-2023.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Maintenance

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[185648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the number of Deduction of Earnings Orders issued by the Child Maintenance Service to the Ministry of Defence's Defence Business Services instead of Deduction of Earnings Requests.

Mims Davies:

Deduction from Earnings Orders (DEO) are applied as a method of payment where the Child Maintenance Service deducts maintenance directly from the Paying Parent's wages. The DEO is primarily used to enforce payments but can be set up voluntarily. Deduction from Earnings Requests are similar to a Deduction from Earnings Order but used for Paying Parents who are serving members of the Armed Forces. The Child Maintenance Service can only request a deduction to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), unlike civilian employers they cannot order or enforce payment. MOD policy aims to comply with requests however if the Paying Parent is committed to operational duties MOD may suspend the collection of debt.

Child Maintenance Service takes action to ensure the correct method of payment is applied through identifying whether a Paying Parent is in the Armed Forces through its use of Real Time Information (RTI) Data taken from HMRC. This provides up to date information about Pay As You Earn income as the information submitted by employers online is displayed in RTI immediately. To ensure that the correct method of payment is used for a Paying Parent who is serving in the Armed Forces caseworkers are provided with step-by-step procedural instructions and training.

As at December 2022 Child Maintenance Service had 46,205 Deduction from Earnings Orders and 483 Deduction from Earnings Requests in operation.

(source – Published stats – stat-xplore – CMS Paying Parents = method of payments).

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Equal Pay**Imran Hussain:****[185668]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if their Department will publish an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for financial year 2023-24 in line with the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance for employers published on 17 April 2023.

Mims Davies:

We are currently considering the best way to approach Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting in the Civil Service.

DWP is working with Civil Service HR colleagues and other government departments to work through the details of the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance that was published on 17 April 2023.

In line with Gender Pay Gap Reporting, the Civil Service is looking to develop a consistent methodology to be used in departments to produce the data.

The outcomes of this development work will inform whether we are able to publish a report for 2023/2024.

■ Employment: Disability

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he plans to take to ensure all Work Coaches receive specific training in the barriers to employment faced by disabled people, including people with complex disabilities.

Guy Opperman:

DWP Work Coaches undergo comprehensive training to support customers with additional or complex needs, particularly disabilities and they continue to build on this in the workplace through accessing point of need learning products.

Technical learning enables work coaches to determine what is required and never assume to know and to cultivate effective communication skills including the sensitive use of questions, to reach joint decisions with the claimant.

The learning also provides the work coach with an understanding of assisted digital, and how they can effectively coach claimants who find using digital services a challenge.

Work coaches are also signposted to tools, guidance support and websites to effectively use resources from both internal and external sites. This ensures that they access the most up to date advice and expertise on a particular health condition.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to gather the views of disabled jobseekers on the training provided to (i) Work Coaches and (ii) Disability Employment Advisors.

Guy Opperman:

DWP continuously evaluate, impact and update the learning for Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisors taking into account feedback through key stakeholders and Operational colleagues who interact with our customers.

All Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisers undergo comprehensive learning to support customers with additional and/or complex needs, particularly disabilities and they continue to build on this in the workplace through accessing point of need learning products.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employers have received (a) any Disability Confident accreditation, (b) Level 1 Disability Confident status, (c) Level 2 Disability Confident status and (d) Level 3 Disability Confident status in each of the last five financial years for which this data is available.

Tom Pursglove:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he plans to take steps to consult with representatives of (a) disability charities and (b) disabled people's organisations on the Disability Confident scheme.

Tom Pursglove:

In 2021, we began a review of the Disability Confident scheme, which was announced in the National Disability Strategy (NDS). During the review, we engaged with a broad range of Disability Confident stakeholders including representatives of disability charities and disabled people's organisations to gather views about the scheme.

In January 2022, the High Court declared the NDS was unlawful because the UK Disability Survey, which informed it, was held to be a voluntary consultation that failed to comply with the legal requirements on public consultations. The Secretary of State wanted to minimise the risk of acting inconsistently with the Court's declaration, therefore, we paused a limited number of policies referred to in the strategy, including work directly related to the Disability Confident review. The Secretary of State has successfully obtained permission to appeal this decision. The Court of Appeal hearing is due to take place on 28 and 29 June 2023.

I am exploring what additional steps we can take, whilst respecting the Court's decision and awaiting the outcome of the appeal.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department spent on providing the Disability Confident scheme in each of the last five financial years.

Tom Pursglove:

The Disability Confident scheme is delivered by a small policy team within the department, and by colleagues across the Jobcentre Plus network, who engage with employers and partner organisations as part of their day-to-day business. Total scheme expenditure is not separately recorded within departmental budgets.

■ Jobcentres: Disability

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[185198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who need (a) refreshable braille displays and (b) other additional hardware to use computers can use Jobcentre computers to look for work.

Guy Opperman:

The Department provides computers for customer use in Jobcentres which have assistive technology such as screen readers and screen magnification built into them. Customers are able to access a wide range of services which can support their needs such as braille and large print documents being made available upon request.

Nadia Whittome:

[\[185456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he will take to ensure that those who need (a) refreshable braille displays and (b) other additional hardware to use computers are able to use computers in jobcentres to look for work.

Guy Opperman:

The Department provides computers for customer use in Jobcentres which have assistive technology such as screen readers and screen magnification built into them. Customers are able to access a wide range of services which can support their needs such as braille and large print documents being made available upon request.

■ **Local Housing Allowance: Private Rented Housing**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of maintaining the level of the Local Housing Allowance in financial year 2023-24 on the capacity of low-income households to participate in the private rented sector.

Mims Davies:

No assessment has been made.

As of February 2023, 1.8 million households receiving housing support (including both Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Housing Element) live in the Private Rented Sector.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) determines the maximum housing support for tenants in the private rented sector. It ensures that claimants in similar circumstances living in the same area are entitled to the same maximum rent allowance regardless of the contractual rent paid. LHA rates are not intended to cover all rents in all areas.

In 2020 we spent almost £1 billion increasing LHA rates to the 30th percentile. The significant investment at that time has been maintained ensuring that everyone who benefited continues to do so.

For those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs and need further support. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available from local authorities. Since 2011 the Government has provided nearly £1.6 billion in DHP funding to local authorities.

■ **Pension Credit: Cost of Living**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure pensioners eligible for Pension Credit claim before the 19 May 2023 deadline in order to qualify for the most recent £301 Cost of Living Payment.

Laura Trott:

As part of our ongoing drive to encourage eligible pensioners to claim Pension Credit, this year we have run extensive television adverts alongside other forms of advertising which highlight that Pension Credit is worth £3,500 a year on average – as well as up to £900 in cost of living payments.

On 9 May, we launched a media push reminding pensioners, their family and friends that there were “10 days to go” to claim Pension Credit and still potentially qualify for the first cost of living payment - if their claim is successfully backdated for the maximum period of 3 months. This message has received coverage across broadcast channels and in national and regional news outlets. On 10 May I held an event at Portcullis House, inviting all MPs to support the “10 days to go” campaign and get the message out to their constituents.

■ Personal Independence Payment**Simon Lightwood:**[\[184777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the time taken by his Department to respond to complaints about Personal Independence Payments sent by Members.

Tom Pursglove:

When the department receives a complaint from a Member of Parliament, the aim is to contact them within 15 working days to tell them of the outcome, or when they can expect a response, if it will take longer.

We will always aim to resolve the complaint as quickly as we can, however, on occasion that the complaint is complex, we will contact the Member of Parliament to let them know when they can expect a response.

The DWP has made significant improvements to the complaints service since 2021; we triage all complaints, giving priority to vulnerable claimants who may be at risk, and those with benefit payment issues. We continually monitor complaints, including the volumes, and have introduced further improvements including developing a consistent approach to complaints through new quality standards. We are committed to learning from complaints, using insight to support further improvements and our service to customers.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Dentures**Seema Malhotra:**[\[184992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason his Department does not consider dentures to be an aid for carrying out daily living activity for Personal Independence Payment assessments.

Tom Pursglove:

PIP provides a contribution towards the additional costs arising from a long-term health condition and/or disability. For somebody to be eligible for PIP, needs must have existed for 3 months and be likely to exist for at least another 9 (other than if a

claimant is nearing the end of life). Eligibility to PIP is determined by a functional assessment of how the condition/disability impacts the individual's ability to undertake a range of key daily living and mobility activities, and takes account of any help they need, which may include the use of aids and appliances.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Telephone Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new full-time equivalent staff have started working on the Future Pension Centre helpline since 1 January 2023.

Laura Trott:

We are seeing unprecedented levels of calls to the Future Pension Centre and have deployed additional resource to ensure people are able to get the information they require when considering purchasing Voluntary National Insurance Contributions by the required deadline. This was in conjunction with extending the HMRC deadline for paying Voluntary National Insurance contributions until 31 July 2023.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that everyone who is considering making voluntary National Insurance Contribution payments will have the opportunity to speak with an adviser on the Future Pensions Helpline by 31 July 2023.

Laura Trott:

We are seeing unprecedented levels of calls to the Future Pension Centre and have deployed additional resource to ensure people are able to get the information they require when considering purchasing Voluntary National Insurance Contributions by the required deadline.

■ Universal Credit

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[185177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to alter the Universal Credit assessment and payment process to prevent repayments being demanded after the recalculation of a person's earnings and sick pay but before their next payment is due.

Guy Opperman:

There are no plans to change the Universal Credit (UC) assessment and payment process. Changes made to a claimant's earnings after an assessment period has ended, would generate an overpayment at the end of the following assessment period. The overpayment would be relevant to the period in which it occurred.

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[185439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the increased rate of Universal Credit began on 10 April 2023; and what steps he took to ensure that those with assessment periods between 1 April and 10 April 2023 were not adversely affected.

Guy Opperman:

Increases in Universal Credit come into force from the start of the first assessment period beginning on or after the first Monday of the tax year. As Universal Credit is a calendar monthly assessed benefit that is paid monthly in arrears, a claimant will receive their newly-uprated benefit award at their first full Assessment Period that follows the change.

■ Universal Credit: Mental Health**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[185301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of applying for Universal Credit on the mental health of recipients.

Guy Opperman:

DWP continuously reviews and improves the service for vulnerable people who claim UC to ensure that it is accessible and responsive to their needs.

■ Universal Credit: Young People**Martyn Day:**[\[184835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 10 May 2023 to Question 183251 on Universal Credit: Young People, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of aligning Universal Credit for people under 25 with the eligibility of 23 years for the National Living Wage.

Guy Opperman:

No such assessment has been made.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOME OFFICE

■ Home Office: Deloitte

Emily Thornberry:

[\[183370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the contract awarded by her Department to Deloitte LLP on 1 February (C20345), if she will publish copies of (a) Appendix B - the Service Specification and (b) Annex 4 - the initial Statement of Work agreed for that contract.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 15 May 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Robert Jenrick:

The additional agreement information for the contract awarded to Deloitte LLP awarded on 1 February 2023 is withheld for commercial and operational security reasons.

A redacted agreement is available on Contract Finder at **Apply for Things - Contracts Finder** ~~Proc 834 Small Boat Arrivals – Contracts Finder~~.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Defence Estate Update

Minister of State for Defence Procurement (James Cartlidge): [\[HCWS789\]](#)

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) continues to review its estate with a view to securing better value for money. The MOD therefore welcomes the High Court's decision dismissing the recent challenges from Annington.

In 1996, the Ministry of Defence, in what was effectively a sale and leaseback agreement, granted a 999-year lease of over 55,000 Service Family Accommodation homes to Annington Property Ltd and immediately leased the homes back on 200-year underleases. In 2018, the National Audit Office concluded in its review of the arrangements that taxpayers are between £2.2 billion and £4.2 billion worse off as a result of the sale and leaseback arrangements.

In January 2022, the then Minister for Defence Procurement informed the House of the steps MOD was taking to explore the extent of its statutory leasehold enfranchisement rights. MOD sought to test these rights through the issuing of enfranchisement notices for eight properties. These notices were designed to explore the extent of the MOD's statutory rights, which are available to all qualifying leaseholders, and to help determine whether enfranchisement can secure better value for taxpayers. Annington were aware that the MOD could seek to enfranchise and had previously referred to that possibility in public facing documents.

Since then, claims have been brought against the Secretary of State for Defence by Annington, Annington Limited and Annington Holdings (Guernsey) Limited in respect of these test notices on both private law (declaratory) and public law (judicial review) grounds in relation to the notices and MOD's right to enfranchise more generally. The ensuing trial was held in February 2023 and judgment has now been handed down.

We welcome the decision of the High Court, which has dismissed all of the challenges brought against MOD. The High Court has confirmed that the MOD acted lawfully, that the MOD was entitled to issue the enfranchisement notices and that those enfranchisement notices were valid.

Given our obligations to secure value for money, this decision has the potential to provide the MOD with more flexibility in the management of its estate to the benefit of Service Personnel and their families and potentially wider Government objectives. I note three points.

Firstly, no formal decision has been taken on further enfranchisement of the estate, but the MOD will consider further the potential implications for securing better value for money for the taxpayer in light of the High Court's findings. The MOD will consider relevant factors, including the ongoing operational requirement for the properties and the economic case for enfranchisement, which may differ between sites.

Secondly, if the MOD does pursue enfranchisement of other units and the parties cannot agree the enfranchisement premium, the relevant premium will be determined by an independent tribunal in accordance with the relevant legislation by reference to a market value, with both parties having the opportunity to present their respective views. If the tribunal were to determine that the cost of enfranchising the units is less than the present value of the rental liabilities, then enfranchisement is likely to represent value for money for taxpayers.

Thirdly, we continue to work with Annington and, most importantly, the MOD is focused on providing good quality, desirable homes for Service Personnel and their families.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Global Health Framework

Minister of State (Minister for Health and Secondary Care) (Will Quince):
[[HCWS786](#)]

We are pleased to announce the publication of the 'Global Health Framework: Working together towards a healthier world'. The framework sets out our vision to play a leading role in improving health globally and in building resilience to future threats. It outlines the actions we will take over 2023-2025 in support of health and for a safer and more prosperous UK and world. It is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-health-framework-working-together-towards-a-healthier-world>.

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the importance of global health and the need for strong health systems to protect nations and economies from future global health threats, not least the need for collective action to deliver the third Sustainable Development Goal – to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.

The framework aims to harness capabilities across government to deliver our global health aims as set out in the International Development Strategy and recently published Integrated Review Refresh. Historically, the UK has been a proud leader in global health. We are well placed to continue this leadership by building on our strengths such as the UK's health system, our expertise in public health and our excellent health science and research sector.

We will use this leadership to achieve the key aims of the framework.

We will strengthen global health security through improving our preparedness and response to future epidemics, pandemics, drug-resistant infections, and climate change.

We will reform the global health architecture, including through a strengthened World Health Organization, to drive more coherent governance and collaboration across the international system.

We will strengthen country health systems and address key risk factors for ill health, working towards ending the preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children in the world's poorest countries, and enabling women and girls to exercise their rights.

And finally, we will advance UK leadership in science and technology, strengthening the global health research base of UK and partner countries, while supporting trade and investment.

Our global work contributes to the UK's ability to handle health threats and strengthens our life sciences sector. A significant part of the solution to the challenges we face at home will come from overseas and having strong relationships with other countries. The Global Health Framework therefore sits alongside the wider international engagement conducted by the government to achieve better domestic health outcomes. For example, our involvement in global health research means we can be at the forefront of technological innovation and bring those benefits to our own population, whilst being a part of global disease surveillance systems ensures we have access to early evidence of health risks that could affect the UK directly or indirectly.

Over the next two years we will collectively progress key activities across the four objectives set out in the Global Health Framework. We will work across government to maximise the impact of these ambitions. Now is the time to act to realise the importance of health for all by treating it as a global priority.

HOME OFFICE

■ INTERPOL General Assembly 2024

The Minister of State for Security (Tom Tugendhat):

[[HCWS785](#)]

I am pleased to inform the House of the date and location for the UK hosted INTERPOL General Assembly in 2024.

INTERPOL and the UK have agreed that the General Assembly will take place between 4 and 7 November 2024 in Glasgow. The city brings experience of hosting COP26 in November 2021, the largest event of its kind that the UK has ever hosted. The agreement followed consultation with the NCA, Scottish Government, Police Scotland and other delivery partners and stakeholders.

The Government is committed to global safety, protecting our citizens, and working with the rest of the world to combat criminal threats. Hosting the INTERPOL General Assembly highlights this steadfast commitment to make the world a safer place. It is a key opportunity to drive innovation and leadership in international police cooperation and tackle major crime trends and security threats facing the world, including serious and organised crime, counter-terrorism and fraud.

The event at Glasgow's Scottish Event Campus (SEC) next year will be INTERPOL's 92nd conference, bringing together over 1,000 senior delegates from across INTERPOL's 195 member countries. The General Assembly is INTERPOL's highest governing body and the largest global gathering of senior law enforcement officials and heads of ministries. The General Assembly meets annually and is responsible for major decisions affecting general policy and resources. This event will include elections for 10 key leadership posts, including the new Secretary General.

In the run up to November 2024, the UK Government will continue to work with key stakeholders to make the event a success for the whole of the United Kingdom, for Glasgow and for INTERPOL.

■ Police Covenant Annual Report

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman):
[\[HCWS788\]](#)

I am today laying before parliament the first annual report concerning the Police Covenant. The report will also be available on GOV.UK.

There are few jobs that are as physically and mentally demanding as those found within policing. Every day police officers and staff put themselves in harm's way, standing between the public and those that would do them harm. These roles, and the single-minded attitude it takes to excel at them, are rightly appreciated by law-abiding members of the public. It is only right that we recognise the demands that are placed on those who work in policing and do all we can to support our police in minimising the impact on those in the police force, their families, and those that have left the service.

The Police Covenant is a pledge by Government, and by society as a whole, to ensure that members of the police workforce suffer no detriment as a result of their role. The Covenant acknowledges the sacrifices made by those who work or have previously worked in our police forces. It is intended to ensure that current and retired officers, staff, volunteers and their families are all included and seeks to mitigate any impacts on their day-to-day life and their future health.

Since we launched the Covenant over a year ago, significant progress has been made on all of the priority areas of work. The Police Covenant has delivered several new pieces of work including pre-deployment mental health training for new recruits and improved occupational health standards for officers in service. Bereavement counselling has also now been established for the families and close colleagues of officers who have taken their own life or been killed on duty. The Covenant has established a Chief Medical Officer role whose initial priorities will be NHS Engagement, reviewing the processes surrounding ill-health retirement, and suicide prevention.

As a clear measure of our progress, three of the original priorities for work have been completed, following significant changes to improve the working experience for the police workforce in those specific areas. Firstly, the Officer and Staff Safety Review has successfully influenced changes to legislation around assaults on emergency workers brought in by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. Secondly, the focus on successful implementation of Operation Hampshire was increased to combat assaults made against officers. Data collection on these assaults is now improving and we have now created an Annual Data Requirement (ADR) for forces to collate data for assaults on police staff. Finally, mental health training has now successfully been included as part of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) Pre-deployment training for new officers and staff.

These early successes are a reflection of the constructive collaboration and combined efforts of policing partners and others involved in the covenant, such as the College of Policing, National Police Chiefs' Council, the staff associations and unions, the interim Chief Medical Officer, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Welsh Government and Non-Home Office Forces.

While it is right to recognise these achievements, this is just the start and there remains much to do. As the nature and challenges of working in the police are constantly evolving, so too is our commitment to support the police workforce. As we close the three completed priorities, we have created three new ones to continue to make progress in further improving the working environment and supporting the police. These new areas of work including supporting police leavers, engaging with the NHS and improving roadside safety for police officers and staff.

We will maintain our drive to improve policing for the public and, through the Police Covenant, we will ensure that we continue to deliver for the police.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

■ Semiconductor Strategy Publication

Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy (Paul Scully):

[\[HCWS787\]](#)

I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made on 19th May in the other place by my Noble Friend, the Minister for AI and Intellectual Property, Viscount Camrose:

Semiconductor Strategy Publication

Since the new Department for Science, Innovation and Technology was created, we have been clear on its mission to make the UK a science and technology superpower.

Today we are taking further decisive steps towards that objective through the publication of our National Semiconductor Strategy.

This Strategy demonstrates how fundamental technology is to the UK and the exciting opportunities it presents. We will build on the UK's deep foundations and core strengths in semiconductor technology, as part of our commitment to become one of the most innovative economies in the world.

Semiconductors are one of the five technologies of tomorrow, along with quantum, AI, engineering biology and future telecoms. They are critical to the UK's economic and national security and to the strategic advantage we will secure on the global stage.

Semiconductors underpin our ambitions elsewhere: to lead the way on artificial intelligence, to enable advances in quantum computing and telecommunications, to power high performance computing, and to facilitate progress towards net zero and in life sciences. Advances in all of these areas will bring tangible benefits to the lives of the British people, whether that is using quantum computers to discover new life-saving

drugs, or high performance computing to more accurately predict the weather. All of this will rely on semiconductors.

But we are clear-eyed about the risks given that semiconductors are fundamental to so many technologies - from ventilators to fighter jets - and their supply chains are vulnerable. Meanwhile, hostile states can seek to acquire semiconductor technical advantage to the detriment of our national security. And a compromise to the cyber security of the hardware behind every device powering modern life is not acceptable.

The semiconductor industry exists in a fiercely competitive global landscape. A number of countries are spending vast sums on their own industries, from the US to the EU to China. The costs are colossal; a single new, advanced fabrication facility can cost £10 billion. That is roughly the cost of twenty new hospitals.

The UK has enormous strengths in the sector: in compound semiconductors, in R&D, and in IP and chip design. Our approach, informed by and delivered hand in hand with industry, is to focus on those strengths and to take them even further.

Our vision is that over the next 20 years, the UK will secure world leading positions in the new semiconductor technologies of the future by focusing on these fundamental strengths. We will foster new discoveries and technological innovation. We will bolster our international position to improve supply chain resilience and protect our security. And we will grow the UK's sector, tapping a market of huge potential.

This is why we are launching the UK Semiconductor Infrastructure Initiative and investing up to £200 million into our semiconductor sector over the years 2022-25, and up to £1 billion, over the next 10 years. This is also why we are launching a new UK Semiconductor Advisory Panel, to ensure that government, academia and industry are all working together to deliver on the priorities set out in this Strategy.

Our Strategy represents the culmination of what government, industry and academia have already done in this sector. And it sets our vision for its future. It is rightly differentiated from the approaches other countries are taking to build large-scale silicon manufacturing capabilities, instead focusing on what is right for the UK. A wealth of exciting opportunities lie ahead: to grow the economy, to create highly skilled jobs, and to be at the cutting-edge of technology that revolutionises every aspect of modern life.

I will be placing copies of the Strategy in the libraries of both Houses, and it will also be made available on gov.uk.