



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 May 2023 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:16 P.M., 24 May 2023). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	6	DEFENCE	12
ATTORNEY GENERAL	6	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	12
■ Government Legal Department: Training	6	■ Afghanistan: Refugees	13
BUSINESS AND TRADE	6	■ Armed Forces	13
■ Automotive Transformation Fund	6	■ Armed Forces: Housing	13
■ Automotive Transformation Fund: Electric Vehicles	7	■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Shipping	13
■ Batteries: Recycling	7	■ Children: Maintenance	14
■ Business Connect: Finance	7	■ East Africa: Politics and Government	14
■ Business: Environmental Protection and Human Rights	8	■ Estonia: Armed Forces	14
■ Electric Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries	8	■ RNAD Coulport	15
■ Iron and Steel: Procurement	9	■ Ukraine: Guided Weapons	15
■ Minerals: Industry	10	■ Ukraine: Military Aid	15
CABINET OFFICE	10	■ Warships: Shipbuilding	15
■ Office for Veterans' Affairs: Photography	10	EDUCATION	16
CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	11	■ Childcare	16
■ Amaravati Sculptures	11	■ Countryside: Young People	17
■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Equal Pay	11	■ Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education	17
■ Leisure: Tooting	11	■ Schools: Air Pollution	18
		■ Schools: Mental Health Services	18
		■ Special Educational Needs	19

■ Special Educational Needs: Teachers	20	■ Air Pollution	31
■ Students: Mental Health	21	■ Air Pollution: Environment Protection	31
■ Teachers: Qualifications	22	■ Animal Experiments	31
ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO	23	■ Biodiversity and Nature Conservation	31
■ Alternative Fuel Payments	23	■ Countryside: Access	32
■ Boilers: Rural Areas	23	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Equal Pay	34
■ Carbon Dioxide: Air Pollution	24	■ Derelict Land	34
■ Carbon Emissions	24	■ Dogs: Imports	35
■ Climate Change	24	■ Electronic Training Aids	35
■ Electricity and Natural Gas: Costs	25	■ Environment Agency: Finance	35
■ Energy Bills Rebate	25	■ Farms: New Businesses	35
■ Energy Charter Treaty	25	■ Food: Prices	36
■ Energy Supply	26	■ Forests: Commodities	37
■ Energy Supply: Carbon Emissions	26	■ Landfill	38
■ Energy: Medical Equipment	26	■ Landfill: Air Pollution	38
■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Greater London	27	■ Livestock: Conservation	40
■ Housing: Energy	27	■ Livestock: Disease Control	41
■ Hydrogen: Power Stations	27	■ Livestock: Exports	41
■ Local Government: Climate Change	28	■ Maize: Imports	42
■ Local Net Zero Forum	28	■ Pesticides: Imports	42
■ Offshore Industry: Skilled Workers	29	■ Waste: Crime	43
■ Sheltered Housing: Energy Performance Certificates	29	■ Water Charges	44
■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans	30	■ Water Companies: Investment Income	44
■ Wind Power: Skilled Workers	30	■ Water: Greater London	44
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	30	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	47
■ Agriculture and Food	30	■ Bijendran Patel	47
		■ Conflict Prevention: Finance	47
		■ Diamonds and Gold: Russia	47
		■ Gaza: Israel	48

■ Iran: Demonstrations	49	■ Mental Health Services: Young People	64
■ Israel: Palestinian Islamic Jihad	50	■ Ophthalmology: Health Services	64
■ Liberia: Elections	50	■ Paramedical Staff: Training	64
■ Nick Maynard	51	■ Radiology: Paediatrics	65
■ Sudan: Peace Negotiations	51	■ Respite Care: Carers	65
■ Transcaucasus: Roads	51	■ Restraint Techniques: Health Services	65
■ Wagner Group	52	■ Social Services: Finance	66
■ West Bank: Schools	53	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	53
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	53	HOME OFFICE	67
■ Accident and Emergency Departments	53	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	67
■ Air Pollution: Public Health	54	■ Asylum: Portland Port	67
■ Air Pollution: Standards	55	■ Cosmetics: Animal Experiments	68
■ Autism and Learning Disability: Community Care	55	■ Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre	68
■ Autism and Learning Disability: Social Services	55	■ Fraud	69
■ Coronavirus: Immunosuppression	56	■ National Fraud Intelligence Bureau	69
■ Dental Services: Children	57	■ Refugees: Children	70
■ Diabetes: Health Services	57	■ Refugees: York	70
■ Healthy Start Scheme	57	■ Visas: Sudan	70
■ Hereditary Angioedema: Diagnosis	58	■ Visas: Ukraine	71
■ Hormone Replacement Therapy	59	JUSTICE	71
■ Hospitals: Discharges	60	■ Criminal Proceedings: Stockport	71
■ Housing: Older People	61	■ Homicide: Trials	72
■ Medical Equipment: Energy	62	■ Journalism: Russia	72
■ Memory Clinics	62	■ Prisons: Pepper Spray	73
■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People	63	■ Prisons: Restraint Techniques	75
■ Mental Health Services: Rural Areas	63	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	76
		■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	76

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme	76	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	88
■ Land Use: Merseyside	77	■ Equality Hub: Staff	88
■ Planning Permission: Appeals	77	■ STEM Returners Programme	88
■ Rented Housing	77	■ Women and Equalities: Artificial Intelligence	89
■ Shorthold Tenancies	78	■ Women and Equalities: Equal Pay	89
■ Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance	78	WORK AND PENSIONS	90
SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY	79	■ Children: Maintenance	90
■ Artificial Intelligence: Research	79	■ Disability: Incontinence	90
■ Telecommunications: Rural Areas	79	■ Employment: Disability	90
SCOTLAND	80	■ Jobcentres: Disability	91
■ Forced Marriage: Children	80	■ Universal Credit: Self- employed	92
TRANSPORT	81	■ Universal Credit: Young People	94
■ A316: Speed Limits	81	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	95
■ Airspace	81	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	95
■ Bus Services: Concessions	82	■ Armed Forces: Housing	95
■ Bus Services: Disability	82	■ Elections: Proof of Identity	95
■ Cars: Petrol	83	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	97
■ Department for Transport: Equal Pay	84	ATTORNEY GENERAL	97
■ High Speed 2 Line	84	■ May 2023 update on progress in delivering the recommendations in Sir David Calvert-Smith's Independent Review into the Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil Case	97
■ Roundabouts: Construction	85	HOME OFFICE	98
■ Shipping: Inspections	85	■ The British Nationality (Regularisation of Past Practice) Bill	98
TREASURY	86		
■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties	86		
■ Railways: Finance	86		
■ Retail Trade: VAT	87		
■ Revenue and Customs: Complaints	87		
■ Sanctions	87		

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ **Government Legal Department: Training****Emily Thornberry:**[\[185878\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many staff in the Government Legal Department received public sector equality training in the period between (a) 13 February 2020 to 2 August 2022, (b) 3 August 2022 to 6 September 2022, and (c) 7 September 2022 to 15 May 2023.

Michael Tomlinson:

Training on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and other elements of equality law is provided to GLD staff in a range of formats, including live training sessions and on demand video content and e-learning modules.

The table below provides the total number of individuals recorded as having engaged with all formats of training during the time periods in question.

TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS
13 February 2020 to 2 August 2022	637
3 August 2022 to 6 September 2022	6
7 September 2022 to 15 May 2023	178

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ **Automotive Transformation Fund****Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[185242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how much of the automotive transformation fund has been distributed to businesses.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

As of May 2023, the total value of offers made under the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) is £278.5 million. In addition, we are in active discussions with investors on a wide range of exciting new projects for the UK's electric vehicle supply chain.

■ Automotive Transformation Fund: Electric Vehicles

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[185565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Automotive Transformation Fund on the competitiveness of electric vehicle manufacturing.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The impact of the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) will be assessed at intervals over the next five years, with baselining work already underway.

Funding from the ATF has already helped secure key investments including £380m in the production of electric drive units at Ford Halewood, a £60 million investment by Johnson Matthey in Hertfordshire to develop hydrogen technologies, and the £1bn electric vehicle hub in Sunderland in partnership between Nissan and Envision AESC.

■ Batteries: Recycling

Andrew Selous:

[\[185212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps her Department is taking to attract battery recycling investment to the UK.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Critical Minerals Refresh published in March, sets out our approach to delivering on the Critical Minerals Strategy, and confirms our participation in the Minerals Security Partnership. Working with international partners, this aims to spur investment in supply chains across four pillars, including recycling and reuse, and will support our work to accelerate a circular economy of critical minerals in the UK.

The Government is also funding record investment in battery innovation and commercialisation, including in recycling. The £541m Faraday Battery Challenge is supporting projects such as REBLEND, which is developing commercial processes to directly recover valuable cathode active materials (CAM) for reuse in automotive batteries. The project is led by Ecoshred, with University of Leicester, University of Birmingham, Minviro, Iconichem Widnes, Watercycle Technologies, Ecolamp Recycling, and Cornish Lithium.

■ Business Connect: Finance

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[185933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what the cost to the public purse was of the Business Connect event held on 23 April 2023.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[185934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, from which Departmental budget the Business Connect event held on 23 April was funded.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[185987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how much funding her Department has allocated for Business Connect events in the 2023-24 financial year.

Nigel Huddleston:

The delivery of Business Connect in April 2023 cost the Department for Business and Trade £260,551.32.

Business Connect was funded by the Department for Business and Trade's Resource DEL budget for priority events for financial year 2023-24.

No further funding has been specifically allocated within the Department for Business and Trade for future Business Connect events in financial year 2023-24.

■ Business: Environmental Protection and Human Rights

Catherine West:

[\[185697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether her Department are taking steps to mandate the introduction of (a) human rights and (b) environmental due diligence measures for companies.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government's approach to due diligence is one of both encouraging and supporting a business-led approach. This, in turn, promotes standards as set out in international frameworks, such as the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Additionally, and in order to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains, the Environment Act has introduced world-leading due diligence legislation.

The Department will soon be launching a review of non-financial information through a call for evidence. The review is part of the Government's wider effort to improve business regulation to reduce burdens and drive economic growth now that the UK has left the European Union. With that in mind the Government currently has no plans to legally mandate companies to conduct further due diligence assessments before considering existing reporting requirements. We will however continue to keep these issues under review.

■ Electric Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

Andrew Selous:

[\[185211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps her Department is taking to support electric vehicle manufacturing in the UK.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) aims to support the creation of an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain in the UK. The government continues to work with industry via the ATF to unlock strategic investments in gigafactories, motors and drives, power electronics, and fuel cell systems.

In the coming months, after engagement with industry, the government will build on the ATF and the long-term Advanced Propulsion Centre R&D programme to take decisive action to ensure future investment in the manufacturing of zero emission vehicles.

■ Iron and Steel: Procurement

Bill Esterson: [\[185579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness of Procurement Policy Note PPN 04/23) on Procuring Steel in Government Contracts in other (a) Government departments and (b) public bodies.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Department for Business and Trade and the Cabinet Office have been engaging with other government departments, and relevant public bodies, throughout the development of Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 04/23.

Since its publication, and as part of the PPN's rollout process, the Cabinet Office held familiarisation sessions to ensure that commercial procurement professionals are fully aware of the new policy and its requirements.

In addition, I continue to engage with sector colleagues on all steel related issues, including procurement in our regular steel sector calls. These calls are attended by industry and trade union representatives, with the most recent call having taken place on 2 May.

Bill Esterson: [\[185580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) setting indicative targets for domestically made steel in public projects and (b) formulating policies to help meet such targets.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Setting UK procurement targets for public projects or any measures which favour, or indirectly discriminate in favour of, UK products or suppliers, constitutes a breach of the UK's international obligations under the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA).

Bill Esterson: [\[185581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of the (a) national security and (b) economic resilience benefits of a domestic steel industry.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Steel is a key material with many different uses. The UK steel industry represents around 1.2% of total manufacturing output in the UK and underpins a range of domestic industries, across manufacturing, infrastructure and construction. It forms the core of some local communities and economies, directly supporting c.39,000 jobs, and a further c.60,000 jobs in the upstream supply chain[1].

The Government recognises the role that steel plays within the UK economy and is working with the industry on its decarbonisation options and a sustainable future.

[1] ONS and NOMIS Data (2021)

■ Minerals: Industry

Henry Smith:

[\[184808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the report by the British Geological Society entitled *Potential for Critical Raw Material Prospectivity in the UK*, published on 17 April 2023, what steps her Department is taking to develop a domestic critical minerals industry.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The report "*Potential for Critical Raw Material Prospectivity in the UK*" delivers on the commitment in the Government's Critical Minerals Strategy to collate geoscientific data and identify target areas of potential for critical minerals within the UK. We are working with the British Geological Survey to understand next steps.

Through the Critical Minerals Strategy we are working to accelerate the UK's domestic capabilities along the whole critical minerals value chain. Our support for businesses like Cornish Lithium and Green Lithium shows our determination to put the Strategy into action. We have also established the new Task & Finish Group on Industry Resilience for Critical Minerals which will investigate the critical mineral dependencies and vulnerabilities faced by UK Industry and help it to mitigate risks.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Office for Veterans' Affairs: Photography

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[185880\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2023 to Question 184900 on Office for Veterans' Affairs: Photography and Social Media, whether the Office for Veterans' Affairs has a dedicated photographer.

Johnny Mercer:

The Office for Veterans' Affairs does not have a dedicated photographer and draws on resources from the Cabinet Office Communications team who support all Ministers in the Department.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Amaravati Sculptures****Navendu Mishra:**[\[185340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions Ministers in (a) her Department or (b) other Departments have had with their Indian counterparts on the ownership and location of the Amaravati Marbles; and if she will make a statement.

Sir John Whittingdale:

Ministers in the department and in other departments have not had any discussions about the Amaravati Marbles with Indian counterparts.

The Amaravati Marbles are lawfully owned by the British Museum, where they are on public display, and can be visited for free by the millions of visitors who go to the museum each year.

The British Museum operates independently of the Government, and decisions relating to the care and management of the museum's collections are a matter for the Trustees of the British Museum.

The British Museum, as well as some other national museums, is prevented by law from removing objects from their collections, with a limited number of exceptions - none of which apply in this case. The Government has no plan to change the law.

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Equal Pay**Imran Hussain:**[\[185675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, 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.

Sir John Whittingdale:

Improving representation and inclusion of people from an ethnic minority background is a priority for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). With that in mind, we are working with Civil Service HR and other government departments to review the details of the Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting guidance that was published on 17 April 2023, and how, where possible, we can adopt Ethnicity Pay Reporting (EPR). In line with Gender Pay Gap Reporting, the Civil Service is looking to develop a consistent methodology to be used across departments to produce reliable, informative data. The outcome of this work will inform whether DCMS is able to publish a report for 2023/2024.

■ Leisure: Tooting**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[185928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the availability of leisure and sport facilities in Tooting constituency.

Stuart Andrew:

Supporting grassroots sport is a key government priority. Last year, Sport England received almost £350 million from the Government and National Lottery to fund grassroots sports projects so that everyone is able to access quality sport and physical activity opportunities, and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits that exercise provides.

Since 2019, Sport England has invested more than £117,000 across 24 projects into grassroots sport in Tooting. This includes £17,500 of funding which was used to resurface the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Ravenstone Primary school. In 2022, funding from the government via the Football Foundation helped develop a new 3G pitch for the AFC Wimbledon Foundation, where they run walking football, a girls pathway and more.

The availability of leisure facilities is a matter for the Local Authority. At the Spring Budget, we announced a £63 million package to support public swimming pools, to be delivered through Local Authorities.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has committed to delivering a new sport strategy that will set the direction for the Government's priorities and its role in the sport sector. This strategy will support grassroots sport by having a specific focus on ensuring that everyone has access to appropriate and accessible opportunities to get active.

DEFENCE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Dave Doogan:****[185998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel of each rank were employed in each branch of the armed forces as of 19 May 2023.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The attached supporting table details the number of personnel of each rank for the three services of the Armed Forces as at 1 January 2023 which is the latest date for which the information is available.

Service personnel statistics are produced quarterly, using data at points 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October. The quarterly statistics are available at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-index>

It should be noted that the rank information is updated annually as at 1 April. The next publication will be released on 22 June will contain the information as at 1 April 2023.

Attachments:

1. UK Regular Forces Rank Structure [20230522- PQN_22-23_2023_06308 (185998)- Doogan- Supporting table.xlsx]

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Luke Pollard: [\[185432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy cases are (a) open and (b) undecided.

James Heappey:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 184887 on 18 May 2023.

Attachments:

1. Afghanistan: Refugees [184887 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]

■ Armed Forces

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[185217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will re-evaluate the adequacy of the armed forces' tactical lift capability.

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[185218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the armed forces' strategic lift capability.

James Heappey:

Strategic and tactical airlift provided by the RAF's Air Mobility fleet are key components of UK defence capability. Both are kept under review through the Capability Investigation process to ensure we are able to meet our current and future requirements in a rapidly changing and volatile world.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Dave Doogan: [\[185985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2023 to Question 184731 on Armed Forces: Housing, how many of the accommodation units that were considered void in 2022 were deemed to be uninhabitable.

James Cartlidge:

Of the 9,075 Service Family Accommodation classified as void in 2022, 682 were deemed to be uninhabitable due to long term damage such as fire or flood damage, or other structural issues.

■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Shipping

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[185235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with his Mauritian counterpart about the potential effects on maritime security in the Indian Ocean of transfer of the British Indian Ocean Territory to Mauritian sovereignty.

James Heappey:

The Secretary of State for Defence has not held recent discussions with his Mauritian counterpart.

The UK and Mauritius are in negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. The UK and Mauritius have reiterated that any agreement between our two countries will ensure the continued effective operation of the joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia, which plays a key role in regional security.

■ Children: Maintenance

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[185647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Deduction of Earnings Requests from the Child Maintenance Service were declined by Defence Business Services in each financial year from 2013-14 to 2022-23; and for what reasons were they declined.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The supporting table details the number of Deduction of Earnings Requests from the Child Maintenance Service that were received and could not be processed in each financial year from 2013-14 to 2022-23, and the reasons they could not be processed.

Attachments:

1. Child Maintenance Service Deductions [20230519- PQW_22-23_2023_06211 (185647)-Chamberlain- Supporting table.xlsx]

■ East Africa: Politics and Government

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[185237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the security situation in (a) Sudan and (b) the Horn of Africa.

James Heappey:

Defence continually monitors situations of security concern around the world, and Sudan and the Horn of Africa are no exception.

We have a strong Defence network in the region, who actively report on regional security issues that are deemed a threat to UK interests. UK Defence retains the option to adjust resources when necessary, to ensure we have the appropriate level of understanding.

■ Estonia: Armed Forces

John Healey:

[\[184889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK military personnel are stationed in Estonia.

James Heappey:

There are currently 1,760 UK military personnel stationed in Estonia.

■ RNAD Coulport**Neale Hanvey:**[\[185421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what pre-planned work took place requiring the re-location of staff from building 201 at Royal Navy Armament Depot (RNAD) Coulport to building 41; and on what dates that re-location take place.

James Cartlidge:

Building 201 was taken out of service to enable pre-planned infrastructure upgrades managed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The contract for this work was awarded in December 2018, work commenced in September 2019 and was completed in October 2020. Staff from Building 201 were fully involved in preparing the facility for handover to the DIO contractor and were accommodated in building 41 from September 2019 until completion of the works.

■ Ukraine: Guided Weapons**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[185236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to provide anti-missile detection defence systems to Ukraine.

James Heappey:

The UK has provided Ukraine with thousands of air defence systems and missiles which can detect and destroy incoming missiles, drones and aircraft. Most recently, on 15 May the Prime Minister confirmed the provision of hundreds more air defence missiles.

■ Ukraine: Military Aid**Robert Courts:**[\[185336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of providing basic training for Ukrainian pilots on the RAF pilot training programme.

James Heappey:

Elementary flying training for Ukrainian pilots is being planned in a manner which will not impact core Sovereign UK pilot training.

■ Warships: Shipbuilding**Damien Moore:**[\[185311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) ship and (b) submarine construction sector; and if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of these steps on the (i) growth, (ii) competitiveness and (iii) sustainability of that sector.

James Cartlidge:

The National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh supports our ambition to grow the UK shipbuilding enterprise and support UK jobs. For specific detail about how the

Strategy has supported UK shipbuilding to date, I refer the hon. Member to the answers provided on 14 December 2022 to Question 104345 and 13 March 2023 to Question 159089 to the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Dr Kieran Mullan).

Alongside the other measures in the Strategy, the naval pipeline makes a significant contribution to the sustainability and growth of the sector, with Type 26, Type 31 and Fleet Solid Support contracts supporting over 8,500 jobs across the UK supply chain well into the 2030s.

The future for the submarine sector is also healthy. The Astute and Dreadnought classes of submarine are currently under construction, supporting tens of thousands of jobs and involving hundreds of UK companies throughout the supply chain. Additionally, the construction of the next generation of AUKUS nuclear submarines will create thousands of UK jobs, particularly in Barrow-in-Furness - the home of British submarine building.

EDUCATION

■ Childcare

Nick Fletcher:

[\[185437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of extending access to 30 free hours of childcare to working parents of all children over the age of nine months on (a) workforce participation and (b) the economy over the next two years from the go live date; and what estimate her Department has made of the annual cost to the public purse of this policy over the next two years from the go live date.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is determined to support as many families as possible with access to high-quality, affordable childcare, which is why in the Spring Budget 2023, my Right Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced significant new investments to expand the free early education entitlements.

From September 2025, eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year, from when their child is nine months old to when they start school.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects the new 30 hours entitlement to gradually increase labour market participation of parents with young children. A 2016 study from the Institute for Fiscal Studies had found that expanding from part-time to full-time free childcare leads to significant increases in labour force participation and employment of mothers, which emerge immediately and grow over the months following entitlement.

By 2027/28, the OBR expects around 60,000 to enter employment and an equivalent effect from 1.5 million mothers of young children already in work increasing their hours.

The department will substantially uplift the hourly rate paid to local authorities to increase hourly funding rates paid to childcare providers, to deliver the existing free early education entitlements. We will provide £204 million of additional funding in 2023/24, increasing to £288 million by 2024/25.

This funding is in addition to the £4.1 billion that the government will provide by 2027/28 to facilitate the expansion of the new free hours offer, by which time we will expect to be spending in excess of £8 billion every year on free hours and early education. This represents the single biggest investment in childcare in England ever.

■ **Countryside: Young People**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take with Cabinet colleagues to ensure young people have access to learning in nature settings.

Nick Gibb:

In April 2022, the Department released its Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. Key initiatives of this strategy include the National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Award. These programmes will engage children and young people with the natural world, and directly involve them in measuring and improving biodiversity in their nursery, school, college or university.

The Department has announced that £15 million will be provided, enabling schools, colleges, and nurseries to create opportunities for outdoor education in natural settings.

By 2025, the Department will aim to introduce a natural history GCSE, giving young people an opportunity to engage with and develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the natural world. In studying this GCSE, young people will explore organisms and environments in more depth and gain knowledge and practical experience of fieldwork. This new opportunity for education adds to fieldwork opportunities already available in subjects such as geography. As the Department delivers on the climate change strategy, the Department will continue to work across Government to identify opportunities for young people to access education in nature settings.

■ **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education**

Nick Fletcher:

[\[185438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the remit of her Department's review into relationships, sex and health education will include a consideration of whether parents with children at (a) primary and (b) secondary schools should have the option of withdrawing their children from all relationships, health and sex education lessons.

Nick Gibb:

The right to withdraw is set out in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. The review announced by the Department in March 2023 will be focused on the content of the statutory

relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) guidance. The Department has no current plans to revisit the legislation.

The Department remains committed to ensuring that all pupils receive age appropriate RSHE to support their wellbeing and attainment and helping them to become successful adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.

As part of the review, the Department is 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>.

■ Schools: Air Pollution

Geraint Davies:

[\[185868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to next update the guidance entitled BB 101: Ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality 2018, published on 23 August 2018.

Nick Gibb:

The advice in 'Building Bulletin 101: Ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality' remains current. The Department has no plans to update this guidance at this time.

■ Schools: Mental Health Services

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[185304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has taken steps to ensure there is a mental health specialist in every school.

Claire Coutinho:

The mental health of children is a priority for this government. We know schools can play a vital role in supporting this, particularly by providing calm, safe and supportive learning environments that promote good mental wellbeing and help pupils who need it to access early targeted support.

It is important to remember it is not the role of schools to diagnose or treat mental health conditions. Schools are best placed to decide what support to provide to respond to the mental health needs of their pupils including, where necessary, through referrals to NHS specialist services.

The department is offering a grant to all schools and colleges in England to train a senior mental health lead, helping schools to put in place effective approaches to mental health and wellbeing. This should include robust processes for identifying pupils or specific groups who need additional mental health support. More than 13,800 schools and colleges have now received a senior mental health lead training grant, including more than 70% of state-funded secondary schools.

To expand access to early mental health support, the department is working with NHS England to increase the number of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) working with schools and colleges. These teams include trained professionals who can offer support to children experiencing common mental health problems and liaise with external specialist services to help pupils get the right support. As of April 2023, MHSTs covered 35% of pupils in schools and learners in further education in England. A further 100 teams are expected to be operational by April 2024, when MHSTs will cover an estimated 44% of pupils and learners.

■ Special Educational Needs

Fabian Hamilton: [\[185887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps she has taken to simplify the Education, Health and Care Plan assessment process to reduce the time take to provide families with a timeline for a plan's completion.

Fabian Hamilton: [\[185888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the eligibility criteria for Education, Health and Care Plans; and what steps her Department is taking to ensue those criteria are interpreted and applied consistently across local authorities.

Fabian Hamilton: [\[185890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to improve training and support for local authority staff involved in the Education, Health and Care Plan process.

Claire Coutinho:

In the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan, published in March 2023, the department set out plans to reform the education, health and care (EHC) plan system. The Improvement Plan does not alter the statutory eligibility for EHC plan. The current test for eligibility for an EHC needs assessment is set out in Section 36(8) of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The SEND and AP reforms seek to make best practice common practice in how EHC plans are delivered. They include establishing a single EHC plan form and supporting processes across England, including a national requirement for the use of digital technology to improve consistency and access to information. We will also test the use of multi-agency panels to enable local authorities to make judgements based on a holistic view of the needs of the child or young person across education, health and care when deciding whether to issue an EHC plan. We are already engaging with children, young people, families, and practitioners to develop this work.

The department wants to ensure that EHC plans, where required, are issued as quickly as possible, so that the child or young person can access the support they need. In 2021 (the latest figures available), there were 93,300 requests for an EHC

plan. 63,200 new EHC plans were issued, the highest number since they were introduced. 59.9% were issued within 20 weeks.

The department recognises the vital role local authority staff play in supporting families in the SEND and EHC plan system. We will consider the skills and training these staff require and, when consulting on amending the SEND Code of Practice, will propose new guidance on delivering a responsive and supportive casework service.

Fabian Hamilton:

[185889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she is taking steps to provide (a) further funding for Special Educational Needs provision and (b) increased resources for (i) specialist support services, (ii) therapies and (iii) interventions.

Claire Coutinho:

High needs funding for children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will be rising to £10.1 billion in the 2023/24 financial year. This is an increase of over 50% from the 2019/20 allocations. The funding will help local authorities and schools with the costs of supporting children and young people, including providing specialist support services, therapies and interventions.

We know that children and young people with SEND frequently require access to additional support from a broad specialist workforce across education, health and care. We are committed to improving the supply, training and deployment of key workforces to make the best use of professional expertise, in order to provide these specialist services, therapies and interventions.

In November 2022, the department announced funding worth £21 million to go towards training 400 more educational psychologists. This new funding, in place from 2024, builds on the £10 million announced earlier in 2022 to train over 200 educational psychologists from September 2023.

■ Special Educational Needs: Teachers

Duncan Baker:

[185126]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for teachers who have qualified in each of the last three years, (a) how many teachers received SEND training before becoming fully qualified and (b) how many teachers received SEND training after becoming fully qualified.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the school workforce is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. Information on the number of newly qualified entrants and deferred newly qualified entrants to teaching is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

The Department is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can reach their potential and receive excellent support from their teachers.

Alongside excellent teachers, teaching assistants play an important role in supporting pupils with SEND to fulfil their potential in mainstream and special schools.

Information on the number of qualified teachers trained to support pupils with SEND is not collected centrally.

As at November 2021 (latest data available) there were 465,500 full time equivalent teachers working in state funded schools in England. This is an increase of 4,400 since the previous year.

Almost 9 in 10 (87.5%) teachers who qualified in 2020 were still teaching one year after qualification, and just over two thirds (68.8%) of teachers who started teaching five years ago are still teaching.

One of the Department's priorities is to continue to attract, retain, and develop the highly skilled teachers needed to inspire the next generation.

■ Students: Mental Health

Alberto Costa:

[\[185818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to provide funding for improving the mental health of 18-25 year olds in further or higher education; and whether it is his policy to support the introduction of legislation to make it compulsory for universities and colleges to (a) record suicides and (b) facilitate joined up monitoring of mental health of young people in further and higher education.

Robert Halfon:

Every student death is a tragedy. The government is committed to doing all we can to prevent these devastating events, which we know have a profound and lasting impact on family and friends.

Whilst we do not plan to legislate higher education (HE) and further education (FE) providers to publicly record suicide numbers, this department does believe it is important to understand the overall trends in HE suicides and share best practice when tragedy does occur. This is why we asked the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to publish an updated linked data analysis on HE suicides. The ONS published the refreshed dataset and analysis on 31 May 2022, which included HE student deaths by suicide from the 2016/17 to 2019/20 academic years, and this can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/estimating-suicide-among-higher-education-students-in-england-and-wales-experimental-statistics/2017-to-2020>.

In order to better support student mental health, especially with regards to the transition between school or college into HE, the department has asked the Office for Students to distribute £15 million of funding to HE providers in 2023/24 to support

student mental health, including providing additional support for transitions from school or college to university, with a particular focus on providing counselling services for students. Funding has already supported 32 providers to actively participate in groups in the seven NHS regions to explore more formal partnership working, with the ultimate aim of closing any gaps in mental health provision for students.

To support the development and implementation of a whole college approach to mental health and wellbeing, the department is giving all colleges in England access to senior mental health leads training by 2025. We are also providing record funding for children and young people's mental health support in the NHS long term plan, through which we are investing at least an additional £2.3 billion a year above 2018/19 levels into mental health services in England by March 2024. This funding will enable an additional 345,000 people under the age of 25 to get the mental health support they need.

The department also recognises that early intervention is critical to prevent the progression and escalation of mental health issues. For this reason, we are introducing Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges. These teams offer support to young people experiencing common mental health issues and facilitate smoother access to external specialist support.

An important step towards HE providers delivering mental health support is student disclosure of mental health conditions. It is vital that students disclose their mental health conditions to their HE provider, so that they can be supported, rather than suffering in silence.

Students are actively encouraged to declare a mental health condition when they apply for university via UCAS. Prospective students can enter any needs related to their mental health difficulty, which is then passed on to the course providers so they can consider additional support, including support prior to commencing the course.

The department supports the Suicide Safer Universities framework, led by Universities UK and Papyrus, which can be found at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/suicide-safer-universities>. As well as supporting universities to prevent student suicides and support students and families after the death of a student, this framework includes additional guidance on information sharing and postvention guidance (actions after a death by suspected suicide), which can be found here: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/features/suicide-safer-universities/sharing-information>.

■ Teachers: Qualifications

Sarah Owen:

[185428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate her Department has made of the number of secondary schools which have no (a) English (b) maths (c) history and (d) religious education teachers who originally qualified to teach that subject.

Nick Gibb:

Legislation does not specify that teachers must have a degree in a particular subject or discipline. It is the Teachers' Standards that specify the subject knowledge required for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). All trainee teachers must meet these by the time they complete their training.

The latest data from November 2021, as published in the School Workforce Census, states that of 2,915 state-funded secondary schools in England: three did not employ a teacher with a post-A level qualification in English, 19 in mathematics, 15 in history and 155 in religious education.

These figures relate only to schools where the subjects were taught. In addition, figures only include schools that supplied both curriculum and teacher qualification data. Subject taught information is based on a typical week of teaching, as determined by the school.

Information on subjects taught and teachers' post A level qualifications is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO**■ Alternative Fuel Payments****Dave Doogan:**[\[185862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department plans to process all applications to the Alternative Fuel Payment scheme that were made before the deadline.

Amanda Solloway:

All applications to the Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund made before the closure of the application window on 31st May will be processed.

■ Boilers: Rural Areas**Ben Everitt:**[\[185466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he plans to take to support rural communities to switch from oil fuelled boilers once the 2026 ban comes into effect.

Graham Stuart:

The Government consulted on phasing out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating systems in homes, businesses and public buildings in England off the gas grid during the 2020s. The Government will set out further detail on how it intends to move forward with this policy when it issues its response in due course.

■ Carbon Dioxide: Air Pollution

Damien Moore: [\[185349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what scientific evidence his Department has which demonstrates the need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Graham Stuart:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report provides a comprehensive and up to date synthesis of the current understanding of climate change, its impacts, future risks and options for adaptation and mitigation.

The UK Government regards the assessments of the IPCC as the most authoritative view on the science of climate change available and uses it to inform its policies.

■ Carbon Emissions

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many energy projects have been created by each of the Net Zero Hubs in each of the last three years.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when his Department plans to announce the replacement funding for the Net Zero Hubs.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much funding each Net Zero Hub received in the most recent funding round.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment his Department has made of the availability of local authority qualified employees to contribute on Net Zero Hub projects.

Graham Stuart:

Local Net Zero Hubs support local authorities to develop a range of net zero projects and attract commercial investment. Local authorities manage their own workforce.

The Government will continue to invest £5 million per year in the Local Net Zero Hubs Programme.

■ Climate Change

Beth Winter: [\[185859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he has taken to develop a Just Transition Work Programme in line with the Sharm-el Sheikh Implementation Plan agreed at COP27; and what consultations have been held with trade unions to date.

Graham Stuart:

The Government recognises that a just transition will support the creation of quality jobs in developing countries and enable enhanced climate mitigation. As such, the Government is working constructively towards a COP28 decision on the Just Transition Work Programme which catalyses increased climate ambition and underscores the importance of supporting workers and impacted communities. Trade Unions are engaged through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process.

Electricity and Natural Gas: Costs**Alan Brown:**[\[185332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to the policy paper entitled Powering up Britain, published on 30 March 2023, what estimate he has made of when policies aimed at rebalancing gas and electricity costs will result in a reduction in (a) electric heat and (b) transport costs.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government has committed to outlining a clear approach to 'rebalancing' by the end of 2023/24, and to have made significant progress affecting relative prices by the end of 2024.

Energy Bills Rebate**Stephen Farry:**[\[185443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to ensure capacity is sufficient to enable all outstanding applications for energy bill support to be processed before the deadline of 31 May 2023.

Amanda Solloway:

Every effort is being put into assessing applications as quickly as possible and applicants should get a response within 6 weeks of applications being made. Although applications for the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Fund and Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund close on 31 May 2023, the processing and payment of them will continue beyond that.

Energy Charter Treaty**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[185914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 30 March 2023 to Question 172525 on Energy Charter Treaty, when he plans to conclude his assessment on the potential withdrawal of the UK from the Energy Charter Treaty; and whether he plans to publish that assessment.

Graham Stuart:

The Government continues to assess the evolving situation regarding Energy Charter Treaty modernisation and will keep the House informed of developments as soon as it is able to do so.

■ Energy Supply

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[185255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to achieve smart shifting of consumer demand for energy to help smooth peaks in demand and absorb excess supply.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is working with Ofgem to implement the 2021 Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, and with National Grid as they review the Demand Flexibility Service that last winter incentivised businesses and households to reduce electricity demand at peak periods. Alongside “Powering Up Britain”, the Government published our consultation response on Delivering a Smart and Secure Electricity System. It set out a multi-year programme to support competitive and well-functioning markets in Energy Smart Appliances and Demand Side Response services which will facilitate shifting electricity demand, thus reducing system costs and benefitting consumers in terms of their energy costs and choices.

■ Energy Supply: Carbon Emissions

Geraint Davies:

[\[184869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to the report by Energy UK entitled Allocation Round 5: Why it matters, and risks to the UK if the Government doesn't act, published on 3 May 2023, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings on the contribution of allocation round five of the contracts for difference scheme to meeting the capacity needed to reach the Government's target for a decarbonized power sector by 2035.

Graham Stuart:

The Contracts for Difference Allocation Round 5 opened on 31 March 2023. Since this is an open round, the Government cannot predetermine the capacity that will be delivered.

■ Energy: Medical Equipment

Jim Shannon:

[\[185243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of existing financial support for disabled people who run medical equipment at home.

Amanda Solloway:

As we explore possible approaches to consumer protection from April 2024, we are working with disability organisations, considering the costs for disabled people, and assessing the need for specific support for disabled people using medical equipment in the home.

I attended the quarterly meeting of the Disability Charities Consortium on Wednesday 24th May, and I am meeting my Hon. Friend the Minister of State for Disabled

People, Health and Work on 6th June to discuss consumer protection for people with disabilities.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Greater London

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will publish an analysis of Greenhouse Gases Emissions in each of the London Boroughs in each of the last five years.

Graham Stuart:

The [UK greenhouse gas emission statistics](#) and the [UK local and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2020](#) set out emissions data down to the local authority level, including for the London Boroughs.

■ Housing: Energy

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an estimate of the number of energy efficiency measures that were installed through Treasury funded initiatives in each of the last ten years.

Graham Stuart:

The Department publishes information on the number of energy efficiency measures installed through Treasury-funded schemes in each year since 2013 on GOV.UK.

■ Hydrogen: Power Stations

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent progress he has made on the hydrogen power station at Keadby in Scunthorpe.

Graham Stuart:

The Government is taking steps to enable the decarbonisation of unabated gas generation like Keadby Power Station. This includes supporting hydrogen production through the £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund (NZHF) while providing revenue support through the Hydrogen Production Business Model; enabling power CCUS through the Dispatchable Power Agreement; and in Powering Up Britain, the Government announced its intention to consult on the need and design of a market intervention for hydrogen power.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make it his policy to increase the number of hydrogen power stations.

Graham Stuart:

The Government views hydrogen as an important component of the UK's future power system to provide flexible low carbon generation capacity as the UK integrates more renewables.

Government analysis shows that having hydrogen available in the power sector could achieve emission reductions at a lower cost than scenarios without hydrogen.

■ Local Government: Climate Change

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he has made an estimate of the number of local authorities that have declared a climate emergency.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the progress of local authorities in achieving net zero by 2050.

Graham Stuart:

The Government has not collected figures on the number of local authorities that have declared a climate emergency.

The Government has not made an assessment of the adequacy of the progress made towards net zero by local authorities.

■ Local Net Zero Forum

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many times and on what dates the Local Net Zero Forum met since its establishment.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if his Department will publish the reports considered at the Ministerial Local Net Zero Forum held in February 2023.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make it his policy to establish a local authority Chief Executive and Departmental Permanent Secretary level Local Net Zero Forum.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what the terms of reference are for the Local Net Zero Forum.

Graham Stuart:

The Local Net Zero Forum has met four times to date at official level, on: 20 June 2022; 6 October 2022; 25 January 2023; and 4 May 2023. The Ministerial Local Net Zero Forum has met once to date, on 9 February 2023.

The Department will discuss publication of the reports considered at the Ministerial Local Net Zero Forum in February 2023 with local government co-chairs.

The Government is discussing with local government what levels of meetings would be useful, including a local authority Chief Executive and Departmental Permanent Secretary level Local Net Zero Forum.

The terms of reference for the Local Net Zero Forum will be published online in due course.

■ Offshore Industry: Skilled Workers

Olivia Blake:

[185626]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an estimate of the number of workers in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland who hold valid certification to work in both the offshore (i) oil and gas and (ii) wind industries in the latest period for which figures are available.

Graham Stuart:

The Government does not hold information on the number of workers who hold valid certification to work in both the offshore oil and gas and wind industries.

The offshore oil and gas sector's trade body Offshore Energies UK produces an annual Workforce Insight Report that includes estimates of total numbers of offshore oil and gas workers. Their 2022 report can be found here:

<https://oilandgasuk.cld.bz/Workforce-Insight-2022-OEUK>.

Olivia Blake:

[185627]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an estimate of the average cost to an offshore oil and gas worker of re-training for employment in the offshore wind sector.

Graham Stuart:

The Department does not hold information on the cost of oil and gas workers re-training for employment in the offshore wind sector.

Through the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, the sector has committed to making it easier for workers to move between offshore renewables and oil and gas sectors, and it is working on the development of an Energy Skills Passport. In 2022, the sector launched a Wind Energy Access Portal which sets out clear information on training requirements to access work in the offshore wind industry.

■ Sheltered Housing: Energy Performance Certificates

Catherine West:

[185393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department has taken to support charitable sheltered housing providers to upgrade to achieve a band C Energy Performance Certificate.

Graham Stuart:

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period to improve the energy

performance of social rented homes. The SHDF will upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below EPC C to that standard.

£778 million of Government funding was allocated for Wave 2.1 of the SHDF in March 2023. Registered charities who own social housing were able to apply directly to Wave 2.1 of the SHDF.

The Autumn Statement announced that £6 billion of new Government funding will be made available for energy efficiency from 2025 to 2028.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alan Brown: [\[185333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what the total capacity of offshore windfarm generation connected to the grid is as of 16 May 2023; and what estimate he has made of that capacity in each year between 2024 and 2030.

Graham Stuart:

As reported in Energy Trends published in March 2023, the UK's installed capacity was 13.9GW at the end of December 2022. The figure for May 2023 will be published in September 2023.

There is currently 7.7GW of Offshore Wind under construction and 6.2GW finalising procurement and preparing for construction. Additional capacity comes forward through each annual Contracts for Difference Allocation Round.

■ Wind Power: Skilled Workers

Olivia Blake: [\[185628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what discussions he has had with representatives of the offshore wind industry on recognising the energy skills passport being delivered by OPITO.

Graham Stuart:

No such discussions have taken place. Under the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, the Offshore Wind Industry Council committed to explore passporting of qualifications between different offshore sectors. The sector is developing an Energy Skills Passport to support workers moving between offshore renewables, oil and gas, and maritime contracting.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture and Food

Ian Byrne: [\[185468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May to Question 184541 on Agriculture and Food, whether any trade union representatives attended the UK farm to fork summit held at Downing Street on 16 May 2023.

Mark Spencer:

The National Farmers Union attended.

■ **Air Pollution****Geraint Davies:**[\[185737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential barriers to achieving national targets on air quality.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra assesses progress towards and barriers to achieving national targets for air quality on an ongoing basis.

■ **Air Pollution: Environment Protection****Geraint Davies:**[\[185748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of which internationally recognised (a) guidelines and (b) standards are most effective at protecting the (i) natural and (ii) cultivated environment from air pollution.

Rebecca Pow:

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a founding signatory to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution. The International Cooperative Programme on Effects of Air Pollution on Natural Vegetation and Crops and Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen, that sit under the Convention; provide assessments on guidance and standards for natural and cultivated land in relation to air pollution, which the UK considers and adopts where appropriate.

■ **Animal Experiments****Catherine West:**[\[185328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to end experimentation on animals in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

The Home Office is responsible for animal testing. The Home Secretary made a statement which can be found [here](#).

■ **Biodiversity and Nature Conservation****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[185582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of trends in levels of connection between the public and nature and biodiversity.

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.

There is clear evidence that people who visit nature regularly feel their lives to be more worthwhile. The most recent People and Nature survey for England (PANS) stated that 82% of adults questioned said that nature makes them happy, 71% of adults had visited green and natural spaces at least once a week and 94% of adults who had visited green and natural spaces in the last 14 days felt that spending time outdoors was good for their physical health, and 92% thought it was good for their mental health. Figures from the Office for National Statistics state the value of access to nature in England in 2020 was around £20bn.

Through Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) Outcome indicator framework we track: changes in people's engagement with the natural environment; engagement in social action for the environment; changes in people's attitudes and behaviours relating to the environment (covering different sectors of the population) and; health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature. The 25YEP Outcome Indicator Framework uses data from PANS. PANS gathers evidence and trend data through an online survey relating to people's enjoyment, access, understanding of and attitudes to the natural environment, and its contributions to wellbeing. Further details about the People and Nature Survey can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/people-and-nature-survey-for-england>

■ Countryside: Access**Rachael Maskell:****[185837]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in what her Department's Environmental Improvement Plan ensures people have equal access to nature.

Trudy Harrison:

As set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan we have committed to work across government to ensure that everyone lives within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space. The Government is taking forward a number of policies to increase access to nature including:

- Delivering the £9m Levelling Up Parks Fund to improve green space in over 100 disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the UK.
- Delivering the £14.5m 'Access for All' programme, which consists of a package of targeted measures in our protected landscapes, national trails, forests and the wider countryside to make access to green and blue spaces more inclusive.
- 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 particularly where provision is poorest.

- Local Nature Recovery Strategies will help to identify locations where action for nature recovery would be particularly beneficial, encouraging the creation of more green spaces, including in urban areas.
- Investing more than £250m to support tree planting and regeneration in urban and peri-urban areas and particularly in areas with high levels of social deprivation. Last year, the Urban Tree Challenge Fund supported 46 projects in England that planted around 25,000 large trees, building upon the 113,000 trees already planted through this fund in deprived urban areas.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps is she taking with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to help ensure that social prescribing for (a) young people and (b) adults promotes access to the natural environment.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government's Green Social Prescribing Programme was established to examine how to increase use and connection to the natural environment through referral to green and/or blue social prescribing services within communities in England to prevent and tackle mental ill health. It has achieved over 7,000 referrals to nature-based activities over the course of the programme, and the evidence suggests that the programme has had a very strong service take-up compared with traditional mental health support services.

We expect to publish our interim evaluation report shortly, with the full evaluation report to follow later this year.

We are committed to supporting the scale-up of green social prescribing across England, as confirmed in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, published on 31st January 2023.

We have established a cross-governmental working group to advocate for green social prescribing across government and are taking several practical steps to build on the good work of the programme. For example, we are in the process of commissioning research into green activity providers to understand better what barriers they face and how we can help with scale-up, and completing the feasibility stages of three clinical research trials, hopefully progressing to full trial stage by Summer 2023.

Within Countryside Stewardship farmers can apply for the supplement WS4 which enables them to create public access within woodland on their farm. There are approximately 900 hectares of land enrolled in this option which provides people of all ages access to the natural environment and contributes to the public's mental health and wellbeing.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Equal Pay**Imran Hussain:**[\[185679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural 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.

Mark Spencer:

We are currently considering the best way to approach Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting in the Civil Service.

Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting is voluntary.

We are 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.

More generally the Civil Service is undertaking extensive work both centrally and within departments to promote diversity across its workplaces, including ethnicity.

■ Derelict Land**Rachael Maskell:**[\[185838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the way brownfield sites may be used for nature rich environments.

Trudy Harrison:

Specific discussions on the use of brownfield sites for nature-rich environments have not taken place between the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a number of policies that will support the restoration of habitat, including identifying areas in urban communities where nature recovery could be particularly beneficial.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and a strengthened biodiversity duty on public authorities will work together to drive action, including to create or restore habitats that enable wildlife to recover and thrive, while conservation covenants will help secure habitat for the long term. LNRSs will provide the spatial framework for the Nature Recovery Network, which will guide creation, restoration and connectivity of habitats and sites to create mosaics of wildlife-rich habitat, including in urban communities; and incentivise private partnerships.

The Green Infrastructure Framework, launched in January, will help local planning authorities and developers to create or improve green infrastructure.

■ Dogs: Imports

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[185927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the timing of the report stage of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill on the import of dogs with cropped ears.

Mark Spencer:

The Government has not made an assessment of this impact. Parliamentary business will be announced in the usual way.

■ Electronic Training Aids

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[185412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of banning the use of (a) electronic shock collars used in conjunction with containment fences for cats, (b) other electric shock collars and (c) other aversive training devices.

Rebecca Pow:

We have laid legislation for approval by Parliament which will ban the use of hand-controlled electronic training collars that deliver an electric shock to cats and dogs given their scope to cause harm and be misused.

The ban will not extend to other types of collars which are controlled by hand-held devices.

We do not plan to extend the prohibition to the use of invisible fencing or containment systems.

■ Environment Agency: Finance

Ruth Jones: [\[184190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the Environment Agency's budget.

Rebecca Pow:

Environment Agency (EA) funding is closely monitored to ensure that the EA can carry out its duties and functions effectively. In the current Spending Review period (SR21) the EA received new ring fenced money for specific activities including enforcement.

■ Farms: New Businesses

Jim McMahon: [\[183783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April to Question 182041 on Farms: New Businesses, what his Department's planned timescale is for the start of the New Entrant Support Scheme.

Mark Spencer:

As set out in the Agricultural Transition Plan, we launched the pilot phase of the New Entrant Support Scheme in November as part of our co-design process. These pilots are testing a range of approaches to supporting new entrants and those looking to scale up their businesses to become successful entrepreneurs in the sector. The pilots will be evaluated and this will inform the type of future support for new entrants. The Department is also working closely with The Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture to coordinate wider activity on creating attractive career routes for those wishing to enter and those seeking to progress within the industry.

■ **Food: Prices****Jim McMahon:**[\[183790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress her Department has made on tackling food price increases in March 2023.

Mark Spencer:

Tackling inflation is this Government's number one priority, with a plan to more than halve inflation this year.

Farmers and growers across the UK are facing global challenges from Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, in addition to the unprecedented Avian Influenza outbreaks occurring across the world. We are undertaking a range of actions to respond to these global challenges, including:

- Paying Direct Payments in England in two instalments each year to help farmers with their cashflow.
- Improved the Avian Flu compensation scheme for farmers to help farmers through the worst global outbreak in many years and eased marketing rules to give certainty over business planning.
- Removed 25% tariff on maize imports from the USA to help with feed costs
- Introduced measures to help with global impacts on fertiliser supply chains including short term support to protect vital CO2 production
- Announcing 45,000 seasonal workers visas for the horticulture industry (an uplift of 15,000 compared with the start of 2022) with scope for up to 10,000 more if there is clear evidence of need, so that labour is not a limiting factor.
- Provided £168 million in grants to drive innovation, R&D and improve productivity through greener equipment, robotics and automation.
- Helping businesses with their costs through the Energy Bill Discount Scheme, business rates relief and extending the cut to fuel duty by 12 months, and small businesses will be fully protected from next year's rise in corporation tax.
- Provided 10,000 farmers with help and advice through the Future Farming Resilience Fund, which provides farmers with free advice to help farmers work out what to do for their business.

Further information on action we have taken to support our farmers and growers: [Our record on farming: 30 actions we have taken to support our farmers and growers - Defra in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

On 11 May 2023, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury met supermarkets to discuss the cost of food, and the Chancellor is meeting them again shortly to discuss how we ensure that consumers have access to a range of affordable food, in recognition of the pressures that people and producers are feeling.

We are keeping the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors all key agricultural commodities, so that we can work with the food industry to address the challenges they face.

Through regular engagement, Defra will continue to work with food retailers and producers to explore the range of measures they can take to ensure the availability of affordable food. For example, by maintaining value ranges, price matching and price freezing measures.

■ **Forests: Commodities**

Alex Sobel: [\[185094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her Department's planned time frame is for the introduction of secondary legislation to implement due diligence commitments on forest risk commodities in the Environment Act 2021.

Alex Sobel: [\[185095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which priority forest risk commodities the Environment Act 2021 due diligence secondary legislation will include.

Alex Sobel: [\[185096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether cocoa will be included in the deforestation due diligence regulations from initial implementation.

Alex Sobel: [\[185097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what level of sourcing information will be required of companies under the due diligence requirements on forest risk commodities of the Environment Act 2021.

Alex Sobel: [\[185098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to ensure the (a) quality and (b) transparency of information provided by companies under the Environment Act 2021 due diligence legislation on forest risk commodities.

Alex Sobel: [\[185099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether all companies will be in scope of the Environment Act 2021 due diligence regulations..

Alex Sobel: [\[185100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of using volume thresholds rather than turnover in ensuring companies handling a high volume of forest risk commodities are in scope of the Environment Act 2021 due diligence regulations.

Alex Sobel: [\[185101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how long after the Environment Act 2021 due diligence secondary legislation is passed she plans to bring it into force.

Alex Sobel: [\[185103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on what basis penalties for non-compliance under the Environment Act 2021 due diligence regulations will be calculated.

Trudy Harrison:

We consulted on the implementation of our due diligence regulations under the Environment Act and published a summary of responses and a government response to the consultation in June 2022.

■ Landfill

Ruth Jones: [\[185386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2023 to Question 184192 on Landfill: Air Pollution, how many alerts the Environment Agency received from operators of landfill sites about failures to comply with the terms of their licence in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

Rebecca Pow:

Air quality alerts are sent to Environment Agency Local Operational Teams. The Environment Agency will collate the data from each area and provide a full response directly to the hon. Member's office.

■ Landfill: Air Pollution

Ruth Jones: [\[185413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2023 to Question 184192 on Landfill: Air Pollution, if she will list (a) dates when the Environment Agency have conducted targeted monitoring to identify pollutant levels and investigated concerns and (b) locations where this monitoring has taken place in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency has conducted its own monitoring around the following landfill sites in England in the last five years:

Table 1: Locations of ambient air monitoring by the Environment Agency near landfill sites between 2018 - 2023 and comparison with the 24-hour average WHO Guideline for hydrogen sulphide (H₂S).

MONITORING LOCATION	LANDFILL SITE NAME	START DATE	END DATE
Clayton Le Woods	Clayton Hall Landfill Site	13 Feb 2018	10 Dec 2018
Silverdale	Walleys Quarry Landfill Site	28 Feb 2019	25 Jun 2019
Kettering	Rushton Landfill Site	14 Feb 2019	18 Sept 2019
Bristol (Emerson Green)	Shortwood Quarry Landfill Site	9 Feb 2020	27 Aug 2020
Blaydon in Ryton	Blaydon Quarry Landfill Site	16 Jan 2020	7 Sept 2020
Finmere	Finmere Quarry Landfill Site	24 Jan 2020	11 Apr 2020
Cannock	Poplars Landfill Site	3 Feb 2020	17 Jun 2020
Walsall	Highfields Landfill Site	12 Mar 2020	11 Aug 2020
Silverdale Pumping Station	Walleys Quarry Landfill Site	4 Mar 2021	Ongoing
Silverdale Galingale View	Walleys Quarry Landfill Site	5 Mar 2021	Ongoing
Silverdale Fire Station	Walleys Quarry Landfill Site	25 Apr 2021	Ongoing
Silverdale Cemetery	Walleys Quarry Landfill Site	12 Apr 2021	Ongoing
Brampton	Buckden North Landfill Site	19 May 2022	2 Dec 2022
Clayton Le Woods	Clayton Hall Landfill Site	23 Aug 2022	19 Oct 2022

Notes –

- Since April 2013, the Environment Agency has a statutory role only around the regulation of landfill sites in England. Natural Resources Wales have a similar role in Wales.
- The Environment Agency's Ambient Air Monitoring Team has carried out these monitoring studies in England during the last five years using real time monitoring equipment located on or outside the boundary of the landfill sites.
- Other monitoring is required of the operator of the permitted site themselves. Part of assessing permit compliance at these installations by the Environment Agency is checking the monitoring processes and the data that is collected by the operator.
- Monitoring at these locations was triggered by a variety of issues and the results of the monitoring, presented in detailed reports, are used to inform the Environment Agency's regulatory activities such as, requiring improvements to operations but also in some cases, the data was used to confirm that there weren't any risks to the environment or human health.
- Examples of the detailed report that the Environment Agency's Ambient Air Monitoring Team produce to accompany their ambient air monitoring around landfill sites can be seen here - <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/22781/widgets/64777/documents/39289>
- More information on the Environment Agency's Mobile Monitoring Facilities can be found here - <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/air-quality-monitoring/widgets/60780/videos/3626>

■ Livestock: Conservation

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[185453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help protect rare breeds of native farm animals.

Mark Spencer:

To support native breeds, Defra publishes the [UK National Breed Inventory](#) annually to help monitor populations of pedigree livestock, including native breeds. For breeders in England, support for native breeds is available under the [SP8: Native Breeds at Risk Supplement](#), which can be accessed through the Countryside Stewardship scheme.

Defra has also published guidelines on contingency planning in the event of an outbreak of a notifiable disease to identify eligible native breeds on the [breed at risk \(BAR\) list](#), that may be exempt from culling.

The Department recognises the important role local abattoirs play in supporting native breed farmers and the wider rural economy. We are very much committed to engaging with the smaller abattoir sector to maintain a robust and competitive industry. At the National Farmers Union Conference in February, I announced the Government's intention to launch capital grant funding to support smaller abattoirs. I

will shortly be holding a round table with experts from the native breeds community to explore how we can support this valuable resource.

■ Livestock: Disease Control

Dan Jarvis:

[\[185850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the UK's biosecurity arrangements on farm animal to human disease transmission.

Mark Spencer:

Zoonotic infections threaten both human and animal health. For zoonotic diseases, we have systems in place to detect and manage outbreaks, for both endemic (those that are already found in the UK) and exotic infections, collaborating closely with the public health agencies.

There are several pathogens of animals which can potentially spread to humans as a result of the close interactions between humans and animals on farm, including Salmonella and Mycobacterium bovis, but incidents of this nature are rare. Nevertheless, we take biosecurity and protection of public health very seriously.

Employers are required by law to prevent ill health to workers that may occur as a result of their business activities. Employers should undertake a risk assessment to help decide what actions they need to take to do this. The Health and Safety Executive regulates this.

The Government is committed to the strongest possible standards of protection against animal diseases including zoonotic pathogens. It is investing £1.4 million (including £200 million in this Spending Review period) to secure the long-term future of the Animal and Plant Health Agency Weybridge facility. This substantial investment recognises the essential role of this laboratory and will enable its excellent scientists to continue to protect the country, boosting our resilience and strengthening our understanding of health risks to, and from, animals and plants.

■ Livestock: Exports

Duncan Baker:

[\[185642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many live (a) cattle, (b) sheep, (c) pigs and (d) goats have been exported for fattening and slaughter since 1 January 2021.

Mark Spencer:

There have been no exports of livestock for slaughter or fattening since 2020.

Exports of cattle, sheep, pigs and goats by sea to mainland Europe have not been viable since 1st January 2021, due to the lack of Border Control Post facilities designated to accept this trade in receiving EU Member States.

Whilst exports of equines have continued, this has been for the purpose of leisure, competition or breeding only; none have been exported for slaughter.

■ Maize: Imports**John McNally:** [\[185651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of stopping the importation of forage maize seed treated with bird repellent and fungicide on domestic production of forage maize for (a) the livestock industry, (b) the dairy industry and (c) the anaerobic digestion industry.

John McNally: [\[185652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of alternatives to stopping the importation of treated forage maize seed at the end of this year.

John McNally: [\[185653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the impact of banning imported forage maize seed treated with bird repellent and fungicide on (a) the UK's ability to grow forage maize and (b) the alternative energy anaerobic digestion industry.

Mark Spencer:

From 1 January 2024, treated seeds can only be used if they are treated with Plant Protection Products authorised in GB. After we left the EU, transitional arrangements were put in place so that seeds treated with products authorised for use in the EU but not GB could continue to be imported, marketed and used. These arrangements come to an end on 31 December 2023. Industry has had the opportunity over the last 3 years to apply for the relevant GB authorisations, HSE has highlighted the actions that they need to take.

■ Pesticides: Imports**Peter Aldous:** [R] [\[186077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to support farmers importing plant protection products that require parallel trade permits.

Mark Spencer:

The parallel trade arrangements set out in EU legislation were based on information sharing between the Member States. Parallel trade permits that were in place when the UK left the EU have been continued for a time. Defra is aware that sales of these parallel products end on 30 June 2023, and the final date for use is 30 June 2024. Secretary of State is committed to supporting farmers with appropriate use of plant protection products, within the context of securing a thriving, environmentally sustainable farming sector, engaging with Cabinet colleagues as appropriate. DEFRA is aware of farmer concerns about parallel trade permits and, together with the Health and Safety Executive, we are monitoring the situation.

■ Waste: Crime**Navendu Mishra:**[\[185342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps she has she has taken to tackle waste-related crime in (a) Stockport constituency and (b) Greater Manchester.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to tackling waste crime, which is a blight on our local communities and the environment and damages legitimate businesses. We have strengthened regulators' powers, are tightening the law and have increased the Environment Agency's budget by £10 million per year to make it harder for rogue operators to find work in the sector and easier for regulators to take action against criminals. We are also providing grants to councils across the country to help them purchase equipment to tackle fly-tipping. Recipients include Manchester City Council.

From January 2022 to date, 7% of incidents reported to the Environment Agency for the region that covers Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, were recorded as illegal waste sites and 0.1% related to the Stockport area. The majority of the reports for Stockport were closed, as unsubstantiated or with the Environment Agency providing advice and guidance detailing the relevant legislation, their obligations, how to return to compliance and the consequences of not doing so.

Within Greater Manchester, there are six cases subject to legal proceedings and nine active investigations into illegal waste crime. Between April 2022 to March 2023 the Environment Agency closed 15 illegal waste sites across Greater Manchester, 7 of which were high risk.

Feryal Clark:[\[185720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps she has she has taken to tackle waste-related crime in (a) Enfield North constituency and (b) London.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to tackling waste crime, which is a blight on our local communities and the environment and damages legitimate businesses. We have strengthened regulators' powers, are tightening the law and have increased the Environment Agency's budget by £10 million per year to make it harder for rogue operators to find work in the sector and easier for regulators to take action against criminals. We are also providing grants to councils across the country to help them purchase equipment to tackle fly-tipping. Recipients include London Borough of Newham Council and London Borough of Waltham Forest Council.

The Environment Agency is aware of recent suspected large scale illegal deposits of waste in the Enfield area. Those suspected of being involved are subject to Operation Angola and an investigation into this group is ongoing. The Environment Agency also has ongoing investigations into large scale organised illegal depositing of waste and are progressing several major cases one of which is going through the court system

at this time. All reports of waste related crime are recorded on the Environment Agency National Incident Recording System and investigated in order of seriousness.

In the South London area (that also includes Kent), Environment Agency investigations to date have resulted in 20 successful prosecutions. Active on-going investigations are targeting priority offenders linked to large scale illegal disposal of waste with a current focus in Kingston, Croydon and Sutton. These investigations are being undertaken with partner organisations such as the police and local authorities.

■ Water Charges

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[185541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people in England who have been in receipt of a water utility social tariff in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

We expect all companies to make sure households are aware of the schemes available to help those struggling to pay their bills. In England, the water sector has both statutory (WaterSure) and voluntary measures (social tariffs) in place for households who struggle to pay for their water bills.

The Consumer Council for Water (CCW) provide information on the number of households in receipt of WaterSure, social tariffs and Water Direct. A detailed breakdown can be found [on CCW's website](#).

■ Water Companies: Investment Income

Caroline Lucas: [\[184347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an estimate of shareholder dividends as a proportion of customer water bills for each water company in each of the past five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State does not intend to make an estimate of shareholder dividends as a proportion of customer water bills. This would not be an accurate method to compare dividends between water companies. All water companies publish their water charges as well as their dividends payments on their websites, and therefore the information requested is already publicly available.

■ Water: Greater London

Jim McMahon: [\[185363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in London; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the North East; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the North West; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in Yorkshire; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the East Midlands; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the West Midlands; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the South East; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the East of England; what medium term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Jim McMahon: [\[185372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans her Department has in place for water shortages in the South West; what medium

term spending plans her Department has if that shortage takes place; and what the water leakage rate is in that region.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra recently published its Plan for Water which set out the importance of ensuring a clean and plentiful water supply. Water companies have a statutory duty to provide clean and reliable water to customers. To fulfil this duty there are statutory requirements to consult, publish and maintain water resources management plans, to balance water supply and demand at least twenty-five years into the future, and to develop drought plans setting out the actions taken to maintain secure supplies during drought events.

Water companies have been consulting on their draft water resources management plans and consulted on their drought plans in 2021. These plans are available on water company websites.

The Government expects water companies to take action to reduce levels of leakage and has consistently challenged them on their performance. Water companies have committed to a government endorsed target to reduce leakage by 50% sector-wide by 2050. As a first step, Ofwat has set requirements for water companies to cut leaks by 16% and reduce mains bursts by 12% by 2025. In July, Ofwat reported that industry wide leakage has reduced by 11% since 2017-18. In addition, water companies will need to contribute to delivery of Defra's Water Demand Target under the Environment Act 2021 to reduce the use of public water supply per person in England by 20% by 2038. This includes a 37% reduction in leakage by 2038 on the pathway to meet their 50% reduction in leakage commitment by 2050.

The Environment Agency collects leakage data reported by water companies annually. It is provided by water company area. This means we cannot break down these data into specific regions such as the East and West Midlands. We have collated the data provided by the companies into regions based on their locations and information provided by regional water resources groups for the year 2021 – 2022.

REGION	MEGALITRES PER DAY (MLD)
London	554.7
North East	135.1
North West	413.8
Yorkshire	283.1
East Midlands	509.3 covers the whole midlands area i.e. East and West
West Midlands	
South East	549.1 (excl London)
East of England	248.4
South West	190.3

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Bijendran Patel****Fleur Anderson:**[\[185946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on establishing a (a) safe and (b) fast route to the UK for Mr Bijendran of Royal London Hospital.

David Rutley:

We are monitoring the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza and welcome the current ceasefire brokered by Egypt. When the Foreign Secretary wrote to his Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen on 10 May, he thanked him for coordinating with the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and requested Israel's continued assistance to allow British nationals in Gaza who wish to return to the UK to do so. The individual in question left Gaza via the Erez crossing into Israel on 13 May, confirming their safety to UK officials on 15 May.

■ Conflict Prevention: Finance**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[185391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding his Department has allocated for conflict prevention in (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

Leo Docherty:

Conflict prevention is a broad term that describes activity that seeks to avert violence.

A range of programmes funded through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the Conflict, Security, Stabilisation Fund (CSSF) can be considered conflict prevention, such as preventing violent extremism or promoting effective land management. The FCDO does not track conflict prevention spend as a separate activity.

The FCDO's latest estimate of its ODA spending for 2022-23 is £7.56 billion. The FCDO's indicative ODA budget for 2023-24 is £8.1 billion. The Integrated Security Fund (ISF) will replace the CSSF with a budget of almost £1 billion.

■ Diamonds and Gold: Russia**Drew Hendry:**[\[185960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2022 to Question 35993 on Diamonds and Gold: Russia, if he will take steps to build the capacity to gather the data on the components used in the production of finished goods imported from partner countries, potentially containing precious metals or stones from Russia, needed to allow regulatory agencies to enforce a ban on precious metals or stones from Russia.

Leo Docherty:

We have committed to working closely with G7 and other key partners to restrict trade in and use of Russian diamonds. This includes the implementation and enforcement of the measure and we will set out further details in due course.

■ **Gaza: Israel****Alex Cunningham:**[\[185910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on reports of airstrikes targeting residential buildings in Gaza.

David Rutley:

We continue to monitor the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza and welcome the recent ceasefire brokered by Egypt. All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence. The reports of civilian Palestinian casualties, including women and children, are alarming. It is vital that all security actions are proportionate, in line with international humanitarian law, and calibrated to avoid civilian casualties as much as possible. The Foreign Secretary made this clear to Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen when he wrote to him on 10 May.

Alex Cunningham:[\[185911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the impact of Israel's closure of crossings with Gaza on the (a) ability of Palestinian patients to travel to the West Bank and East Jerusalem to receive medical treatment and (b) entry of humanitarian relief supplies into Gaza.

Alex Cunningham:[\[185912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help ensure the safe passage of (a) local and (b) international (i) medical and (ii) humanitarian personnel through the Erez crossing during airstrike attacks on Gaza.

David Rutley:

We urge Israel to allow access into and out of Gaza and the West Bank, in accordance with international humanitarian law, for humanitarian actors, reconstruction materials and those, including Palestinians, travelling for medical purposes. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of this issue with the Israeli authorities. We strongly condemn all forms of violence and incitement to violence directed towards healthcare workers. The wounded and critically ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need. The UK Government welcomes any effort to cooperate between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, including in the healthcare sector. When the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen on 10 May, he asked him to facilitate humanitarian access to Gaza.

Fleur Anderson: [\[185943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on reports that recent border closures have prevented 142 patients in Gaza from accessing urgent treatments and cancer treatments in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Fleur Anderson: [\[185944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on reports that recent border closures have prevented aid workers from leaving Gaza.

David Rutley:

We urge access into and out of Gaza and the West Bank, in accordance with international humanitarian law, for humanitarian actors, reconstruction materials and those, including Palestinians, travelling for medical purposes. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We strongly condemn all forms of violence and incitement to violence directed towards healthcare workers. The wounded and critically ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need. The UK Government welcomes any effort to cooperate between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, including in the healthcare sector. When the Foreign Secretary wrote to his Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen on 10 May, he asked him to facilitate humanitarian access to Gaza.

■ Iran: Demonstrations

Stephen Morgan: [\[185402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is taking steps to coordinate international action on holding the Iranian regime to account for the (a) execution and (b) the imprisonment of protestors.

Stephen Morgan: [\[185403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to promote (a) free elections, (b) freedom of assembly and expression and (c) the protection of human rights in Iran.

Stephen Morgan: [\[185404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with his international counterparts to promote peace and democracy in Iran.

David Rutley:

The UK supports Iranians standing up for their fundamental freedoms by ensuring the regime is held to account for its violent repression of protests. Since October 2022, the UK has designated more than 70 Iranian officials and entities involved in serious human rights violations. This includes Iran's prosecutor general, deputy prosecutor general, and others responsible for egregious prison sentences and use of the death

penalty. We work closely with our international partners to ensure accountability on the world stage, including through the establishment of a UN Fact Finding Mission. We continue to raise Iran's dire human rights record at all appropriate opportunities, and call on the regime to listen to the people's clear desire for meaningful change.

■ Israel: Palestinian Islamic Jihad

Paul Bristow:

[\[185429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure a ceasefire between Israel and Islamic Jihad lasts.

David Rutley:

We continue to closely monitor the security situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The Foreign Secretary said in his 14 May statement that the UK welcomes the announcement of this Egyptian-brokered ceasefire and will support efforts to promote dialogue and create a pathway towards sustainable peace. The UK has proscribed Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) as a terrorist entity since March 2001 and as such does not engage with members of its organisation. PIJ and other terrorist groups must cease all actions that are violent or provocative, or that put civilian lives at risk. The Foreign Secretary wrote to Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen on 10 May to reiterate the UK's support for Israel's right to self-defence and to encourage the facilitation of humanitarian access to Gaza.

■ Liberia: Elections

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[185549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in Liberia on the importance of freedom, fairness and peace in elections scheduled for October 2023 in that country; and whether the Government plans to support any international election monitoring work for those elections.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The outcome of the October 2023 elections is for the people of Liberia to decide. The British Embassy in Monrovia engages with the Government of Liberia, political parties, civil society and other key stakeholders on issues of good governance, the rule of law and the importance of free, fair and peaceful elections. Our Embassy is working closely with international partners including the US, UN and Economic Community of West African States to support the delivery and monitoring of an election that properly reflects the will of the Liberian people.

■ Nick Maynard

Fleur Anderson:

[\[185945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on establishing a (a) safe and (b) fast route to the UK for Professor Nick Maynard.

David Rutley:

We are monitoring the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza and welcome the current ceasefire brokered by Egypt. When the Foreign Secretary wrote to his Israeli counterpart Eli Cohen on 10 May, he thanked him for coordinating with the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and requested Israel's continued assistance to allow British nationals in Gaza who wish to return to the UK to do so. The individual in question left Gaza via the Erez crossing into Israel on 13 May, confirming their safety to UK officials on 15 May.

■ Sudan: Peace Negotiations

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[185639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he took to help avoid conflict in Sudan.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Prior to the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the British Ambassador and Embassy in Khartoum had engaged intensively with the two military leaderships to encourage progress towards a final political agreement and the transfer of power to a civilian administration. We provided expertise to support and inform discussions between the SAF, RSF and civilian parties on mechanisms and timelines for reforming and integrating the two forces. Engagement was conducted through the Quad (UK, US, UAE, KSA), and Troika (UK, US, Norway), in support of the tripartite mechanism's (United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development) facilitation role.

The UK also maintained pressure through its statements on Sudan and through resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council and Security Council. The UK's Special Representative for Sudan, alongside Special Envoys and Representatives from the Troika, EU, France and Germany, met with General Burhan and General Hemedti in February 2023. Two days before the outbreak of hostilities, the UK issued a joint public statement with Troika, EU, France and Germany calling for de-escalation of tensions.

■ Transcaucasus: Roads

Hywel Williams:

[\[185879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his international counterparts on taking steps

to ensure that people affected by blockages along the Lachin corridor are able to access (a) food, (b) medicine and (c) energy.

Leo Docherty:

The UK Government has been vocal about the importance of re-opening the Lachin Corridor and publicly highlighted humanitarian concerns, including through multilateral fora such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UN Security Council and we regularly engage with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments, including on humanitarian issues. I [Minister Docherty] discussed the situation in Lachin during my visit to Azerbaijan in February and with Prime Minister Pashinyan on my visit to Armenia in May. The UK has a strong record of supporting humanitarian responses in this region and FCDO officials are in close contact with humanitarian agencies about the situation on the ground. Additionally the START FUND, a humanitarian response fund to whom the UK is a significant donor, allocated £350,000 to the region to support those effected by the closure of the Lachin Corridor.

■ **Wagner Group**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[185558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the report entitled Rapport sur les événements de Moura du 27 au 31 mars 2022, published by the UN Office for Human Rights on 12 May 2023, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of that report on (a) discussions with Cabinet colleagues about UK proscription of the Wagner Group, (b) investigations in pursuit of sanctions against entities associated with the global Wagner Group and (c) other findings related to his Department.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK issued a joint statement with the US and Canada following the release of the UN's report on the massacre of over 500 people in Moura, central Mali, carried out by Malian forces and Wagner Group. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has said, summary execution, rape and torture during armed conflict amount to war crimes and could, depending on the circumstances, amount to crimes against humanity. I [the Minister for Africa, Andrew Mitchell] have since also set out the need for human rights compliance to achieve long-term stability. The UK Government continues to emphasise our support for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) at the UN Security Council, urging the Malian authorities to strengthen their cooperation with the UN and to respect MINUSMA's freedom of movement.

The Foreign Secretary regularly speaks to his counterparts on a range of issues. Proscription is a matter for the Home Office. Whilst we keep the list of proscribed organisations under review, it is Government policy not to comment on whether a group is under consideration for proscription. The UK Government has already sanctioned both the Wagner Group and its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin. The

Government does not normally comment on future sanctions designations as to do so would reduce their impact.

■ West Bank: Schools

Paul Bristow:

[185430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is making representations to his Israeli counterpart on the demolition of schools in the West Bank.

David Rutley:

The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to international humanitarian law. Our opposition to the demolition of Palestinian property is long-standing. The practice causes unnecessary suffering and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. Most recently, on 7 May, The Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon wrote to the Israeli Ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, to express the government's issues with the demolition of Jubbet Adh Dhib school. Lord Ahmad also urged the Israeli government to take all possible steps to halt the imminent demolition of Ein Samiya school and to uphold the right to education for all.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments

Feryal Clark:

[181638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the rollout of high intensity use services as recommended in the Urgent and Emergency Care Recovery Plan.

Will Quince:

NHS England has now established governance overseeing the implementation of the Urgent and Emergency Care Recovery plan and will monitor the delivery of commitments in it, including the continuing rollout of high intensity user services (HIU).

We have established an implementation group with regional and local representation, and are offering wider support to systems that are rolling out or expanding HIU services by using data to provide personalised contact.

We have also put key operational processes and guidance in place to support systems implementing HIU services. These are available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/high-intensity-user-service-resource-pack-supporting-documents/>

■ Air Pollution: Public Health**Geraint Davies:****[185739]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of urgency of the need for targets to protect public health from (a) outdoor and (b) indoor air pollution.

Maria Caulfield:

Government has set two new targets for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) under the Environment Act 2021. These are, a maximum annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic metre by 2040, and a population exposure reduction target of 35% by 2040 compared to 2018.

To drive action on the PM2.5 targets in the short term Government has also set two interim targets in the Environmental Improvement Plan published in January, a maximum annual mean concentration of 12 micrograms per cubic metre by the end of January 2028, and a population exposure reduction target of 22% by the end of January 2028 compared to 2018

The Government has worked with internationally recognised experts to deliver the evidence to inform target setting. We continue to work with the UK Health Security Agency and our expert advisory groups, the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants and the Air Quality Expert Group, to develop the evidence base in relation to indoor air quality.

Geraint Davies:**[185747]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of which internationally recognised (a) guidelines and (b) standards are most effective at protecting public health from indoor air pollution.

Maria Caulfield:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published guidelines for indoor air quality for selected chemicals commonly present in indoor air and provide a scientific basis for legally enforceable standards. The guidelines are available at the following link: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789289002134>

The WHO have also produced guidelines for indoor air quality affected by dampness and mould, available at the following link:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789289041683>

and household fuel combustion, available at the following link:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548885>

In 2020, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence produced guidance focused on interventions to change the structure of, ventilation of, and materials used in new and existing homes, as well as interventions to change people's behaviour to reduce their exposure to indoor air pollution at home. The guidance is available at the following link: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng149>

■ Air Pollution: Standards

Geraint Davies:

[\[185749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help improve indoor air quality.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department of Health and Social Care convenes a cross-government official-level working group which is considering how to take forward ambitions set out in both the Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022 and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Air Quality Expert Group's report of November 2022.

Through its cleaner air programme the United Kingdom Health Security Agency aims to reduce people's exposure to air pollution, tackle the existing disparities and improve outcomes for all. Its programme has three core elements, increasing the evidence base, supporting stakeholders and improving awareness and understanding.

■ Autism and Learning Disability: Community Care

Seema Malhotra:

[\[185641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on implementing the Building the Right Support Action Plan.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 23 May 2023]: Significant progress has been made in implementing the Building the Right Support (BtRS) Action Plan. Since its publication in July 2022, the majority of the commitments due to complete to date, 19 of 22, have now been delivered and there are mitigations in place for those that have not.

For commitments with upcoming completion dates, the majority are on track to be delivered as expected. Mitigations are in place for the small number of commitments that are currently off track to be delivered by their expected completion date.

The BtRS Delivery Board, which is responsible for overseeing implementation of the BtRS Action Plan, regularly reviews progress on these commitments and takes collective action where a commitment is identified as being off track.

■ Autism and Learning Disability: Social Services

Alex Sobel:

[\[185633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Care Quality Commission's review entitled *Out of sight – who cares?*, published in October 2020, what steps his Department is taking to respond to that report's recommendations.

Maria Caulfield:

We welcomed the publication of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on the use of restraint, seclusion and segregation and published our response in July 2021,

in which we accepted in full or in principle all recommendations for the Department. We are focused on ensuring all patients, including people with a learning disability and autistic people, receive safe and high-quality care.

In response to the recommendations made in the report, we have taken several actions including undertaking independent case reviews and introducing a Senior Intervenor pilot to help move individuals in the most restrictive settings towards discharge. We are carefully considering the outcomes of these programmes to inform our ongoing work.

We have also introduced the Use of Force Act which includes measures to both reduce the inappropriate use of force and to ensure accountability and transparency about the use of force in mental health units.

The CQC report recommended improved community support for people with a learning disability and autistic people and single Ministerial ownership of the actions taken. We published the Building the Right Support Action Plan in July 2022, which sets out actions to improve community support for people with a learning disability and autistic people. Progress is overseen by a cross-system, cross-Government Delivery Board, established to bring together all partners who can make change happen.

The draft Mental Health Bill, published on 27 June 2022, sets out our proposed reforms to help improve support for people with a learning disability and autistic people. As part of this work, we have committed to updating the Mental Health Act Code of Practice, including reviewing the definition of long-term segregation.

■ Coronavirus: Immunosuppression

Gareth Bacon:

[\[184519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing immunocompromised people with personalised tests for Covid-19 antibodies.

Maria Caulfield:

An antibody testing study has been funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to establish if antibody testing can identify which immunosuppressed individuals remain at greatest risk of severe COVID-19 infection after vaccinations. The Stratification of Clinically Vulnerable People for COVID-19 Risk Using Antibody Testing (STRAVINSKY) study will receive £2.8 million and involve 3000 immunocompromised participants over two years. 2600 participants will receive a finger-prick antibody test, with 400 receiving more detailed immune analyses. The study will include the analysis of pooled existing antibody testing evidence from several studies to develop an understanding of how each patient group responds to the programme of COVID-19 vaccinations.

It is hoped the findings will provide clinicians, policymakers and members of the public with up-to-date information on the incremental impact of the programme of booster vaccinations and inform future advice and targeted medicines for people who

are immunosuppressed, including the use of antibody testing. We will continue to communicate to people most vulnerable to COVID-19 about available clinical interventions, including vaccination and treatments, as well as testing and public health advice.

■ **Dental Services: Children**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[185780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the capacity is for the (a) number and (b) proportion of children in England that can be registered for NHS dentistry; and if he will make a statement.

Neil O'Brien:

State funded healthcare provided by the National Health Service in England, including dentistry, is available free of charge to all children who are ordinarily resident in England and under the age of 18 years old or under 19 years old and in full-time education.

Unlike general practitioners' patients, dental patients are not registered to a particular practice. A dental practice can accept a patient for a course of treatment if they have capacity to deliver that treatment. There are no geographical restrictions on which dental practice a patient may attend, allowing patients the choice of where they receive treatment.

Where a person is unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through a local NHS dental practice for their child, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

■ **Diabetes: Health Services**

Feryal Clark:

[\[185449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS England on increasing access to diabetes healthcare teams in (a) Enfield North constituency (b) the London Borough of Enfield and (c) London.

Helen Whately:

The Department has held no discussions with NHS England on increasing access to diabetes healthcare teams specifically in Enfield North constituency, the London Borough of Enfield and London.

■ **Healthy Start Scheme**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[185839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has adequate funding to cover the cost of all people who are eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme.

Neil O'Brien:

The Department is allocated funds for each financial year, which includes funds for Healthy Start. Healthy Start is a demand-led scheme and spending on the scheme varies each year.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[185841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was unclaimed by people eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme in financial years (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

Neil O'Brien:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[185900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 April 2023 to Question 175581 on Healthy Start Scheme, whether his Department estimates the anticipated demand for the Healthy Start Scheme each year.

Neil O'Brien:

Healthy Start is a demand-led scheme and spending on the scheme varies each year. The amount of funds provided to the Department for Healthy Start each year is based on forecasts of the number of families on the scheme, with the Department managing actual spend within its overall budget.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[185902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much has been spent on the Healthy Start Scheme including on (a) transition to the digital scheme, (b) applicant support and (c) promotion in 2022-23 financial year.

Neil O'Brien:

Audited data on the cost of operating the Healthy Start scheme in the 2022/23 financial year is not yet available.

Andrew Western:[\[185986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average annual cost was of operating the Healthy Start scheme in the last three years.

Neil O'Brien:

The average annual cost of operating the Healthy Start scheme between 2019/20 and 2021/22, the last three years for which data is available, was £55,523,961.

■ Hereditary Angioedema: Diagnosis**Christopher Pincher:**[\[185552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of (a) the incidence and (b) rate of misdiagnosis of Hereditary Angioedema in England; and if he will make a statement on boosting awareness of the condition in the medical profession.

Helen Whately:

Information on the incidence and rate of misdiagnosis of hereditary angioedema (HAE) is not held by the National Health Service at a national level.

A survey of centres providing care for people with HAE in the last three years conducted by the HAE community found that there are approximately 1150 patients with identified HAE in England, with 90% of centres responding.

Raising awareness of rare diseases, including HAE, among healthcare professionals is one of the four priorities of the 2021 UK Rare Diseases Framework. Significant progress was made in 2022 against commitments in England's first Rare Diseases Action Plan to increase awareness of rare diseases. This includes the development and expansion of innovative digital resources on genomics and rare diseases, specifically aimed at healthcare professionals.

A new action in England's second action plan, published in February 2023, will see rare diseases incorporated in the educational strategies for the nursing and midwifery, pharmacy and primary care workforce. Progress made over the year ahead will be detailed in England's 2024 Rare Diseases Action Plan.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy**Carolyn Harris:**[\[185935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to reduce regional variations in the availability of hormone replacement therapies.

Maria Caulfield:

Regional information is not held centrally, however, there are over 70 hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products available in the United Kingdom and the vast majority are in good supply. We are regularly engaging with individual suppliers to prevent and mitigate supply issues in the short and long term. The HRT supply position has improved considerably since last Spring.

Local or system level formularies have been established in some areas to support integrated care boards (ICBs) in making the best use of resources based on local population needs. Where they are in place, local formularies guide prescribers to preferred products rather than mandating what they can and cannot prescribe.

Prescribers are still able to prescribe medicines that are not listed on a formulary.

Carolyn Harris:[\[185936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the average administrative time spent by healthcare professionals on updating local formularies to include hormone replacement therapies in the last 12 months.

Maria Caulfield:

No estimate has been made as this information is not held centrally.

Local formularies guide prescribers to preferred products rather than mandating what they can and cannot prescribe. Prescribers are still able to prescribe medicines that

are not listed on a formulary. Formularies do not always include medicines from all clinical areas, as they are tailored towards areas where support is felt to be helpful and or necessary for a local area.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Liz Kendall: [\[185291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the of the £750 million pledged to speed up hospital discharges in winter 2022-23 was spent before 31 March 2023; and where the unspent funds have been reallocated to.

Helen Whately:

The £500 million discharge fund was made available in two tranches with the first in December 2022 and the second at the end of January 2023. All areas have submitted a final report. We are reviewing the data and analysis of spending will be included in the evaluation. Local areas spending plans have been published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-discharge-fund-spending-plans>

The evaluation will also consider the use of the £200 million funding through NHS England for step-down beds. The full £50 million capital funding announced in January 2023 has been allocated to National Health Service organisations, who will report on the spend in their annual accounts, after the year end audits are completed.

Liz Kendall: [\[185292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many step down beds were purchased using the £750 million of funding allocated by his Department for freeing up beds in hospitals during winter 2022-23.

Helen Whately:

The £500 million discharge fund was made available to support reduction in delayed discharges in 2022/23 in two tranches with the first in December 2022 and the second at the end of January. Local areas spending plans are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-discharge-fund-spending-plans>

We are reviewing data shared from local areas on their spend from the discharge fund and this will be included in the evaluation of the impact £500 million discharge fund.

A further £200 million was made available in January 2023 to integrated care boards (ICBs) to buy extra bed-based step-down care. Between 24 January and 31 March, sitrep data indicates ICBs used this funding to purchase over 7,000 step-down beds and over 19,000 packages of care.

The £50 million in capital funding made available in January 2023 was provided to expand hospital discharge lounges and ambulance hubs and not to purchase additional step-down beds.

Liz Kendall: [\[185293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients were readmitted to an inpatient setting from a step down bed procured through the £750 million allocated by his Department for freeing up hospital beds in winter 2022-23.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not collected centrally.

Liz Kendall: [\[185294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated to speed up delayed discharges in the 2023-24 financial year; and where those funds have been derived from.

Helen Whately:

The Department is distributing £600 million in 2023/24 through the Better Care Fund (BCF) to reduce discharge delays, freeing up National Health Service beds for those that need them. This is being split between local authorities and integrated care boards (ICBs) with each receiving £300 million. This is new money announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement as part of a £2.8 billion funding package for social care and discharge.

Local areas can also decide to spend a proportion of other BCF funding on discharge, if this aligns to local priorities and is in line with national conditions set out in the 2023 to 2025 BCF policy framework. The BCF and NHS minimum contribution for 2023/24 is approximately £6.9 billion.

Liz Kendall: [\[185295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason statistics on discharge delays are not broken down on a daily and weekly basis for the 2023-24 financial year.

Helen Whately:

NHS England have committed in the urgent and emergency care recovery plan to explore a new metric on delayed discharge, and this will be communicated in due course. There are no plans to change the way statistics on discharge delays are published in the 2023/24 financial year.

■ Housing: Older People

Liz Kendall: [\[185299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the remit will be of the Older People's Taskforce.

Helen Whately:

The inaugural meeting of the Older People's Housing Taskforce took place on Tuesday 16th May 2023 at Grace House in St. John's Wood in London. The press release is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/news/taskforce-to-transform-older-peoples-housing-underway

The taskforce is bringing together experts from across the sector and people with lived experience to make recommendations on how we can provide greater choice, quality, and security of housing for older people.

The panel will meet regularly and focus on overarching themes, including, the needs, preferences and concerns of older people, their families, and their carers, maximising the potential of technology, building design, and regulation to ensure homes are suitable for the future and understanding what needs to happen at the local level to enable progress in increasing the volume and diversity of housing options for older people. The taskforce will run for up to 12 months, producing an independent report to Government when it concludes.

■ Medical Equipment: Energy**Jim Shannon:**[\[185244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the level of NHS electricity rebate for patients with medical equipment.

Helen Whately:

No assessment has been made. Both the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England are supporting the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's review of energy rebate schemes that are currently available for users of medical equipment at home.

In addition, certain specialised services such as home Haemodialysis and home oxygen concentrators, do include the provision of financial support to offset energy costs incurred by patients using medical equipment at home.

The Government's cost of living support package further delivers over £94 billion worth of support over 2022/23 and 2023/24 to help households and individuals with the rising cost of living.

■ Memory Clinics**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[185763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS memory services provide ongoing support to patients after a dementia diagnosis.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[\[185724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of children and adolescent mental health services appointments.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to increasing investment into National Health Service mental health services by at least £2.3 billion a year by March 2024. Part of this increased investment will enable an additional 345,000 children and young people to be able to access NHS funded mental health support, including through appointments with children and adolescent mental health services by March 2024.

To support this, our aim is to grow the mental health workforce by an additional 27,000 staff by March 2024. December 2022 figures show an increase of over 8,900, full-time equivalent staff in the mental health workforce compared to December 2021 and over 20,700 more compared to December 2010.

We are making good progress on expanding access to mental health care for children and young people year on year. 689,621 children and young people in England aged under 18 years old were supported with at least one contact in the year up to July 2022 compared to 618,537 in the year up to July 2021.

■ Mental Health Services: Rural Areas

Sir John Hayes:

[\[185877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the specific requirements of people living in rural areas who seek mental health support.

Maria Caulfield:

We are working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to understand the impacts of our mental health policies for people that live in rural areas.

Integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for decisions about the provision of services in their area and on how funding allocations should be used to meet the needs of people within their specific ICB region. There are adjustments made in the ICB allocations formula to account for how the costs of providing health care may vary between different types of rural and urban areas.

We are taking steps to increase access to mental health services, including remotely both digitally and over the telephone, which can be helpful for people in rural settings. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to investing an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health services, including through ICB baseline funding.

■ Mental Health Services: Young People

Sir John Hayes:

[\[185869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support mental health services for young people in Lincolnshire.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan commits an additional £2.3 billion a year for the expansion and transformation of mental health services in England, including Lincolnshire, by March 2024 so that an additional two million people can get the National Health Service-funded mental health support that they need.

We continue to deliver Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges across England. Lincolnshire currently has seven such teams, with another one due to be created by January 2024. These teams deliver interventions directly to children with mild to moderate mental health needs, such as anxiety, and they also provide advice to school staff and act as a link with local children and young people's mental health services.

■ Ophthalmology: Health Services

Bob Blackman:

[\[185921\]](#)

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 introducing a national eye health strategy on economic productivity.

Neil O'Brien:

We recognise the economic impact of sight loss, and this is why we continue to take action to improve the prevention, detection and treatment of sight threatening conditions. Furthermore, the National Institute for Health and Care Research has invested over £100 million over the last five years to support research into diagnosis, prevention and treatment of eye conditions.

NHS England's transformation programme is also considering how eye care services should be commissioned to ensure future sustainability, taking into account local commissioning structures.

■ Paramedical Staff: Training

Feryal Clark:

[\[184233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of paramedics working in primary care undertaking cervical screening sample taker training.

Neil O'Brien:

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 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-cervical-sample-taker-training>

■ Radiology: Paediatrics

Alex Cunningham:

[\[185893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take steps to ensure that paediatric interventional radiology service policies are in place for all hospitals that provide paediatric services.

Helen Whately:

The Surgery in Children Clinical Reference Group (CRG) provides clinical leadership and advice to NHS England and the Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Group, including on paediatric imaging and interventional radiology.

The issues linked to the concerns raised about access to interventional radiology are to be presented to the Women and Children's Programme of Care Steering Group on the 28 June 2023, discussed at the Surgery in Children Clinical Reference Group meeting on 14 July and will also be presented to the Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Networks to incorporate into their respective network work programmes during 2023/24.

■ Respite Care: Carers

Liz Kendall:

[\[185298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hours of respite the funding allocated to unpaid carers in the Next Steps to put People at the Heart of Care report will provide.

Helen Whately:

No assessment has been made. In 2023/24, £327 million of Better Care Fund funding has been earmarked to provide short breaks and respite services for carers, as well as additional advice and support.

■ Restraint Techniques: Health Services

Alex Sobel:

[\[185635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of using alternatives to restraint, segregation and seclusion in healthcare settings.

Maria Caulfield:

Under the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018, all mental health unit staff must receive appropriate training in use of force which includes restraint, segregation and seclusion. Statutory guidance on the use of force in mental health settings sets out what this training should cover, including the use of techniques for avoiding or reducing the use of force, for example, preventative approaches, the use of individualised de-escalation techniques, conflict avoidance and resolution, and staff clinical supervision, reflective practice and mentoring.

The Restraint Reduction Network has worked with Health Education England to produce a set of ethical training standards that protect human rights and support the minimisation of restrictive practices. From April 2022, the Care Quality Commission expects services across health and social care to have certified training that complies with the Network's training standards.

The Act also requires mental health units to publish a policy regarding the use of force by staff who work in that unit, setting out the steps the unit is taking to reduce and minimise the use of force. Mental health units must record and publish use of force statistics provide information for patients about their rights in relation to the use of force by staff.

■ Social Services: Finance

Liz Kendall: [\[185296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the unallocated funding in the Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care report will be used for; and when that funding will allocated.

Helen Whately:

Up to £600 million of funding announced in the People at the Heart of Care white paper has not yet been allocated. The Government is considering how best to use this funding, including further investment in workforce and will target this remaining funding on measures that will have the most impact.

The recently published 'Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care' set out more detail on the Government's plans for reform over the next two years, building on the £100 million already invested in the past year.

Liz Kendall: [\[185297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding was allocated to support the social care workforce in the People at the Heart of Care White Paper in December 2021 compared to the Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care report in March 2023.

Helen Whately:

In the People at the Heart of Care white paper, the Government allocated at least £500 million to transform the way we support and develop the workforce. In Next

Steps to put People at the Heart of Care, we set out plans to invest £250 million in the workforce over the next two years.

The Government is also considering how best to use an additional £600 million of funding, including further investment in the workforce, and we will target this remaining funding on measures that will have the most impact.

HOME OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Richard Drax:

[\[184983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what role she plans that voluntary bodies and charities will play in regard to the migrant barge in Portland Port; and what funding she plans to provide to those bodies and charities.

Robert Jenrick:

We are working with local authorities and the voluntary sector in regular Multi Agency Forum (MAF) meetings to identify potential opportunities.

■ Asylum: Portland Port

Richard Drax:

[\[184980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who will provide what medical facilities for the migrants on the barge in Portland Port; and who will be responsible overall for their health.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office expect to provide medical services on site, with detailed planning ongoing. All asylum seekers in the UK may contact Migrant Help 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if they need help, advice, or guidance, that includes raising issues relating to safeguarding.

Richard Drax:

[\[184981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the dispersal arrangements are for the migrants on the barge in Portland Port when their time on the vessel comes to an end; where they will then be housed; and what responsibilities Dorset Council will have for them.

Robert Jenrick:

The accommodation have been contracted for 18 months. We are assessing how long asylum seekers will be accommodated before being moved further through the accommodation system.

Richard Drax:

[\[184982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding will be provided to statutory bodies that have responsibilities for the planned migrants on the barge in

Portland Port in addition to what has already been promised to Dorset Council and the police.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office has committed to providing funding to help minimise the impact on the local community and local services. Discussions regarding the specific funding arrangements for statutory bodies are ongoing.

■ **Cosmetics: Animal Experiments**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[185505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of the High Court ruling on the licensing of animal testing for cosmetic ingredients on 5 May 2023.

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>

Cat Smith: [\[185607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons her Department allows licenses for animal testing of cosmetic ingredients to be issued in certain circumstances.

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>.

■ **Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre**

Sir Alan Campbell: [\[185206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has for the future management of Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre when the current contract ends.

Robert Jenrick:

Derwentside IRC is in the latter stages of the formal procurement process.

[Heathrow and Derwentside Immigration Removal Centres Procurement - Find a Tender \(find-tender.service.gov.uk\)](#) ;

[Heathrow and Derwentside IRCs Procurement - Contracts Finder.](#)

■ Fraud

Seema Malhotra: [\[185258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the Fraud strategy did not include proposals to combat procurement or payroll fraud.

Seema Malhotra: [\[185259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the readiness of UK companies which were subject to fraud to report the incident to the police.

Tom Tugendhat:

The Home Office is responsible for fraud against individuals and businesses and fraud against the public purse is the responsibility of the Public Sector Fraud Authority.

The Fraud Strategy sets out a comprehensive whole system approach to make sure fraudsters cannot target the British public and our businesses. We will increase law enforcement investigative capacity to tackle all fraud, including procurement and payroll fraud.

■ National Fraud Intelligence Bureau

Damien Moore: [\[185414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau on dealing with cases referred to it by Action Fraud.

Damien Moore: [\[185415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of mandating that the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau must assess and action all legitimate cases referred to it by Action Fraud.

Tom Tugendhat:

Reports submitted to Action Fraud are considered by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB).

The NFIB consider a number of factors, including whether there are any linked reports and the information provided about the suspects. Where there is sufficient evidence then the report will be analysed by a crime reviewer and sent to the appropriate police force to be considered for investigation.

We are replacing the Action Fraud service to create a more efficient new system that will provide better intelligence to forces. Improvements include:

- Increasing the number of staff in the call centre
- Expanding the reach of victim care services, including for the most vulnerable
- Sending cases to forces faster and better progress updates on cases

These improvements, which have been tested across the victim support landscape, law enforcement agencies, and other relevant bodies, will improve the support services and reporting tools for victims, provide greater intelligence and insight to policing for investigations, and allow for greater proactive work to prevent and disrupt fraudsters at scale.

■ Refugees: Children

Tim Loughton:

[\[185180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Government plans to respond to the Children's Commissioner's letter of 5 April 2023 requesting information on unaccompanied child refugees who have been accommodated in hotels by her Department since July 2021.

Robert Jenrick:

Home Office officials continue to work collaboratively with the Children's Commissioner's Office in response to this request for information. We have introduced weekly meetings to provide the Children's Commissioner's office with progress updates directly and I have personally met with the Children's Commissioner twice. We will continue to work through the required legislative and legal processes to ensure this request is managed in the right way which is essential when answering a request of this sensitivity and size.

■ Refugees: York

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment has she made of the impact of moving refugees (a) based in York and (b) based in York with children attending York schools from their settled location on their social and emotional wellbeing.

Robert Jenrick:

I can confirm that the Home Office currently does not have any Afghan bridging hotels in York.

■ Visas: Sudan

Rachael Maskell:

[\[185323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of visa applicants from Sudan whose passports and other travel documents are held in the visa application centre in Khartoum have been contacted by her Department.

Robert Jenrick:

UK Visas and Immigration have contacted all customers who have been issued or refused visa applications in our Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Khartoum and offered them a letter confirming that their passport is securely stored and attaching a digital copy of their passport.

Rachael Maskell:[\[185324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from Sudan who had applied for a visa were awaiting a decision on 16 May 2023; and how many of those have submitted their passports to her Department.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office is committed to publishing transparency data on applications by nationality as part of the immigration quarterly statistics release, which is available on the GOV.UK website.

UK Visas and Immigration are in the process of trying to contact customers who have been issued or refused visa applications in our Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Khartoum and offering them a letter confirming that their passport is securely stored and attaching a digital copy of their passport.

■ Visas: Ukraine**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[185901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 April 2023 to Question 182300 on Visas: Ukraine, whether her Department is taking steps to undertake an online survey with higher reliable data quality.

Robert Jenrick:

There are no plans to undertake a further online survey with this group.

The latest published statistics on the Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data are available here: [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

JUSTICE**■ Criminal Proceedings: Stockport****Navendu Mishra:**[\[185461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the size of the backlog of criminal court cases in Stockport constituency.

Mike Freer:

The number of outstanding cases at the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court are routinely published as part of the National Statistics release Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly.

The latest published data is available to December 2022 and can be found at the following link: [Criminal court statistics quarterly: October to December 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2022).

For the Crown Court, figures are published specifically for the North West of England. For magistrates' courts, the Greater Manchester Local Justice Area is the closest match available.

The published data for the Crown Court are found here: [Crown Court cases received, disposed and outstanding tool](#), and the published data for the magistrates' court are found here: [Magistrates' courts cases received, disposed and outstanding tool](#).

■ Homicide: Trials

Ellie Reeves: [\[185973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many murder trials have been delayed since 2010.

Mike Freer:

We have interpreted your request as being for ineffective trials, which is where the trial does not commence on the due date and requires rescheduling. This could be due to a variety of reasons, such as the absence of a defendant or a witness or adjournment requests from either the prosecution or defence.

Ineffective trial volumes for murder offences at the Crown Court from 2014 to 2022 can be found in the attached table. Information on ineffective trials broken down by offence are not available prior to 2014.

The number of ineffective trial volumes for murder offences significantly increased in 2022, this was primarily due to the Criminal Bar Association action between April and September 2022.

Attachments:

1. Volume of ineffective trials at the Crown Court [2023-05-24 PQ 185973 table.xlsx]

■ Journalism: Russia

Drew Hendry: [\[185968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of giving (a) legal and (b) financial support for journalists who are the subject of strategic litigation against public participation lawsuits undertaken by (i) businesses and (ii) individuals linked to the Russian state.

Mike Freer:

The Government remains determined to take robust action to tackle strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPPs) as soon as parliamentary time allows. We are committed to introducing targeted legislation to stop anyone – linked to the Russian state or otherwise - from abusing our legal system and using improper means to intimidate those acting in the public interest.

Reforms will include a statutory definition of SLAPPs, an early dismissal mechanism, and costs protection for SLAPPs cases. Our intention is that journalists subject to SLAPPs in future will benefit from costs protection (determined by the court), which will lessen legal and financial risks associated with lengthy proceedings.

■ Prisons: Pepper Spray

Janet Daby: [\[185397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in which prisons his Department plans to introduce PAVA incapacitant spray.

Janet Daby: [\[185399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisons have been equipped with PAVA incapacitant spray.

Damian Hinds:

The planned roll-out of PAVA to the public sector estate has been completed and is available to staff in all adult male prisons. Privately managed prisons holding adult males have the option to roll out PAVA to their staff.

There are 92 prisons that have been equipped with PAVA.

Janet Daby: [\[185398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to obligate prisons to complete a readiness assessment prior to the introduction of PAVA incapacitant spray.

Damian Hinds:

The current guidance for PAVA, which will go on to form part of the wider Use of Force policy framework in due course, includes the requirement for all prisons to complete a readiness assessment prior to commencing rollout activity. This is a one-off activity, intended to help support a prison prepare for their introduction of PAVA.

Janet Daby: [\[185401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, under what circumstances HM Prison and Probation Service is authorised to withdraw the use of PAVA incapacitant spray from prisons.

Damian Hinds:

PAVA is intended to protect staff and prisoners in very serious assaults. Safe implementation of PAVA use is accompanied by clear and explicit guidance ensuring staff are confident as to when PAVA spray should be used. We are closely monitoring the use across all prisons where it is available.

There are no defined circumstances where we would withdraw the use of PAVA from prisons, but have, and will continue to act and give support to prisons where we see an increase in use or determine that it is being used outside policy. A full evaluation of the roll out of PAVA is currently being undertaken to consider impacts.

Janet Daby:

[\[185407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of potential trends in the use of PAVA incapacitant spray on (a) Black, (b) Muslim and (c) young adult prisoners.

Damian Hinds:

We have been conducting research on Use of Force, attending the local Use of Force committee meetings and gathering best practice, including in the data considered at the committee, ways of running the meeting, and its membership. The research included speaking to prisoners and staff who have experienced force. This will be available to use in Autumn 2023.

The department is incorporating data on Use of Force into its prisons equalities monitoring tool to be released to front-line D&I leads. This tool is for internal operational monitoring and policy development. This will allow D&I leads to directly compare across ethnic groups in Use of Force incidence within prisons.

We have established a Use of Force Disproportionality working group, which brings together Diversity and Inclusion, the HMPPS Race Action Programme and Use of Force team, that will collect and share good practice around reducing disproportionality and develop further guidance on how to take action where necessary.

Janet Daby:

[\[185409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to centrally collect data on the ethnicity of prison officers deploying PAVA incapacitant spray on prisoners.

Damian Hinds:

There are no plans to centrally collect data on the ethnicity of prison officers deploying PAVA.

PAVA is only used as a last resort by specially trained prison officers. Prisons monitor its use carefully, including for any disparities in the way it is deployed.

Janet Daby:

[\[185410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 21 November 2022 to Question HL3309 on Prisons: Rehabilitation, whether HM Prison and Probation Service has introduced additional measures to build relationships between prison officers and prisoners with protected characteristics in prisons equipped with PAVA incapacitant spray.

Damian Hinds:

We are determined to stamp out discrimination wherever it is found and HMPPS has committed to changing its culture for the better and relationships between staff and prisoners. Our approach includes refreshing our mental health support and education services, reviewing the impact of incidents where force is used, developing a nationwide mentoring programme, and creating targeted recruitment campaigns to ensure our staff fully reflect the communities they serve. Prisons have responsibility

to analyse information on who PAVA is used on, and the staff who use it, with appropriate actions taken to challenge disproportionality identified in relation to any of the protected characteristics.

We will continue working closely with third sector partners, trade unions and our staff networks, who represent colleagues with protected characteristics, to continue building relationships between staff and people in prison.

■ Prisons: Restraint Techniques

Janet Daby:

[\[185405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what criteria his Department uses to assess whether a prison has (a) demonstrated that their monitoring of potential disproportionality in the use of force is effective, (b) understood potential trends in the use of force and (c) demonstrated how they will address potential disproportionalities in the use of force through their action plan.

Damian Hinds:

Prisons are expected to have a diverse and empowered committee, with laypersons invited to express the views of prisoners. In some prisons, prisoners are invited to form part of the committee. We have provided clear guidance around Use of Force governance through the Good Governance Toolkit. The toolkit supports sites with their assurance, staff development and prisoner rehabilitation. It provides signposting for concerns relating to force and establishes a framework of positive practice and improvement through assurance. The toolkit highlights the input required for the assurance processes, such as the data collation, analysis and presentation at the UoF Committee and to ensure an explain or reform response is made. This was developed in consultation with the HMPPS Race Action Programme and both internal and external stakeholders and is based around the Procedural Justice principles.

We have put in place a process around the assurance visits that the central team conduct, with standardised measures, including looking at data and disproportionality. They also look at the diversity of the local committee. Once a visit is completed, the report is shared with the prison and depending on the level of concern, follow up visits arranged. When we devised the internal scoring and weighting, we placed a high weighting on identifying disproportionality, and also on the actions taken. If prisons are not doing either of those, it would be reported back, and support given to develop the prisons own processes. If their committee is not meeting the Lammy recommendation then the team will suggest ways to do so, such as prisoner representation or external third sector organisations. We also engage at regional level with group safety leads, and equality leads to support them and also take referrals to ensure support is given.

We have established a Use of Force Disproportionality working group, which brings together Diversity and Inclusion, the HMPPS Race Action Programme and Use of Force team, that will collect and share good practice around reducing

disproportionality and develop further guidance on how to take action where necessary.

Janet Daby: [\[185406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to commitments given by his Department to the Equality and Human Rights Commission on preventing the unlawful use of PAVA spray in prisons in October 2020, when he plans to publish national use of force statistics.

Damian Hinds:

The department continues to work towards publication of national use of force statistics. We have improved the recording of use force incidents, using a digital platform that collects more information on who we are using force on. In order to publish the data, we must ensure it meets minimum standards and be robust for the purpose of its intended use and scrutiny. This is be considered alongside other priorities for data publication.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Bill Esterson: [\[185997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made with Cabinet colleagues of the impact of the time taken for planning consent to be agreed on introducing depot charging facilities at logistics sites.

Rachel Maclean:

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that as part of promoting sustainable transport development should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Alyn Smith: [\[185400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will extend the Homes for Ukraine scheme beyond its current timescales.

Felicity Buchan:

We remain steadfast in our support for Ukraine, the Ukrainians now living in the UK and are working closely with local authorities and the devolved administrations across the UK supporting them. We continue to keep the scheme under review, and will set out updates in the usual way.

■ Land Use: Merseyside

Conor McGinn:

[\[185823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on development on (a) greenbelt and (b) brownfield sites in St Helens and Merseyside.

Rachel Maclean:

Details of the Government's planning policy are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, available on gov.uk.

■ Planning Permission: Appeals

Gareth Thomas:

[\[184876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of average appeal handling times for appeals considered by the Planning Inspectorate; what steps he plans to take to reduce appeal handling times; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

I refer the Hon Member to the monthly statistics published [here](#). The Secretary of State has also recently written to a number of authorities regarding planning performance. Copies of these letters can be found on gov.uk.

■ Rented Housing

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[185740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of clause five of the Renters (Reform) Bill on (a) trends in the level of rent, (b) the difference between changes in market rents and changes in the Consumer Prices Index and (c) the supply of rental properties.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[185741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether it is his policy that the power under Clause 5(7) of the Renters (Reform) Bill will only be used to apply to assured tenancies which are not social housing where the rent of the assured tenancy does not exceed the rent of an equivalent property let in the social housing sector.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[185742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason the Renters (Reform) Bill contains no provisions for renters of mobile homes; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Further to the answer given to Question UIN [185473](#) on 22 May 2023, updated dwelling stock estimates published today continue to show that supply within the private rented sector is roughly stable.

We are continuing to monitor the private rented sector, through sources such as the English Housing Survey and ONS Rental Price Index.

The Renters (Reform) Bill exempts Private Registered Providers of Social Housing (PRPSH) offering assured tenancies of social housing from these changes. These are defined as a 'relevant low-cost tenancy'. The power allows the Secretary of State to specify a description of other assured tenancies that meet the definition of 'relevant low-cost tenancy'.

The Bill does not apply to those whose accommodation does not meet the definition of a 'dwelling' as defined in housing legislation, such as those who live in caravans. We continue to take a series of measures across the park homes sector and I am happy to discuss our plans further with the Hon member at his convenience.

■ **Shorthold Tenancies**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[185727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Renters (Reform Bill) on assured shorthold tenancies.

Rachel Maclean:

The Renters (Reform) Bill had its First Reading in the House of Commons on 17 May. I refer my Rt. Hon. Friend 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.

■ **Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance**

Andy Slaughter:

[\[185570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the article by Dr Nick Thoburn of the University of Manchester entitled Razing the neighbourhood: consequences and alternatives to council estate demolition, published in April 2023, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of that report's recommendations on repair, refurbishment and retrofit of existing social housing.

Rachel Maclean:

Further to the measures under debate in the Social Housing Regulation Bill, approaches to regeneration should have the support of a majority of residents. Residents and the wider community should have the opportunity to have a say on the choices and options, master-planning and design.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY**■ Artificial Intelligence: Research****Chi Onwurah:**[\[185547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps she is taking to support research into and the development of large language models for artificial intelligence systems.

Paul Scully:

On 24 April, the Prime Minister and the Science, Innovation and Technology Secretary announced £100 million in initial start-up funding for a Taskforce responsible for accelerating the UK's capability in rapidly-emerging types of artificial intelligence.

The Foundation Model Taskforce, modelled on the success of the COVID-19 Vaccine Taskforce, will develop the safe and reliable use of this pivotal artificial intelligence (AI) across the economy, and ensure the UK is globally competitive in this strategic technology.

With AI set to contribute billions of pounds to UK GDP, the work of the Taskforce will help deliver on the Prime Minister's priorities to grow our economy, whilst generating better outcomes for people across the country through better public services.

The Taskforce will bring together government and industry experts and report directly to the Science, Innovation and Technology Secretary and to the Prime Minister. The funding will be invested by the Taskforce in key opportunities to support the development of models and increase the UK's capabilities in this type of AI, which has impacts across the economy.

The Taskforce will develop several specific use cases, likely to be focused on public service delivery (including healthcare) and national security.

It will ensure the UK's capability in this rapidly developing area is built with safety and reliability at its core, in line with the approach set out in the AI Regulation White Paper published in March.

■ Telecommunications: Rural Areas**Sara Britcliffe:**[\[185625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what recent assessment the Government has made of the adequacy of the current legislative framework governing the installation of telecommunications infrastructure in residential areas.

Sir John Whittingdale:

During the adjournment debate on Installation of Telecommunications Infrastructure on 15 March, the Minister for Data and Digital Infrastructure reaffirmed to the House the Government's commitment to providing the necessary digital infrastructure across the UK to ensure that people and businesses have the connectivity they need. At the

same time, we are mindful that communities have concerns about new infrastructure. We want to ensure that those concerns are heard and considered, and that we get the balance right. Reliable, fast digital connectivity is vital for the prosperity of this country, local businesses and families.

The Government has made a number of legislative interventions to support the deployment of fixed and wireless connectivity, including amendments to the Electronic Communications Code through the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022, reforms to planning legislation and mandating gigabit connectivity to all new build developments. The Government therefore does not intend to revisit the legislation relating to telecommunications infrastructure deployment at this time. The current legal framework recognises the impact of network deployment on communities and the environment, and we believe that it strikes the right balance between promoting efficient deployment and taking into account the impacts on communities.

In order to assess the effectiveness of legislation in this area, monitoring of the rollout of digital infrastructure is in place, and the Government is committed to understanding the impact of the legislative framework going forwards. For example, reports and updates published by Ofcom, Building Digital UK (BDUK) and ThinkBroadband all allow the Government to measure the success of Government interventions to increase connectivity.

The Government also undertakes regular engagement with all parties with an interest in this sector. In particular the Government has supported the creation of, and continues to attend meetings of, the National Connectivity Alliance. The Alliance is an independent body, led by a steering group comprising an equal number of operators and landowner representatives, and co-ordinates working groups to examine and make recommendations on a wide range of issues. This work provides an invaluable insight for the Government to understand how its legislative interventions are received on the ground.

Lastly, Ofcom is able to take enforcement action in respect of breaches of the restrictions and conditions on operators if it has reasonable grounds to believe that they are failing to comply with those requirements. Local Planning Authorities should inform Ofcom of any situations where they believe operators are not complying with their statutory duties.

SCOTLAND

■ **Forced Marriage: Children**

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[185567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will have discussions with the Scottish Government on the UK's obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals to ban child marriage by 2030.

Mr Alister Jack:

I am pleased that the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act recently came into force in England and Wales, and I note the important work and contribution from the Member for Mid Derbyshire. As a devolved matter, it is for the Scottish Government to decide on the age of marriage. Nonetheless, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice wrote to the then Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government last December, encouraging the Scottish Government to follow the UK Government's lead. I hope the Scottish Government will take action on this soon, in order to meet our targets under the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

TRANSPORT■ **A316: Speed Limits****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[\[186217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the A316 from Junction 1 of the M3 to the Whitton Road roundabout has speed limits of 40mph and 50mph.

Mr Richard Holden:

The M3 junction 1 is at the edge of the Greater London Authority boundary. The responsibility for managing London's road network is shared between Transport for London (TfL) and the London boroughs.

Local authorities have the power to set speed limits on their roads. They have the local knowledge making them the best placed to do so.

■ **Airspace****Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[185204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to maximise the benefits of the CAP1616 process in delivering airspace modernisation; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The airspace modernisation programme is a critical national infrastructure project that aims to deliver quicker, quieter and cleaner journeys for the benefit of those who use and are affected by UK airspace. Modernisation is long overdue and is critical to ensure that UK airspace is fit for purpose in the future.

All proposals to alter flightpath arrangements must follow the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) airspace change process (CAP1616). The CAA has recently consulted on CAP1616 seeking views on various options designed to simplify its structure, make the process clearer and easier to understand, and ensure it can be proportionate and tailored to each airspace change proposal. The consultation ended on 19 March 2023 with the updates to CAP1616 expected to be in place by the end of this year.

The outputs of this consultation will allow the CAA to unlock the full benefits of the CAP1616 process and it will make a written statement on its website on this in due course.

■ Bus Services: Concessions

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[185690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing bus fares for students between the ages of 16 and 19.

Mr Richard Holden:

In England, the majority of bus services outside London operate on a commercial basis, and decisions about offering reduced or discounted fares for commercial bus services are predominantly for operators to take. Many bus operators currently offer discounted travel cards for younger people. Our most recent set of statistics shows that operators in 70 out of 84 travel concession authority areas in England, outside London, offered some form of discounted travel for young people.

Policy for home to school transport sits with the Department for Education. However, the statutory responsibility for transport to education and training for those aged 16 to 19 rests with local authorities. This enables them to make reasonable decisions based on the needs of their population, the local transport infrastructure and the resources they have available

The Government introduced the £2 fare cap on 1 January to help passengers save on their regular travel costs and to help increase patronage on buses. This scheme was due to end on 30 June, however on 17 May we announced a further investment of up to £200 million to extend the current £2 bus fare cap in place on single tickets 1 July until 31 October. This will be followed by a longer term fare cap of £2.50 from 1 November 2023 to 31 November 2024

We are also investing in the bus sector to deliver the ambitions of the National Bus Strategy to make bus services more reliable and cheaper. We have allocated over £1 billion of funding for English Local Transport Authorities outside London to support the delivery of Bus Service Improvement Plans, some of which include the introduction of measures to reduce bus fares for young people. For example, the North East have recently introduced a £1 fare for single bus journeys for the under 22s.

■ Bus Services: Disability

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[186094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason larger local transport authorities have greater access to funding for disabled bus passes compared to smaller local transport authorities.

Mr Richard Holden:

Funding for free concessionary pass holders is provided to Local Authorities by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Settlement Funding

Assessment which is allocated by His Majesty's Treasury through a formula that supports a wide range of activities to ensure that each travel concession authority receives the funding that they need.

The funding is not ringfenced, which enables local authorities to make spending decisions that more closely match local needs and circumstances.

■ Cars: Petrol

Damien Moore:

[\[185346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of a ban on the sale of petrol cars on (a) carbon emissions and (b) levels of pollution in the UK.

Jesse Norman:

As a result of the significant reductions to carbon emissions from energy generation, transport is now the highest carbon emitting sector; cars accounted for more than 50% of emissions in 2019. Ending the sale of internal combustion engines, alongside setting intermediary zero-emissions vehicles sales targets leading up to 2035, is expected to reduce this by roughly 60% by 2035 and 98% by 2050, compared to 2019 levels. Vehicle emissions are also among the two largest controllable sectors for air pollution. Ending internal combustion engine sales will remove tailpipe air pollution produced by cars and vans, including some of the most harmful emissions such as PM2.5 and NOx.

Damien Moore:

[\[185350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential economic impact of a ban on the sale of petrol cars on the UK economy.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department has not published an assessment of the economic impacts of a ban on the sale of petrol cars in the UK. However, the Department has published an assessment of the impacts of the first phase of the ZEV mandate, which mandates that 80% of new car and 70% of new van sales must be zero emission by 2030. This includes an assessment of the policy's direct economic impacts, including social costs and benefits, on employment related to the manufacture of vehicles and development of the charging infrastructure network, and on drivers' disposable incomes.

On 30 March 2023, the Department published a consultation on our final proposals for a zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate and regulation of CO2 emissions for new cars and vans in the UK from January 2024. The accompanying consultation-stage cost benefit analysis sets out the economic impacts of the proposed regulations.

Damien Moore:

[\[185351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic impact of ban on the sale of petrol cars on UK households (a) in the

lowest decile for mean household wealth (b) at the mean household wealth and (c) in the highest decile for household wealth.

Mr Richard Holden:

The impact assessment for the ZEV mandate demonstrated that, over time, running cost savings of electric vehicles outweigh capital costs over a reasonable ownership period. Just as many households don't buy new petrol cars today, there is no expectation that anyone will be forced to buy a new ZEV car, with the expectation that many consumers, as now, will prefer to buy second-hand.

■ **Department for Transport: Equal Pay**

Imran Hussain:

[\[185682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

Jesse Norman:

The Department 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 the Department is able to publish a report for 2023/2024.

■ **High Speed 2 Line**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[185926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the next high speed two six-monthly report to Parliament will be published.

Huw Merriman:

The last six monthly report on HS2 to Parliament was published in October 2022.

April 2023 would have marked the six month point from the previous edition, but this was postponed due to external factors including recess, the pre-local election period and the King's coronation. We remain committed to providing timely and transparent updates to Parliament and we aim to publish the next edition shortly.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[185939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average train journey time from (a) Glasgow to London and (b) Bangor to London (i) is and (ii) will be following the completion of HS2.

Huw Merriman:

HS2 services will provide needed additional capacity on the West Coast Mainline with increased reliability and significantly faster journey times.

Journey times between Glasgow and London will fall from the current 4 hours 30 minutes to an estimated 3 hours 48 minutes with the completion of HS2. Bangor to London is currently 3 hours 20 minutes. Faster journeys could be available when HS2 services begin via Crewe if passengers were willing to change trains. For example, the current journey time from Bangor to Crewe is 1 hour 33 minutes, with Crewe to London an estimated 55 minutes when HS2 is operational. The journey times will be dependent on the final timetable when HS2 services become operational.

No decisions have been made on the timetable that will operate when HS2 services begin. These decisions will be made nearer the start of services and will be subject to public consultation.

■ Roundabouts: Construction

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[186122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guidance his Department has published on the construction of soft roundabouts on public highways.

Mr Richard Holden:

Mini-roundabouts are a prescribed traffic sign within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016; it is for local authorities to ensure any mini-roundabouts placed are compliant with legislation.

The Department for Transport publishes and regularly updates the Traffic Signs Manual, which contains guidance for traffic authorities on the use of traffic signs and road markings. Guidance on mini-roundabouts can be found in Chapter 5 of the Traffic Signs Manual on GOV.UK:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/773421/traffic-signs-manual-chapter-05.pdf

■ Shipping: Inspections

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[185942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to shorten the time taken by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to undertake surveys and safety inspections on fishing vessels.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) monitor the expiry dates for all small fishing vessel certificates. The MCA allows owners of small fishing vessels to book their renewal inspection up to 6 months before their certificate expires and still retain the anniversary date of the certificate.

The MCA send the owner/operator a reminder letter five months prior to their certificate expiring to prompt and encourage them to book an inspection well in advance of their certificate expiry date and to ensure there is no lapse in validity of the certificate that would affect their ability to commercially fish.

The MCA includes links to guidance within the reminder letter on how to prepare for your survey, reducing the length of time to complete the survey process.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Wendy Chamberlain:

[185860]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the percentage changes in alcohol revenue were broken down by alcohol category for each financial year between 2013-14 to 2022-23.

Gareth Davies:

The Alcohol [Bulletin](#) tables show receipts by alcohol category between the financial years 2013-14 and 2021-22.

Data relating to the 2022-23 financial year has yet to be published, but will be released at the end of May 2023, in the [Alcohol Bulletin](#).

The Alcohol Bulletin can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/alcohol-bulletin>.

■ Railways: Finance

Ben Lake:

[185940]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether (a) Northern Powerhouse Rail, (b) Transpennine Route Upgrade, (c) other rail schemes in the North and Midlands and (d) each element of the Integrated Rail Plan core pipeline are (i) classed as England and Wales projects and (ii) treated as such for the purposes of the Barnett formula.

Ben Lake:

[185941]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cost of each element of the Integrated Rail Plan core pipeline, including (a) Northern Powerhouse Rail, (b) Transpennine Route Upgrade and (c) other rail schemes in the North and Midlands.

John Glen:

The Integrated Rail Plan (November 2021) set out a provisional cost estimate of £22.6 billion (2019 prices) for the core Northern Powerhouse Rail network, including an expanded Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU).

The IRP also set out cost estimates for the rest of the its core pipeline, which includes upgrades to both the Midland and East Coast Main Lines, and for other rail schemes in the North and Midlands.

Cost estimates for all of the IRP's core pipeline continue to be developed as work on these schemes progress, and updated ranges will be included in their businesses cases as and when they are published.

The UK Government is responsible for heavy rail infrastructure across England and Wales so spends money on this in Wales rather than funding the Welsh Government to do so. This is reflected in the application of the Barnett formula and is consistent with the funding arrangements for other policy areas reserved in Wales.

The Welsh Government are well funded to deliver all of their devolved responsibilities, receiving around 20% more funding per person than equivalent UK Government spending in other parts of the UK.

■ Retail Trade: VAT

Bob Blackman:

[\[185233\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many tax-free sales were made where the goods were delivered straight to an address outside the UK in Great Britain in 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

Goods exported from the UK can be zero rated for VAT purposes provided export conditions are met, although local taxes and duties remain due upon import into the destination country. UK VAT registered exporters are required to account for this in their VAT records and retain evidence to prove the goods have left the UK to support the zero-rating. However, the reporting requirements are such that HMRC does not hold the specific information requested.

■ Revenue and Customs: Complaints

Simon Lightwood:

[\[185455\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the time taken by HMRC s to respond to complaints raised by Members on behalf of their constituents.

Victoria Atkins:

The Cabinet Office asks all government departments to reply to 80 per cent of Ministerial correspondence within 20 working days.

However, HMRC aims to reply to 80 per cent of Ministerial correspondence within 15 working days.

The Cabinet Office also publishes data on departmental performance in dealing with correspondence from MPs and peers on an annual basis.

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

■ Sanctions

James Murray:

[\[185961\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC has made payments (a) directly or (b) indirectly for the benefit of any individuals who were a designated person for the purposes of financial sanctions regulations in each of the last 10 years.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC withholds repayments to designated persons and entities that are owned or controlled by those subject to financial sanctions that have a UK tax footprint.

HMRC has reviewed its position following the changes in sanctions legislation following the UK leaving the EU and is confident that no persons or entities on the UK sanctions list has received payment from HMRC, except where provided for by an appropriate licence in accordance with UK sanctions policy.

HMRC has robust processes in place to identify designated persons and entities owned or controlled by designated persons, and banking controls put in place by HMRC's banks also provide a further level of protection.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES■ **Equality Hub: Staff****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[185705\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of the Equality Hub restructure on (a) programmes of work and (b) staff workloads.

Maria Caulfield:

The Equality Hub is delivering efficiencies whilst also ensuring it has the necessary resources to deliver its important work. As part of the restructure we looked at what activity can be stopped, paused or delayed and we agreed this, and future priorities, with Ministers. The resources that we have enable us to deliver those priorities whilst ensuring staff workloads are appropriate.

■ **STEM Returners Programme****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[185707\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how much funding the Government has allocated to the STEM returners programme.

Maria Caulfield:

We've made great progress in increasing the number of girls studying STEM subjects but we need to do more to get women into STEM jobs. To support this, we have launched a new STEM returners programme to refresh and grow the skills of people who have taken career breaks to care for others. Women Returners has been awarded £150,000 to support parents and carers back into the workplace through sector-specific refresh training and work opportunities. The first cohort of returners began training this May.

■ Women and Equalities: Artificial Intelligence

David Linden:

[185339]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the Government Equalities Office uses automated decision making.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government's Roadmap to a Digital Future includes digital transformation in Government by "automating manual processes" in order to realise efficiency opportunities for Government and deliver value for the taxpayer.

Automated decision making in Government is compliant with provisions in GDPR and the Data Protection Act, which includes the right for a data subject to request "a new decision that is not based solely on automated processing".

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roadmap-for-digital-and-data-2022-to-2025>

■ Women and Equalities: Equal Pay

Imran Hussain:

[185671]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, 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.

Maria Caulfield:

Although ethnicity pay gap reporting is voluntary, we are currently considering the best way to approach ethnicity pay gap reporting in the Civil Service. The Equality Hub is a business unit of the Cabinet Office and the pay data of their staff will be incorporated into any wider Cabinet Office figures, as is the case for gender pay gap reporting.

We are 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.

More generally the Civil Service is undertaking extensive work both centrally and within departments to promote diversity across its workplaces, including ethnicity.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Maintenance****Wendy Chamberlain:****[185646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Deduction from Earnings Orders have been issued by the Child Maintenance Service to the Ministry of Defence's Defence Business Services in each financial year from 2013-14 to 2022-23.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The Department publishes quarterly Child Maintenance Service (CMS) statistics, with the latest statistics available to the end of December 2022 [here](#).

The quarterly number of Deduction Orders set up and in process can be found in Table 7.1: Enforcement Actions of the [National Tables](#).

Quarterly statistics showing the method of payment for CMS Paying Parents are available on Stat-Xplore [here](#).

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found [here](#).

■ Disability: Incontinence**Andrew Selous:****[185213]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many men in England are classified as disabled due to incontinence.

Tom Pursglove:

I can confirm that the department does not hold the information requested. The department does not hold health records for each individual in England. In relation to disability benefits, the department does not classify or register disabilities or hold a disability register. The information held for disability benefit claimants is usually based on the primary disabling condition and claimants may often have multiple disabling conditions upon which the decision is based.

■ Employment: Disability**Seema Malhotra:****[185262]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment his Department has made of the quality of outcomes from the Disability Confident employment scheme.

Tom Pursglove:

In 2021, we began a review of the Disability Confident scheme which was announced in the National Disability Strategy (NDS). The review was exploring ways the scheme could be strengthened, including the quality of outcomes for disabled people.

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.

■ Jobcentres: Disability

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[185497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to provide £5 million of funding to a fund to equip all Jobcentre Plus's with specialist assistive technology.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[185498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to take steps to help disabled people to use computers in jobcentres to look for work.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[185499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Sense report entitled Research on the employment support available to people with complex disabilities, if he will work with (a) disabled people and (b) disability charities to assess the adequacy of assistive technology in jobcentres.

Guy Opperman:

I would refer to the answer already given at [PQ 181920](#) in relation to the support provided to customers in our Jobcentres.

As part of its commitment to make services accessible to all customers, the Department provides computers for customer use in Jobcentres which have assistive technology built into them and are managed separately from the wider DWP IT estate. The Department also provides a range of peripheral items in each Jobcentre such as alternative keyboards. This provision has funding identified and ring-fenced within the current spending review period.

The DWP have also improved access to our Wi-Fi services in all Jobcentres, allowing customers to use their own personal devices if they prefer.

DWP Work Coaches undergo comprehensive learning to support customers with additional or complex needs, particularly disabilities. As part of their learning DWP provides the Work Coach with an understanding of assisted digital, and how they can effectively coach claimants who find using digital services a challenge.

■ Universal Credit: Self-employed

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of (a) households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant and (b) people living in households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant were subject to the Minimum Income Floor in the last five financial years for which data is available.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 23 May 2023]: The table below shows the average monthly number and proportion of (a) households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant and (b) people living in households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant subject to the Minimum Income Floor in each financial year from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

	HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONE OR MORE SELF-EMPLOYED CLAIMANTS		INDIVIDUALS AT HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONE OR MORE SELF-EMPLOYED CLAIMANTS	
	Average monthly number subject to the MIF	Proportion subject to the MIF	Average monthly number subject to the MIF	Proportion subject to the MIF
2018/19	11,300	25%	17,600	29%
2019/20 (Apr-19 to Feb-20)	29,300	26%	46,600	30%
2020/21	-	-	-	-
2021/22 (Aug-21 to Mar-22)	29,700	7%	47,200	8%
2022/23 (Apr-22 to Feb-23)	78,500	19%	124,700	22%

Source: Universal Credit Management Information

Notes:

1. Numbers of households and individuals are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Numbers of households and individuals are the average for each month during the specified period.
3. Claimants are counted as subject to the Minimum Income Floor if they are gainfully self-employed, not in a start-up period, and do not have temporary easement under which the MIF is not applied.
4. The Minimum Income Floor was suspended from March 2020 to July 2021. As such, there are no households subject to the MIF in 2020/21, and figures for

2019/20 and 2021/22 exclude months in which the MIF was suspended. The latest month for which figures are available is February 2023.

5. Households with a UC award of zero but whose claims have not yet closed are not included.
6. From August 2021 onwards there has been a large increase in numbers and proportions subject to the Minimum Income Floor as 12 month start-up periods come to an end for the large volume of claimants assessed in the period following the re-introduction of the MIF in August 2021.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[185575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of (a) households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant and (b) people living in households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant were subject to the Minimum Income Floor in the last 12 months for which data is available.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 23 May 2023]: The table below shows the number and proportion of (a) households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant and (b) people living in households with a self-employed Universal Credit claimant subject to the Minimum Income Floor from March 2022 to February 2023.

	HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONE OR MORE SELF-EMPLOYED CLAIMANTS		INDIVIDUALS IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONE OR MORE SELF-EMPLOYED CLAIMANTS	
	Number subject to the MIF	Proportion subject to the MIF	Number subject to the MIF	Proportion subject to the MIF
Mar-22	53,400	13%	84,700	14%
Apr-22	60,000	15%	95,500	17%
May-22	62,800	15%	100,200	18%
Jun-22	64,200	16%	102,200	18%
Jul-22	65,000	16%	103,500	18%
Aug-22	66,900	16%	106,500	19%
Sep-22	70,200	17%	111,700	20%
Oct-22	78,700	20%	124,700	22%
Nov-22	86,700	22%	137,300	24%
Dec-22	93,900	23%	148,700	26%
Jan-23	104,500	26%	165,500	29%
Feb-23	111,000	27%	175,500	31%

Source: Universal Credit Management Information

Notes:

1. Numbers of households and individuals are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Households with a UC award of zero but whose claims have not yet closed are not included.
3. Claimants are counted as subject to the Minimum Income Floor if they are gainfully self-employed, not in a start-up period, and do not have temporary easement under which the MIF is not applied.
4. During the period shown there has been a large increase in numbers and proportions subject to the Minimum Income Floor as 12 month start-up periods come to an end for the large volume of claimants assessed in the period following the re-introduction of the MIF in August 2021.

■ Universal Credit: Young People

Martyn Day:

[\[185959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2023 to Question 184836 on Universal Credit: Young People, if he will pay under 25 year olds who live independently the same rate of Universal Credit that is paid to those aged 25 years and over.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has no plans to change the rates of Universal Credit.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Luke Pollard:

[\[185788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether personnel living in Service Family Accommodation will have the same rights and benefits under Social Housing (Regulation) Bill as social housing tenants.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 23 May 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Dehenna Davison:

Under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, passed by the last Labour Government, Service Family Accommodation is run by the Ministry of Defence and **is not** defined as social housing.

It is not regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing, and will not be impacted by the changes being made by this Bill.

Luke Pollard:

[\[185789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether service family accommodation is covered by the definition of social housing in the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill,

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 23 May 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Dehenna Davison:

Under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, passed by the last Labour Government, Service Family Accommodation is run by the Ministry of Defence and **is not** defined as social housing.

It is not regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing, and will not be impacted by the changes being made by this Bill.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Michael Fabricant:

[\[182118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason a young person's railcard is not valid for use in local and national elections as voter ID; and if he will take steps to make the young person's railcard a valid form of voter ID.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 April 2023. The correct answer should have been:

Dehenna Davison:

The Government carefully considered a wide range of documents when selecting which **acceptable forms of identification to use at polling stations** forms of identification would be accepted for use at polling stations. It is essential that the list of **accepted identification** accepted forms of identification includes those that are owned by the majority of the electorate, but also that the list is finite and so can be effectively administered by polling station staff. Evidence from the voter identification pilots showed that use of a young person's rail card was very low **where they were trialled in Woking in 2018** against concessionary travel passes for older people, where they were trialled in Woking in 2018. Additionally, young **Young** person's railcards are **also** generally offered in both digital and hard copy **physical** formats **but digital formats are not currently accepted as voter identification** and, although it is intended that digital formats may be accepted in future, the Government did not specifically include digital format documents for the roll out of the policy, in order to support its effective delivery. Allowing the hard copy **It was judged that allowing a physical** version of a young person's railcard but not a digital version could lead to voter confusion.

Cabinet Office research shows that 98% of electors already own a form of photographic identification (in date or expired) that is accepted under the changes and this increases to 99% for those ages 18-29. A number of student cards are accredited by the Proof of Age Standards Scheme, and so are accepted. This includes the National Union of Students endorsed 'TOTUM +' student card, and a Young Scot card, meaning there are nationally available student cards that will be accepted as identification in polling stations.

The Government has committed in legislation to review the voter identification policy after implementation and **, as set out previously,** will consider appropriate changes to the list of accepted identification documents as part of this process.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ **May 2023 update on progress in delivering the recommendations in Sir David Calvert-Smith's Independent Review into the Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil Case**

Attorney General (Victoria Prentis):

[\[HCWS804\]](#)

Following the Court of Appeal's judgment in the Unaoil case (*R. v Ake & Anor*) in December 2021, the then Attorney General commissioned Sir David Calvert-Smith to conduct an independent review into the Serious Fraud Office's (SFO) handling of the case.

Sir David's full report was published on 21 July 2022, alongside a response to his recommendations. Sir David made 11 recommendations, which were accepted. These covered a range of matters, including record keeping and case assurance, compliance with policies, and resourcing.

At the same time, the then Attorney General laid a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) providing Parliament with the findings of Sir David's review and a response to his recommendations. This statement included a commitment to update Parliament on progress in delivering these recommendations in November 2022 and February 2023.

On 29 November 2022, I laid a WMS providing the first of these updates and a detailed progress update was also published on GOV.UK. This update showed substantial progress in delivering Sir David's recommendations, with the SFO having already taken significant action to implement nine of his 11 recommendations. For the two remaining recommendations, work had commenced to address Sir David's proposals.

At the same time, this update highlighted that while many of the changes recommended by Sir David could – and have been – made quickly, it would take time to embed these changes and assess their effectiveness.

I also informed Parliament that the second progress update would be provided in May 2023 to allow the findings of an upcoming inspection of the SFO by His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI) to be considered as part of the update.

Today, I am providing the second update on progress against Sir David's recommendations. As of May 2023, there continues to be good progress. Significant action has now been taken to deliver all eleven of Sir David's recommendations, with further activity planned in some instances. In addition, action to embed the changes that have been made and monitor their effectiveness is ongoing.

There is also independent evidence that the actions taken so far are proving to be effective. On 4 May 2023, HMCPPI published its follow-up inspection of case progression in the SFO. As part of the inspection, where issues raised in Sir David's review were within scope, HMCPPI used the evidence gathered to assess the progress made to

address his recommendations. While highlighting some areas for further work, this assessment indicated positive progress on many of his recommendations.

It nonetheless remains the case that it will take time to fully embed Sir David's recommendations and assess whether the actions taken have been effective. To support this longer-term assessment, the Law Officers have asked the Chief Inspector of HMCPSI to consider an inspection of the recommendations' implementation as part the HMCPSI's inspection programme in 2024-25.

A detailed update on progress will be published on GOV.UK today and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

HOME OFFICE

■ The British Nationality (Regularisation of Past Practice) Bill

The Minister of State for Immigration (Robert Jenrick):

[\[HCWS805\]](#)

The British Nationality (Regularisation of Past Practice) Bill, introduced today, will confirm in statute a long-standing historical policy under which EU, EEA and Swiss nationals living in the UK in the relevant period and exercising free movement rights here were considered to be settled.

This will protect the nationality rights of people born in the UK to parents who were considered settled on the basis of that policy, and who were treated as British automatically, and those who registered or naturalised as British citizens on that basis.

The Bill also clarifies when EU, EEA and Swiss nationals could be considered settled on the basis of exercising an equivalent right in Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, which are considered part of the UK for nationality purposes.

We want to be clear that we are not creating 'new' British citizens, but rather confirming the citizenship of individuals we have long considered, and treated as, British already under established Home Office policy.

The introduction of the Bill was preceded by consultation with the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, with relevant officials in these locations having confirmed their support for the measures the UK Government is looking to introduce.

To support scrutiny of the Bill by both Houses, we are publishing on GOV.uk and Parliament.uk the following documents:

- Explanatory Notes
- Equality Impact Assessment
- ECHR Memorandum
- Factsheet