



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 May 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 14 May 2024). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Oil: Russia

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[25586\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what prosecutions referred by HMRC are (a) ongoing, (b) pending and (c) complete into the illegal importation of Russian oil branded as (i) refined and (ii) from other countries.

**Robert Courts:**

It would not be possible to determine the number of cases involving the illegal importation of Russian oil referred by HM Revenue & Customs to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) without an examination of CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

### BUSINESS AND TRADE

#### ■ Business: Investment

**Conor McGinn:** [\[24957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps she is taking to help increase business investment in (a) St Helens North constituency and (b) the North West.

**Alan Mak:**

The Department for Business and Trade works with partners to promote investment opportunities across the North West to overseas investors and provide support for businesses wishing to be based within the region.

The Government is investing £80 million in the Liverpool City Region Freeport and £320 million in Investment Zones in the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester creating new jobs and attracting new businesses. Both the Investment Zone and Freeport have key locations in St Helens.

The Government also supports a range of programmes dedicated to helping businesses to grow. In March this year, we launched the second-generation Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, with £660 million committed to support debt and equity finance for businesses across the North of England. Since its launch in 2012, the Start Up Loans programme has provided over £121 million of loans to new entrepreneurs across the North West region, as of 13 September 2023.

#### ■ Gratuities

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[24792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Millions to take home more cash as new guidance on Tipping is

published, published on 22 April 2024, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of delaying the implementation of the Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act 2023 to 1 October 2024.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act will require employers to pass all tips on to workers, without deductions. The implementation date for the Act, and the accompanying statutory Code of Practice, was revised from 1st July to 1st October to ensure sufficient time for those affected by the changes to prepare.

The impacts of the new requirements were considered in the impact assessment for the Act: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3197/publications>.

■ **Minerals: Northern Ireland**

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[24922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the EU Critical Raw Materials Act on levels of trade between Northern Ireland and the (a) rest of the UK and (b) EU.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is carefully considering this Regulation and will be publishing an explanatory memorandum shortly, with detail on its potential impact on Northern Ireland.

Any applicability in Northern Ireland will of course be subject to the important democratic scrutiny mechanisms in the Windsor Framework.

■ **Overseas Trade: North Macedonia**

**Alex Sobel:** [\[25323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether she has taken recent steps to facilitate bilateral trade with North Macedonia.

**Greg Hands:**

Bilateral trade between the UK and North Macedonia was worth a total of £2.5 billion in the 4 quarters to end of Q4 2023, comprising of £1.7bn of exports and £787 million of imports. North Macedonia is the UK's largest trading partner in the Western Balkans. The UK's trade relationship is underpinned by the Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement (PTCA), signed in 2020. The inaugural PTCA Joint Committee met in 2022 and we hope to convene the second version later this year. In September 2023, the UK launched the British-Macedonian Business Chamber, as a symbol of the growing trade & investment partnership.

## ■ Small Businesses: Closures

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[24939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what estimate she has made of the number of small businesses in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry and (c) England that have closed in each of the last three years.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Numbers of enterprise (business) 'deaths' (closures) are not available at the parliamentary constituency level. Neither are they available, yet, for unitary authorities in 2023.

Numbers of enterprise 'deaths' are not available broken down by business size and are only available for PAYE and/or VAT registered businesses.

Data in the 2 tables below show total numbers of registered enterprise 'deaths' in England in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and in Coventry in 2021 and 2022.

**Table 1: Counts of all enterprise 'deaths' in 2021 and 2022 in England and Coventry**

	2021	2022
England	291,370	308,900
<i>of which...</i>		
Coventry	1,570	1,750

Source: [ONS business demography](#)

**Table 2: Provisional counts of all enterprise 'deaths' in 2023, in England**

	2023
England	293,170

Source: [ONS business demography, quarterly experimental statistics](#)

## ■ Sub Post Offices: Pay

**Sir Geoffrey Cox:**

[\[24869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what discussions the Minister of State for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business has had with Post Office Ltd on the decision to reduce the remuneration period for subpostmasters with Hard to Place post offices; and what steps he is taking to ensure sufficient compensation and support for affected subpostmasters during the transition period.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

I and my officials meet regularly with Post Office Ltd to discuss a range of issues of mutual interest, including Hard to Place Postmasters. I also chair a regular working group between the National Federation of SubPostmasters and Post Office to discuss a range of issues affecting postmasters.

Whilst the level of compensation offered to Hard to Place postmasters represents a commercial matter for Post Office to determine, the Government supports Post Office Limited's attempts to resolve the situation. The previous situation was more detrimental to all parties involved as individuals were holding on, as they had for a number of years already, in the hope that they would get compensation that might not have materialised.

**■ Three: Vodafone Group****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[24791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the Competition and Market Authority investigation into the proposed merger between Vodafone and Three Mobile.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Competition and Markets Authority is the UK's independent competition regulator and its merger investigations are independent of Government.

**■ Trade Agreements: Gulf Cooperation Council****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[25307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how many chapters of a prospective free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council have been concluded.

**Greg Hands:**

Six rounds of negotiations have been successfully concluded as part of negotiations on a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Department for Business and Trade regularly engages with the GCC at both Chief Negotiator and ministerial level and is making good progress on agreeing chapters including in areas such as Customs, Technical Barriers to Trade and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). The department cannot comment any further as negotiations are ongoing.

**■ UAV Engines: Exports****Richard Thomson:** [\[24836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether (a) Jet-A and (b) JP-8 fuel for Hermes 450 drones has been exported to Israel in the last 12 months.



**Alan Mak:**

Data on UK exports is published by HMRC. For the latest 12-month period where data is available (until March 2024) there were no exports of any kerosene-type jet fuel to Israel.

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****Public Libraries****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[25252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to help encourage visitors to libraries.

**Julia Lopez:**

We will be publishing a refreshed Government strategy for public libraries later this year, informed by the independent review of English public libraries conducted by Baroness Sanderson of Welton which engaged with a wide range of interested parties, including through the series of roundtable meetings she held across the country.

One of the recommendations of Baroness Sanderson's review was that Libraries Week be moved from October, which often clashes with the party conference season, to a time in the year when MPs and peers can more easily engage with it and promote the work of libraries in their local area. We are delighted that, from this year, Libraries Week will take place at the end of June (this year, 24–30 June).

The forthcoming strategy will set out our plans to ensure that people across the country can benefit from excellent library services, and HM Government will explore opportunities to increase library use and engagement especially by children in line with Baroness Sanderson's independent review recommendations.

In addition, the £20.5 million, DCMS-funded Libraries Improvement Fund is supporting public library services across England. The fund is supporting 95 projects to enable library services to upgrade their buildings and improve digital infrastructure, increasing their potential to develop more flexible spaces and improving digital access, thereby increasing library access and use.

**Public Libraries: Closures****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[25253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an estimate of the number of libraries that have closed since 2010.

**Julia Lopez:**

Arts Council England collects data from local authorities and publishes a basic dataset of information on public libraries in England. The libraries basic dataset for 2022 shows the number of static libraries in England (statutory and non-statutory) from April 2010 to 31 December 2022 and includes information on permanent library

closures (though not information on where replacement libraries have been set up). It can be found [here](#).

More broadly, there remains a significant challenge for both the Government and for the libraries sector in getting robust, accurate, and timely data which can be used to support both advocacy and improvement. We are clear about the need to address this problem and are working closely with sector bodies (including Arts Council England, Libraries Connected and the Local Government Association) to chart a way forward in this area. Our forthcoming Government strategy for libraries will follow up on recommendations made by Baroness Sanderson of Welton's independent review of public libraries in this regard.

## ■ Video Games: Artificial Intelligence

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[24796]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to help support companies in the gaming industry that use artificial intelligence to innovate.

**Julia Lopez:**

The UK Government has a clear plan to grow the creative industries by a further £50 billion and support another 1 million jobs by 2030. This was set out in June 2023 in the Creative Industries Sector Vision, which was accompanied by £77 million of new funding to support the sector's growth. This is on top of a range of tax reliefs introduced or expanded since 2007 covering film, television, animation, video games, orchestras, theatres and more.

His Majesty's Government is working across Departments to develop an approach on artificial intelligence and copyright which allows this technology and the creative industries - including video games - to grow in partnership.

The Sector Vision includes an objective to increase public and private investment in creative industries' innovation, contributing to the UK increasing its research and development (R&D) expenditure to drive R&D-led innovation. In the 2023 Autumn Statement, Her Majesty's Treasury also announced a DCMS-led review on public investment in R&D spending for the creative industries.

The Sector Vision is supported by £310 million in Government spending, including the following support for AI innovation across the creative industries, including video games:

- £76.5 million CoSTAR programme - an infrastructure network for world-class R&D in screen and performance technology. The new national network of five CoSTAR Labs includes the Realtime Lab in Dundee which will bring together local video games development expertise with academic expertise in R&D and AI at Abertay University and the University of Edinburgh.
- £50 million Creative Clusters programme - joining up academics with business in the creative sector to drive innovation and research to improve growth.

- £30 million Creative Catalyst programme - delivering small scale innovation funding to creative businesses.

In the [UK Innovation Strategy](#) the creative industries, including video games, are identified as critical to the government's ambition to make the UK a global hub for innovation, engaging in innovation at a higher rate than other sectors and more productive than the UK average. Innovate UK has funded £100m through the BridgeAI programme, helping businesses in priority sectors, including the creative industries, to harness the power of AI and unlock their full potential.

## ■ Water Sports

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[24987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many water sports (a) training sessions, (b) activities and (c) events have been reported to her Department due to unsafe water quality in each year since 2020.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Event organisers, including National Governing Bodies (NGBs), are responsible for ensuring appropriate measures are in place to protect participants.

We recognise the need for water sport participants to have access to consistent and up-to-date data about bathing water quality. DCMS is working with relevant water based National Governing Bodies and the Outdoors For All Coalition to understand the barriers to accessing and participating in green and blue spaces.

Designated bathing waters and water quality monitoring in England is the responsibility of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Environment Agency (EA). DEFRA is a permanent member of the National Physical Activity Taskforce, which ensures that we deliver coordinated policy that will help encourage people to get active.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**John Healey:**

[\[25419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 May 2024 to Question 23990, how many eligibility decisions have been overturned as a result of the review.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

I refer the right hon. Member to my answer to Questions 23990 and 23497. I will update the House once the review is completed.

**Attachments:**

1. [Afghanistan: Refugees](#) [23990 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]
2. [Afghanistan: Refugees](#) [23497 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]

**■ Armed Forces: Housing****Luke Pollard:** [\[24821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 May 2024 to Question 24130 on Armed Forces: Housing, how many callouts were made to (a) single living accommodation and (b) Service Family Accommodation properties for maintenance issues in each year between 2017 and March 2022.

**James Cartlidge:**

Data relating to callouts to Single Living Accommodation for maintenance issues between 2017 and March 2022 is not held centrally and can only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Data relating to callouts to Service Family Accommodation for maintenance issues between 2017 and March 2022 is not held as this predates the current Future Defence Infrastructure Services contracts.

**■ Armed Forces: Recruitment****Luke Pollard:** [\[25348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces career offices there are in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 18 April 2024 to Question 21529 to the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne (Mr Healey).

**Attachments:**

1. [Armed Forces: Recruitment](#) [21529 - Armed Forces Recruitment.docx]

**■ Artillery: Procurement****Mr Mark Francois:** [\[25449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate his Department has made of the initial operating capability date for the Archer 155mm artillery system.

**James Cartlidge:**

The current approved Initial Operating Capability for Archer 6x6 is 31 October 2024.

**Mr Mark Francois:** [\[25450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate his Department has made of the initial operating capability date for the Boxer-related 155mm artillery system in the Army.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Army aims to achieve a Mobile Fires Platform Minimum Deployable Capability within this decade and continues to examine options to accelerate the procurement process and delivery.

**■ AWACS: Fuels****Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[24407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what system the E7 Wedgetail uses for mid-air refuelling.

**James Cartlidge:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend (Sir Jeremy Quin) the then Minister for Defence Procurement gave to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones) on 27 July 2021 to Question 35542.

**Attachments:**

1. [Military Aircraft: In-flight Refuelling](#) [35542 - Military Aircraft In-flight Refuelling.docx]

**■ AWACS: Procurement****Mr Mark Francois:** [\[25447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate his Department has made of the initial operating capability date for the E-7 Wedgetail.

**James Cartlidge:**

The E-7 Wedgetail is expected to enter service with the RAF in 2025. The finalised date for In-Service, Initial Operating Capability and Full Operating Capability remains subject to approval in the Full Business Case which was submitted as planned in March 2024.

**■ Canada and New Zealand: AUKUS****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[23158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 April 2024 to Question 20923 on Ministry of Defence: Canada and New Zealand, whether he discussed (a) the entry to and (b) cooperation with AUKUS by (i) Canada and (ii) New Zealand.

**James Cartlidge:**

Yes, the Secretary of State for Defence spoke with his Canadian and New Zealand counterparts on AUKUS Pillar 2 activity on those occasions.

**■ Canada: AUKUS****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[23154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has discussed AUKUS pillar 2 with his Canadian counterpart.

**James Cartlidge:**

Yes, the Secretary of State for Defence has discussed AUKUS Pillar 2 with the Canadian Defence Minister, Bill Blair, on multiple occasions. The discussions have been wide ranging across the full spectrum of Defence matters.

**■ Catterick Garrison**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[24813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel were based at Harden Barracks as of 3 May 2024.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As at 1 January 2024, there were no UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Harden Barracks.

**■ Catterick Garrison: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[24306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to RM Bickleigh for maintenance issues relating to (a) roofing, (b) loss of heating and hot water, (c) electrics, (d) pest control and (e) damp and mould since April 2022.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[24309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Cambrai Barracks for maintenance issues relating to (a) roofing, (b) loss of heating and hot water, (c) electrics (d) pest control and (e) damp and mould since April 2022.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[24310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Vimy Barracks for maintenance issues relating to (a) roofing, (b) loss of heating and hot water, (c) electrics, (d) pest control and (e) damp and mould since April 2022.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[24311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Piave and Bapaume Barracks for maintenance issues relating to (a) roofing, (b) loss of heating and hot water, (c) electrics (d) pest control and (e) damp and mould since April 2022.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[24312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Alma Barracks for maintenance issues relating to (a) roofing, (b) loss of heating and hot water, (c) electrics, (d) pest control and (e) damp and mould since April 2022.

**James Cartlidge:**

The total number of callouts that have been made to Service Family Accommodation (SFA) at RM Bickleigh, Cambrai Barracks, Vimy Barracks, Piave and Bapaume Barracks and Alma Barracks for maintenance issues since April 2022 are shown in the attached table.

We are unable to separate the SFA figures servicing Cambrai Barracks, Vimy Barracks, Piave and Bapaume Barracks and Alma Barracks as they are all part of the wider Catterick Garrison.

The total number of callouts made to Single Living Accommodation at RM Bickleigh, Cambrai Barracks, Vimy Barracks, Piave and Bapaume Barracks and Alma Barracks, for maintenance issues since April 2022 are shown in the attached table.

**Attachments:**

1. [Army Barracks: Maintenance Issues](#) [24306 - Barracks Maintenance Issues.docx]

■ **Dale Barracks**

**Luke Pollard:**

**[24815]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel were based at Dale Barracks as of 3 May 2024.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As at 1 January 2024, there were 400 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Dale Barracks.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at Dale Barracks can only be provided as at 1 January 2024 in line with Published National Statistics.
2. This figure comprises UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Volunteer Reserve, Serving Regular Reserve, Sponsored Reserve and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) of unknown origin. University Officer Cadets are excluded. The figure includes both trained and untrained personnel.
3. The figure is based on Service personnel's stationed location and not their location of residence – where personnel work is not necessarily where they live. Personnel deployed on operations to an area away from their stationed location are shown against their most recent stationed location.
4. Figures containing Reserve personnel are estimates because the station location data for Reserves has not been fully verified.
5. The figure has been rounded to the nearest 10 to prevent inadvertent disclosure of personal identities. However, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

■ **Deverell Barracks**

**Luke Pollard:**

**[24812]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel were based at Deverell Barracks as of 3 May 2024.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As at 1 January 2024, there were no UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Deverell Barracks.

**■ Falkland Islands: Typhoon Aircraft****Mr Mark Francois:**[\[25451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Typhoon aircraft are based in the Falkland Islands; and what tranche of Typhoon aircraft these are.

**James Cartlidge:**

There are four RAF Typhoon aircraft permanently stationed in the Falkland Islands. The details on Tranche are held at a higher classification.

**■ Fulwood Barracks****Luke Pollard:**[\[24814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel were based at Fulwood Barracks as of 3 May 2024.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As at 1 January 2024, there were 140 UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at Fulwood Barracks.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at Fulwood Barracks can only be provided as at 1 January 2024 in line with Published National Statistics.
2. This figure comprises UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Volunteer Reserve, Serving Regular Reserve, Sponsored Reserve and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) of unknown origin. University Officer Cadets are excluded. The figure includes both trained and untrained personnel.
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4. Figures containing Reserve personnel are estimates because the station location data for Reserves has not been fully verified.
5. The figure has been rounded to the nearest 10 to prevent inadvertent disclosure of personal identities. However, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

**■ Guided Weapons: Procurement****John Healey:**[\[22852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department last signed new contracts for (a) AMRAAM, (b) ASRAAM, (c) CAMM, (d) Javelin, (e) NLAW, (f) Tomahawk and (g) Aster missiles.



**James Cartlidge:**

The below table contains the dates of when new contracts were last signed for each of the munition type requested. It does not contain subsequent contract amendments or renewals.

<b>WEAPONS</b>	<b>LAST SIGNED NEW CONTRACTS</b>
AMRAAM	December 2021
ASRAAM	December 2023
CAMM	March 2021
Javelin	April 2023
NLAW	December 2022
Tomahawk	June 2022
Aster missiles	August 1999

**Notes:**

1. Javelin and Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) are procured through Foreign Military Sales, a government to government agreement directly between the UK MOD and the US Government.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**[\[24431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on the Anglo-French Future Cruise-Anti-Ship Weapon programme.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Future Cruise / Anti-Ship weapon programme is in the third year of the assessment phase and joint Anglo-France work is designing novel technological advances in missile capability. Significant progress has been made on suitable candidate weapon systems to fulfil the Naval and Air requirements. At this stage of the programme, work is focused on reducing technical and schedule risk, prior to the potential Demonstration and Manufacturing phases, and preparations are underway to prepare towards Full Business Case. Additionally, progress is also being made to explore bringing Italy on board as a partner nation, with a Letter of Intent signed in June 2023.

**■ Imphal Barracks****Luke Pollard:**[\[24811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel were based at Imphal Barracks as of 3 May 2024.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As at 1 January 2024, there were 680 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Imphal Barracks.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Imphal Barracks can only be provided as at 1 January 2024 in line with Published National Statistics.
2. This figure comprises UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Volunteer Reserve, Serving Regular Reserve, Sponsored Reserve and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) of unknown origin. University Officer Cadets are excluded. The figure includes both trained and untrained personnel.
3. The figure is based on Service personnel's stationed location and not their location of residence – where personnel work is not necessarily where they live. Personnel deployed on operations to an area away from their stationed location are shown against their most recent stationed location.
4. Figures containing Reserve personnel are estimates because the station location data for Reserves has not been fully verified.
5. The figure has been rounded to the nearest 10 to prevent inadvertent disclosure of personal identities. However, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Data Protection****John Healey:**[\[25416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personal data incidents have affected suppliers to his Department in each year since 2010.

**John Healey:**[\[25417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personal data incidents related to the recruitment for the (a) Army, (b) Royal Navy, (c) RAF and (d) Royal Marines there have been since 2010.

**John Healey:**[\[25418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many potential recruits to the (a) Army, (b) Royal Navy, (c) RAF and (d) Royal Marines have been affected by personal data incidents related to recruitment systems since 2010.

**John Healey:**[\[25422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) armed forces personnel, (b) civil servants in his Department and (c) veterans have been affected by personal data incidents affecting MOD suppliers in each year since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

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

**Ministry of Defence: ICT****Dame Nia Griffith:**[\[22925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 21 of the progress update entitled, Transforming for a Digital Future: Government's 2022 to 25 roadmap for digital and data, published in February 2024, when his Department first assessed each of its red-rated legacy IT systems as red-rated.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) assessed its systems against the Cabinet Office criteria for obsolescence from June 2023. This assessment process identified 11 systems as having a red-rating. In accordance with risk management best practice the MOD develops remediation plans to address the red-rated systems. As at the time of publication of the progress update in February 2024, seven systems have fully funded plans, two have partially funded plans, and the remaining two were being addressed. As of today, I can now confirm that the remaining two have identified plans for remediation.

**RAF Shawbury****Luke Pollard:**[\[25347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at RAF Shawbury as of 8 May 2024.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As at 1 January 2024, there were 620 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at RAF Shawbury.

Please note, UK Forces Service Personnel comprises UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel, Volunteer Reserve, Serving Regular Reserve, Sponsored Reserve, and Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) of unknown origin. University Air Squadron Officer Cadets are excluded. The figure includes trained and untrained personnel.

The figure includes Reserve personnel and is therefore an estimate because the stationed location data for Reserves has not been fully verified.

The figure has been rounded to the nearest 10. However, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Data has been provided as at 1 January 2024 to align with published Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics.

**■ RNAD Coulport****Luke Pollard:** [\[24305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on improving service accommodation at Royal Naval Armaments Depot in Coulport since April 2022.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Royal Naval Armaments Depot Coulport is an integral part of His Majesty's Naval Base Clyde. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 7 May 2024 to Question 23943.

**■ RNAD Coulport: Repairs and Maintenance****Luke Pollard:** [\[24303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Royal Naval Armaments Depot, Coulport for maintenance issues relating to (a) roofing, (b) loss of heating and hot water, (c) electrics (d) pest control and (e) damp and mould since April 2022.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Royal Naval Armaments Depot Clyde is an integral part of His Majesty's Naval Base Clyde. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 7 May 2024 to Question 23569.

**■ Rwanda: Asylum****John Healey:** [\[25415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what role armed forces personnel will play in deportation flights for the Rwanda scheme.

**Leo Docherty:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 22 April 2024 to Question 21377 to the hon. Member for Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport (Mr Pollard).

**Attachments:**

1. [Question 21377](#) [UIN 21377.docx]

**■ Type 45 Destroyers****Mr Mark Francois:** [\[25448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Type 45 destroyers are (a) operationally available, (b) in refit and (c) undergoing the power improvement project upgrade programme.

**James Cartlidge:**

HMS Diamond, HMS Duncan and HMS Dauntless are all currently available for operations. HMS Daring, HMS Dragon, and HMS Defender are all currently at various stages of the Power and Propulsion Programme.

**EDUCATION****■ Anti-semitism****Sir John Hayes:**[\[25406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many universities have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism.

**Luke Hall:**

As of 10 May 2024, 245 higher education (HE) providers in England, including all but six universities, have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.

While the decision to adopt the definition rests with individual HE providers, the government will continue to encourage all to adopt the definition. Adopting this widely recognised educative tool is a signal that providers take these issues seriously.

**■ Apprentices and Training: Disadvantaged****Andrew Bridgen:**[\[25235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help disadvantaged children access (a) traineeships and (b) apprenticeships.

**Luke Hall:**

Apprenticeships offer great opportunities for young people who are starting out in their careers, and the department is committed to supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access these opportunities more easily.

The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme, funded at £3.2 million per year, provides schools and further education colleges across England with a free, bespoke package of comprehensive information and supports young people from all backgrounds and areas to access apprenticeships. The department is expanding the ASK Development Schools project in the 2023/24 academic year from 40 to 60 schools, including those in disadvantaged areas. This provides bespoke support for students in years 10 and 11 at levels one and below, who have the potential to progress into an apprenticeship but who are facing significant personal barriers such as learning difficulties, disabilities, or emotional, behavioural development issues.

The department has also tripled the care leavers' bursary for apprentices under the age of 25 from £1000 to £3000, helping even more young people to access and complete their apprenticeships, and continues to pay an additional £1,000 to employers and providers to support apprentices aged 16-18, care leavers and those with an Education, Health and Care plan aged 24 and under. The department is also supporting young people to undertake apprenticeships by fully funding training costs for new apprentices aged 16-21 in non-levy paying employers, who tend to be small and medium-sized enterprises, from April 2024.

As part of the government's commitment to provide a comprehensive and clear skills offer for employers and individuals, in August 2023 the traineeships programme was integrated into the 16-19 study programme and adult education provision. All the elements of the traineeship programme, English and mathematics, work experience, employability, and occupational skills and qualifications will continue to be funded for 16-19 year olds as part of the national 16-19 study programme. Providers with access to funding can continue to offer traineeship type programmes for young people who need support to get into work, apprenticeships, or further learning.

#### ■ Department for Education: ICT

**Matt Rodda:**

[\[25017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the guidance by the Central Digital and Data Office entitled Guidance on the Legacy IT Risk Assessment Framework, published on 29 September 2023, how many red-rated IT systems are used by her Department; and how many red-rated IT systems have been identified since 4 December 2023.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), in the Cabinet Office, has established a programme to support departments managing legacy IT. CDDO has agreed a framework to identify 'red-rated' systems, indicating high levels of risk surrounding certain assets within the IT estate. Departments have committed to have remediation plans in place for these systems by next year (2025).

It is not appropriate to release sensitive information held about specific red-rated systems or more detailed plans for remediation within the Department for Education's IT estate, as this information could indicate which systems are at risk, and may highlight potential security vulnerabilities.

#### ■ Education: Coventry

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[24940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to tackle educational disadvantage in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

**Damian Hinds:**

Raising attainment for all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, is at the heart of this government's agenda. Evidence shows that pupils with additional needs are more likely to fall behind and need extra support to reach their full potential.

The department has consistently taken a range of steps to give priority support and deliver programmes that help disadvantaged pupils, including improving the quality of teaching and curriculum resources, strengthening the school system, and providing targeted support where needed.

The Pupil Premium, worth over £2.9 billion in 2024/25 continues to support schools to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Coventry local authority is a designated Education Investment Area, for which the department has published Trust Development Statements, which can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1159211/West\\_Midlands\\_Trust\\_Development\\_Statements\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1159211/West_Midlands_Trust_Development_Statements_v2.pdf).

The Trust Development Statement for Coventry outlines the department's vision to reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils across all education phases. In order to raise education standards across Coventry, the department welcomes proposals from high-quality Multi Academy Trusts with experience in supporting communities with higher rates of deprivation.

Schools and trusts can also receive up to 15 days of support from a system leader through the department's Trust and School Improvement Offer. Colleagues within the department work closely with Coventry City Council to identify schools and trusts that may benefit this support.

## ■ Education: Travellers

**Nadia Whittome:**

[25396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps her Department has taken to help improve the educational attainment rate of Romani Gypsy, Roma and Irish traveller children.

**Damian Hinds:**

A world-class education system that works for everyone is the surest way to ensure that all children and young people can reach their potential. The department has high expectations for all pupils. The department does not design education policy to target certain groups of pupils based on ethnicity, but instead is focused on improving outcomes for all children. For all children to reach their potential they need an ambitious, knowledge-rich curriculum, taught by great teachers in schools with high expectations and good pupil behaviour.

One of the most significant factors affecting pupil attainment, which cuts across all ethnicities, is economic disadvantage. That is why the department has continued to provide pupil premium funding which will rise to over £2.9 billion in 2024/25. Pupil premium per pupil rates will have increased by 10% over the three years from 2021/22 to 2024/25. This increase will ensure that this targeted funding continues to help schools to support the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.

In 2024/25, the national funding formula (NFF) will allocate £7.8 billion (17.8% of all funding allocated by the NFF) through additional needs factors based on deprivation, low prior attainment, English as an additional language and mobility.

The department recognises the issues faced by Romani Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller children and young people and how schools and others can make a positive difference. While some pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds can, and do, perform well at school, as a group their attainment and attendance at school is particularly low at every key stage of education.

The department will continue to work to deliver reforms, to ensure all children and young people are able to reach their potential and experience the transformative effect of a high-quality education and continue to support schools and leaders to respond to the needs of their schools and communities.

### ■ Faith Schools: Admissions

**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[25436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of ending the cap on faith school admissions.

**Damian Hinds:**

My Rt. Hon. friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced on 1 May 2024 that the department are consulting on faith designation reforms for new and existing free schools and special academies. This is available on Hansard at:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-05-01/hcws437>.

The consultation will run for seven weeks, closing on 20 June 2024. The department will then carefully consider all responses to the consultation and use them to inform the department's recommendations for better meeting the policy objectives of faith schools.

The government's response will be published on the GOV.UK website within twelve weeks following closure of the consultation.

### ■ Schools: Bullying

**Nadia Whittome:** [\[25397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many incidents of ethnicity-based bullying within schools were reported to her Department in the last 12 months; and what steps her Department is taking to help tackle such incidents.

**David Johnston:**

There is no legal requirement on schools to record and report incidents of bullying and there never has been. Schools should develop their own approaches for monitoring bullying and exercise their own judgement as to what will work best for their pupils.

All schools are legally required to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent all forms of bullying. They have the freedom to develop their own anti-bullying strategies appropriate to their environment and are held to account by Ofsted.

In July 2017, the department updated its advice for schools, which outlines schools' responsibilities to support children who are bullied. The advice makes clear that schools should make appropriate provision for a bullied child's social, emotional and mental health needs. This advice is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>.



The department provided over £3 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2024, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. This included projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying.

## ■ Schools: Portsmouth

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[25007]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve standards in (a) reading, (b) writing and (c) maths in Portsmouth schools.

**Damian Hinds:**

This government is committed to raising standards in literacy and numeracy, the foundations for children's success in education and beyond.

The department has delivered a range of measures to improve the teaching of English. The department has published a Reading Framework, providing guidance on the teaching of reading in primary schools, launched the National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy to train existing teachers to become literacy experts, and is conducting a review into best practice in writing teaching.

This has been backed by investment. In 2018, the department launched a £67 million English Hubs Programme to improve the teaching of reading, with a focus on phonics, early language development and reading for pleasure. Currently, 14 schools are receiving intensive support from Springhill Hub in the Portsmouth Local Authority District. This is in addition to the two schools that have already graduated from the programme.

Similarly, in 2014, the department introduced a national network of 40 Maths Hubs, to help local schools improve the quality of their teaching. Maths Hubs deliver the department's Teaching for Mastery programme, which is bringing teaching practice from high performing East Asian jurisdictions to primary and secondary schools across England. The Solent Maths Hub covers Portsmouth as well as Hampshire, Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

The Prime Minister also recently announced more investment in mathematics, as part of the new Advanced British Standard qualification, including some £60 million over two years to improve mathematics education.

In addition to support provided through the department's hubs programmes, Portsmouth is receiving further dedicated support as one of 24 Priority Education Investment Areas identified in the Schools White Paper. Portsmouth will receive £1.8 million as part of a national investment of around £40 million of additional funding for bespoke interventions, including in literacy and numeracy, to address local needs. The aim is to address entrenched underperformance, in areas with some of the highest rates of disadvantage in the country.

## ■ Schools: Sexual Harassment

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[25022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress her Department has made on developing updated guidance for schools on tackling sexual harassment.

**Damian Hinds:**

The department has previously committed to non-statutory guidance on sexual harassment, sexual violence and violence against women and girls. This is pending whilst the department carries out the review of the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance, and the department will be considering how best to support teachers in this area.

A draft of the amended RSHE statutory guidance will be published for consultation as soon as possible. The department will take responses carefully into account, including any relating to content on sexual harassment and violence, in finalising new guidance prior to publication.

## ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

### ■ Biodiversity and Climate Change: Devolution

**Deidre Brock:** [\[24949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps she (a) has taken and (b) plans to take with the devolved Administrations to improve coordination of efforts towards achieving the UK's international (i) climate and (ii) biodiversity obligations.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

DESNZ works closely with the devolved administrations (DAs) on international climate obligations and reporting to the UNFCCC. DESNZ worked with the DAs on the development of the 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and this year will be seeking their views for the 2035 NDC. This reflects the role the DAs play in the UK-wide drive to decarbonise the economy. DESNZ accredited 20 delegates from DAs to attend COP28 and will accredit DAs delegates to attend COP29.

Through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, which advises UK-wide and international nature conservation, the four nations will coordinate to further our ambitious biodiversity agenda.

### ■ Boiler Upgrade Scheme

**Selaine Saxby:** [\[25112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much has been spent through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme; and how many measures have been installed as a result of that expenditure, by parliamentary constituency.

**Amanda Solloway:**

As of the end of March 2024 the total value of grants paid through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme is £138.9 million.

Application, redemption, and payment data is published monthly on Gov.uk. The number of grants paid for heat pump and biomass boiler installations by parliamentary constituency up to the end of March 2024 can be found in the March statistics published here in table Q1.3 :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/boiler-upgrade-scheme-statistics-march-2024>.

**■ Climate Change****Rushanara Ali:****[24923]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when her Department plans to submit its next nationally determined contribution to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; and if she will make it her policy that the next nationally determined contribution will set out how the UK will adhere to the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

In line with the Paris Agreement, the UK will communicate its next nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change at least 9 to 12 months ahead of COP30 (i.e. between November 2024 and February 2025).

In communicating the NDC, the UK will take account of the Global Stocktake which encourages Parties to come forward in their next NDCs with ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets, covering all greenhouse gases, sectors and categories and aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 °C, as informed by the latest science, in the light of different national circumstances.

**■ Energy: Conservation****Selaine Saxby:****[25102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many energy efficiency measures have been installed by parliamentary constituency between 2010 and 2024.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Department published figures on the number of energy efficiency measures installed by parliamentary constituency between January 2013 and December 2023 in the Household Energy Efficiency Statistics, detailed report 2023 (Table 1.7), [here](#). Data on 2024 installations are published in individual scheme monthly statistics: Boiler Upgrade Scheme, [here](#); Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery and Homes Upgrade Grant, [here](#); Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (Wave 1) [here](#); Great British Insulation Scheme [here](#); ECO data will be available [here](#).

Prior to 2013, Government support for energy efficiency measures was provided via the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target and Community Energy Saving Programme. Further information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

## ■ Energy: Prices

**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[24937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate her Department has made of the average amount spent on energy bills per household in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last five years.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Data on household electricity and gas energy bills are published as part of the Quarterly Energy Prices statistical series ([here](#)). The department collects this information at the regional level and does not hold it for smaller geographies.

Average annual domestic electricity bills for England and UK regions are presented in table QEP 2.2.3 and average annual domestic gas bills for GB regions are presented in table QEP 2.3.3 ([here](#)).

## ■ Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme

**Selaine Saxby:** [\[25111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much has been spent through the Local Authority Delivery Scheme; and how many measures have been installed as a result of that expenditure, by parliamentary constituency.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The first phase of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme allocated £200m in grants to over 200 Local Authorities. Phase 1 delivered upgrades to 18,634 homes. Phase 2 allocated £300m to the five Local Net Zero Hubs, who worked with their regional Local Authorities to continue to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to 20,542 homes. A £287m third phase of funding built on Phase 1 and 2 of LAD, Delivery commenced in early 2022 and ended in September 2023 having upgraded 19,716 homes to date. Statistics, including a breakdown of the measures delivered by area can be found on [Gov.uk](#).

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Selaine Saxby:** [\[25110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much has been spent through the Green Homes Grant; and how many measures have been installed as a result of that expenditure, by parliamentary constituency.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Full details on Green Homes Grant voucher scheme spend, and how many measures have been delivered by parliamentary constituency, can be found on Gov.uk:

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/green-homes-grant-voucher-release-october-2022](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/green-homes-grant-voucher-release-october-2022).

**■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme****Grahame Morris:**[\[25466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much remuneration the Trustees of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme receive for their roles on the committee.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

In 2023, the remuneration was £91,500 per year for the Chair, £41,350-£72,650 per year for the Committee Chairs and £24,150 per year for other members of the Committee.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[25467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, on what date the Government last made a contribution to the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme under British Coal.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Government has not needed to input funds to the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme since becoming Guarantor.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[25469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many (a) former miners and (b) former miners' widows are in receipt of a mineworkers' pension.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

As at 31 March 2024, the number of former miners in receipt of a Mineworkers' Pension Scheme pension is 86,032 and the number of former miners' widows/dependants in receipt of a pension is 23,253.

**■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme: Easington****Grahame Morris:**[\[25468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many (a) former miners and (b) former miners' widows are in receipt of a mineworkers' pension in Easington constituency.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

As at June 2023, the total number of members of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme in the Easington constituency was 3,563. The breakdown by former miners and former miners' widows is not available.

## ■ Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

**Selaine Saxby:** [25109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much has been spent through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme; and how many measures have been installed as a result of that expenditure, by parliamentary constituency.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme has made over £2.8 billion available over the financial years 2020/21 to 2025/26 to install heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures in public sector buildings. As of April 2024, the scheme has awarded grants worth over £2.7 billion to fund nearly 1,200 such projects. More grant funding is in delivery.

The Department does not hold a breakdown of installed measures by parliamentary constituency. However, information about all projects in each phase of the scheme is available through their respective summary reports, published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme>.

## ■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

**Selaine Saxby:** [25108]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much has been spent through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund; and how many measures have been installed as a result of that expenditure, by parliamentary constituency.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) is a 10-year, £3.8bn 2019 manifesto commitment. To date, total committed grant funding awarded for SHDF and the associated demonstrator is over £1bn. SHDF Wave 1 awarded £179m in grant funding, Wave 2.1 awarded grant funding of £778m in March 2023 and £75.5m in grant funding under the SHDF Wave 2.2 top-up competition, was announced in March 2024. A further £1.25bn has been allocated to SHDF for delivery across 2025-28. The number of measures installed by region is provided in monthly official statistics releases, which can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-housing-decarbonisation-fund-statistics>.

## ■ Warm Home Discount Scheme

**Selaine Saxby:** [25103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many households received the Warm Home Discount by parliamentary constituency since its creation.

**Selaine Saxby:** [25104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much has been spent through the Warm Home Discount scheme by parliamentary constituency since its creation.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Department published statistics on the Warm Home Discount (WHD) for the first time in 2023:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/warm-home-discount-statistics-2022-to-2023>

Table 17 in the published tables shows the number of households and the total cost of those households who received the WHD, by Core Group type, since 2011/12 when the WHD was introduced, up until the latest figures for 2022/23. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the number of households and the total cost of those households who received the WHD by parliamentary constituency in 2022/23.

Figures covering 2023/24 are expected to be published on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Dairy Products: Labelling****Helen Morgan:**[\[24731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Not for EU labelling requirements in the dairy sector on levels of (a) food and (b) packaging waste.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

A public consultation on not for EU labelling requirements was held earlier this year. The evidence is now being analysed and we expect to publish a response in due course. Excessive wastage of food or packaging were not raised as a significant concern in these responses or in any wider industry forums.

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Buildings****Julie Elliott:**[\[24911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) has been found on his Department's estate.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

After significant survey work across the estate, we have identified 4 Properties where RAAC is present. Where necessary for Health and Safety, buildings have been closed or partially closed to enable remediation.

**■ Farming Recovery Fund: Staffordshire****Sarah Edwards:**[\[25601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason Staffordshire's eligibility for the Farming Recovery Fund is under review.

**Robbie Moore:**

October 2023 to March 2024 was the second wettest 6-month period on record in England, recorded rainfall was nearly 60% above the average of the last decade. The impacts on farm businesses are already evident in some sectors and are likely to extend through the year.

The launch of the Farming Recovery Fund on 9 April captured a first tranche of 9 counties affected by the flooding as a result of Storm Henk. Since then, we have listened and responded to feedback by removing the requirement for land to be within 150 metres of the main river and are committed to reviewing the eligibility to ensure that it best meets the needs for those who were most affected by the persistent wet weather over the winter.

In recognition of the persistent wet weather over the winter, I am in discussion with farmers about what further support is needed. As part of this support, we have provided flexibility to farmers who have not been able to complete their agri-environment scheme requirements in winter or the spring – due to the prolonged wet weather impacts.

**■ Flood Control: Finance****Justin Madders:**[\[24779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to introduce further funding rounds under the natural flood management programme.

**Robbie Moore:**

We want to mainstream the use of Natural Flood Management (NFM) and expect the £25 million NFM programme will help inform how we do that. While we do not currently have plans for further rounds, we would encourage applicants to apply for NFM funding as part of our wider £5.6 billion investment in flood and coastal defences.

**■ Flowers: Diseases****Sir Chris Bryant:**[\[24868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many recorded incidents of disease were connected to imports from the EU of (a) gypsophila, (b) solidago, (c) orchids, (d) dianthus and (e) chrysanthemum between 2020 and 2023.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

During 2020 – 2023 there were no findings of disease on cut flowers of the stated genera from the EU. Please note that import physical checks on cut flowers from the EU were not required during this time.



**■ Flowers: Imports****Sir Chris Bryant:** [\[24866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what was the total number of cut flower imports between 2010 and 2020.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

During 2010 – 2020 there were 177,113 imports of cut flowers.

**■ Flowers: UK Trade with EU****Sir Chris Bryant:** [\[24867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) gypsophila, (b) solidago, (c) orchids, (d) dianthus and (e) chrysanthemum consignments were imported from the EU between 2020 and 2023.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

During 2020 – 2023 there were 54,432 imports of cut flowers of the stated genera from the EU.

**■ Food Supply: Climate Change****Catherine West:** [\[25519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of climate change on UK food security.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

The UK has a high degree of food security, built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 73% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year. UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

We recognise the impact of climate change on the food system which is why we are investing in the sustainability and resilience of the domestic sector and are undertaking work to improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change on the wider food system and the resilience of the wider UK food supply chain. The third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) was published in July 2023, and addresses the 61 risks and opportunities identified in the third Climate Change Risk Assessment. NAP3 includes dedicated responses to risks to domestic agricultural productivity and UK food availability, safety, and quality from climate change overseas.

The Agriculture Act imposes a duty on the Secretary of State to have regard to the need to encourage environmentally sustainable food production. Our farming reforms aim to support a highly productive food producing sector by supporting farmers to

manage land in a way that improves food production and is more environmentally sustainable, and by paying farmers to produce public goods such as water quality, biodiversity, animal health and welfare and climate change mitigation, alongside food production.

The UK Food Security Report (UKFSR) sets out an analysis of statistical data relating to food security, fulfilling the duty in the Agriculture Act 2020 to present a report on food security to Parliament at least once every three years. It examines trends relevant to food security to present the best available understanding. The report was last published in December 2021 and will next be published by December 2024.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister announced that we will introduce an annual Food Security Index to underpin the three-yearly UK Food Security report. This will present the key data and analysis needed to monitor how we are maintaining our current levels of self-sufficiency and overall food security. We will publish the first draft of the Food Security Index during the second UK Farm to Fork Summit on 14 May 2024.

## ■ Hornets

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

[\[25385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to provide (a) resources, (b) strategy and (c) public information to tackle invasive Asian hornets.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The National Bee Unit (NBU), part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have a long-standing relationship with Defra to deliver the Bee Health Programme which includes management and control of honeybee pests and diseases and responding to outbreaks of Asian hornets. As part of APHA, the NBU have already and will continue to draw on further resources from the wider agency to take action on Asian hornets. There is an Asian hornet contingency plan in place which details the government response to Asian hornets and it is regularly reviewed. The most effective way of minimising the threat of Asian hornets is through our continued eradication response, with the aim of preventing Asian hornets from establishing.

The NBU has been taking action against Asian hornets since 2016 and has a fine-tuned response. The Inspectors frequently find a nest within a day of an initial sighting being reported. From 2016 to 2022, there were 23 confirmed sightings, leading to the destruction of 13 nests. In 2023, the well-developed strategy was scaled up to deal with increased incursions with 78 confirmed sightings and 72 nests destroyed.

We are using a range of communication channels to raise awareness and keep beekeepers and the public informed about Asian hornets. To support accurate and timely reporting, Defra has funded development of the Asian hornet watch app. The NBU keep beekeepers informed of the response through updates published on BeeBase and have also carried out other awareness raising activities, including a blog filmed in Kent to support Asian Hornet Week in 2023. The Non-Native Species

Secretariat (NNSS) works with over 50 local actions groups and a wide range of other organisations to raise awareness of Asian hornets. In 2023 they sent out 14,000 alert posters and 25,000 ID sheets, and since January 2024 they have sent a further 31,000 alert posters, 57,000 ID sheets, and 14,000 nest ID sheets. Professor Nicola Spence, the Defra Deputy Director for Plant and Bee Health, Plant Varieties and Seeds, has provided press interviews covering details of the response to Asian hornets. Defra is hosting an exhibit at the 2024 Chelsea Flower Show dedicated to raising awareness of the Asian hornet, to increase vigilance amongst the public.

## ■ Import Controls: Disease Control

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[24028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2024 to Question 13303 on Import Controls: Disease Control, when he will publish an economic impact assessment of the legislative measures required to introduce the Border Target Operating Model.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

Analysis has been and will continue to be produced for statutory instruments in accordance with the Better Regulation Framework.

An Impact Assessment was produced for The Official Controls (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2024 and was published on 22 April on [legislation.gov.uk](https://legislation.gov.uk).

## ■ Import Controls: Fees and Charges

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[24232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Border Target Operating Model, if he will establish a (a) complaints and (b) appeals process for importers who feel they have been charged a higher sum under the Common User Charge than they are liable for.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

Businesses who must pay the Common User Charge will be guided by appropriate advice and support.

Shared Services Connected Ltd. (SSCL) will issue invoices on behalf of Defra. As part of their service, SSCL will be the first point of contact for any invoice related queries, including where a customer has a query about the amount they have been charged. SSCL also have an established complaints procedure. SSCL's contact details will be provided on the invoices. Where required, SSCL can escalate queries, issues and complaints to a dedicated team within Defra for further consideration, investigation and resolution.

In addition, where a customer is not satisfied with any aspect of the service, they can follow [Defra's standard complaints procedure](#), as detailed in the CUC terms and conditions.

**■ Import Controls: Staff****Stella Creasy:** [\[24029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many staff will be assigned to (a) monitor and enforce the restrictions introduced under the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) and (b) carry out the administration of the BTOM, expressed as (i) full-time equivalent numbers and (ii) headcount.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

Monitoring and enforcing the border controls introduced under the BTOM is undertaken collaboratively on a site by site basis at each point of entry between Defra, Port Health Authorities (part of local authorities), the Animal and Plant Health Agency, Border Force and HMRC, and the Port Operators.

The department considers that this information is operationally - and in the case of Port Operators commercially - sensitive and should be withheld.

**■ Inland Border Facilities: Ashford****Stella Creasy:** [\[24449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the (a) cost of construction and (b) estimated annual running cost of the Sevington Border Control Post.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

(a) The Department considers that this information is commercially sensitive and should be withheld.

(b) The Department will publish further information on Sevington Border Control Post operating costs shortly. This information will be provided as an update to existing common user charge GOV.UK publications.

**■ Nature Conservation****Deidre Brock:** [\[25246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the recommendations in the report entitled Creating a nature-rich UK: Unleashing the potential of nature-based solutions, published by Zero Hour on 13 September 2023.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is already carrying out a programme of large-scale habitat creation and restoration to implement nature-based solutions. Taking actions for nature, including protecting our land and species, is also a core part of our third National Adaptation Programme.

Through the Environment Act 2021, we have committed to the legally binding targets of creating or restoring more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites by 2042 and increasing the tree canopy and woodland cover of

England to 16.5% by 2050. We have also made a number of further commitments in the Environmental Improvement Plan, including restoring approximately 280,000 hectares of peatland in England by 2050 and encouraging and supporting increased agroforestry with an aim to increase silvo-arable agroforestry to 10% of all arable land by 2050.

We are providing significant funding in this area. Our transformational, £675m, Nature for Climate Fund has supported tree planting to reach the decade's highest levels, with more than 15 million trees planted in England during this Parliament. In February we awarded £25 million funding to 40 schemes around England for improving flood resilience through a new natural flood management programme.

The Government has guaranteed an average annual budget of £2.4 billion for the farming sector for the life of this Parliament. Our reforms require specific actions to be taken that enhance the environment and protect food production. This includes paying farmers to restore valuable habitats such as lowland peat and to engage in sustainable agroforestry and wetland management, which will support adaptation to climate change.

#### ■ **River Avon: Pollution**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[20852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the levels of pollution in the River Avon.

**Robbie Moore:**

The Government published the Plan for Water in April 2023 – our comprehensive strategy for managing our water environment, including our rivers. It brings together the significant steps we have already taken with a suite of new policy actions. It aims to change the way that we manage water, improve water quality, and continue to secure our water supply through increased investment, stronger regulation and enforcement.

The latest Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment of Ecological Status for rivers, including River Avon, sets out the condition of waterbodies across the country. Although none of the 6 waterbodies across the River Avon achieved Good Ecological Status – a measure of water quality – most of the underlying tests did do. Agency modelling predicts that approximately 55% of phosphates in the main River Avon arise from water company wastewater treatment works and approximately 30% arise from agriculture.

This Government is committed to improving water quality in the River Avon and the Environment Agency continue to drive this forward by carrying out inspections at agricultural and water company sites along the river.

## ■ River Avon: Pollution Control

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[20853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the levels of pollution in the River Avon.

**Robbie Moore:**

We are committed to continue improving water quality and are delivering record investment, stronger regulation and tougher enforcement to improve our water for our own health, for nature and the economy. In the Avon catchment area, over 60 water company assets (sewage treatment works, sewage pumping stations and combined sewer overflows) were inspected by the Environment Agency (EA) by end of February 2024 for the 2023/24 business year.

Along the River Avon, the EA also conducts inspections at agricultural and intensive farming sites to ensure compliance with regulations. Additionally, the EA offer advice and guidance on best practices to mitigate potential pollution risks to farmers and landowners.

## ■ Rural Areas: Community Development

**Andrew Bridgen:**

[\[25228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support small rural community projects in North West Leicestershire constituency.

**Robbie Moore:**

- In September 2022, the UK Government launched the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The fund provides a rural top up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, providing allocations for eligible local authorities in England to help address the additional needs and challenges facing rural areas.
- The fund provides capital funding to support new and improved community infrastructure. It will provide essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.
- As part of the fund North West Leicestershire has received a total allocation of up to £469,090 between April 2023 and March 2025.
- Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of the REPF – including assessing and approving project applications, processing payments and day-to-day monitoring. As with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the REPF was designed to enable local decision making to better target the rural priorities of places within England. Places are empowered to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level.
- In addition, funding has been provided through Defra's Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund. The St John the Evangelist Church in Donisthorpe received a £75,000

towards their project which aims to transform the inside of the church into a space which can be shared with the whole community. The improved, warmer, friendlier environment will help the building to become somewhere that the community are happy to enter and feel a belonging to, suitable for a variety of activities, bringing people together to care for one another.

- This is one of 106 community buildings which have received grants from the Fund to date and with the additional £5 million of funding for community buildings announced in The Budget many more communities will be able to bid for grants to help improve their buildings.

### ■ **Seafood: Imports**

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[25474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the number of (a) verification requests and (b) refusals of seafood consignments entering the UK in each of the last five years.

**Sir Mark Spencer:**

This information is not held centrally by the Government.

### ■ **Water Companies: Insolvency**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[24632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what criteria his Department uses to determine whether water companies have failed to carry out their (a) statutory functions and (b) licensed activities to such an extent that his Department would apply to the High Court for them to be placed into special administration under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991.

**Robbie Moore:**

The Defra Secretary of State and the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat), with consent of the Secretary of State, have the power to request the court to place a company in a special administration regime (SAR) so that its business can either be rescued or transferred as a going concern to new owners. Section 24 (2) of the Water Industry Act 1991 sets out the legal parameters for which a SAR can be applied for.

### ■ **Water: Sports**

**Jamie Stone:** [\[24985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department requested that water sports (a) training sessions, (b) activities and (c) events were (i) cancelled and (ii) postponed due to unsafe water quality in each year since 2020.

**Robbie Moore:**

Defra is responsible for designating bathing waters in England. As decisions on water sports training sessions, activities and events are managed locally, Defra has not requested that any are cancelled or postponed.

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[24986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many water sports (a) training sessions, (b) activities and (c) events have been reported to his Department due to unsafe water quality in each year since 2020.

**Robbie Moore:**

Defra is responsible for designating bathing waters in England but many water sports training sessions, activities and events will take place outside of these bathing waters. Information on water quality issues affecting local training sessions, activities and events is not routinely reported to Defra. Government is committed to improving water quality through more investment, stronger regulation and tougher enforcement to tackle every source of river and sea pollution.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[24574\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will make representations to his Bahraini counterpart on the release of (a) Sheikh Ali Salman, (b) Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, (c) Hassan Mushaima and (d) other members of the political opposition in that country.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The FCDO continues to follow matters that relate to human rights within Bahrain closely, including some individual cases. The Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, discussed human rights with Bahrain Foreign Minister Al Zayani on 22 April. The UK remains committed to supporting reforms in Bahrain and to encouraging the government to meet its human rights commitments.

### ■ Brazil: Floods

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[24795\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will take steps with his international counterparts to support the Brazilian government following the dam collapse and floods in Rio Grande do Sul.

**David Rutley:**

I [Minister Rutley] was saddened to learn of the terrible flooding that has ravaged Rio Grande do Sul. I offered my sincere condolences to all those affected by this tragic incident, including the families of those who have so sadly lost their lives. His Majesty's Ambassador to Brazil has also offered condolences to State Governor Eduardo Leite. Through the Start Fund the UK has supported an allocation of £193,000 to provide humanitarian aid in response to the flooding in Brazil. The Start Fund is a pooled fund to which the UK is a major donor.



**■ Development Aid: Sanitation and Water****Claire Hanna:**[\[25099\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, how many (a) clean water and (b) sanitation projects his Department has funded through official development assistance since 2021.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK is committed to improving access to clean water and sanitation. In 2021, UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding for Water Supply and Sanitation was £78 million. In 2022, UK ODA funding for Water Supply and Sanitation was £48 million. Official 2023 figures will be published in Autumn 2024. FCDO data shows 46 active ODA-funded development programmes with water or sanitation components.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: ICT****Matt Rodda:**[\[25016\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, with reference to the guidance by the Central Digital and Data Office entitled Guidance on the Legacy IT Risk Assessment Framework, published on 29 September 2023, how many red-rated IT systems are used by his Department; and how many red-rated IT systems have been identified since 4 December 2023.

**David Rutley:**

The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), in the Cabinet Office, has established a programme to support departments managing legacy IT. CDDO has agreed a framework to identify 'red-rated' systems, indicating high levels of risk surrounding certain assets within the IT estate. Departments have committed to have remediation plans in place for these systems by next year (2025). It is not appropriate to release sensitive information held about specific red-rated systems or more detailed plans for remediation within the FCDO's IT estate, as this information could indicate which systems are at risk, and may highlight potential security vulnerabilities.

**■ Gaza: Humanitarian Aid****Mark Logan:**[\[24838\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will make an assessment of the (a) effectiveness of aid distribution in Gaza and (b) potential merits of reinstating funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

Allegations that UNRWA staff were involved in the events that took place on 7 October in Israel are appalling, which is why we took decisive action to pause future funding to the organisation.

The Prime Minister has been clear that the UK will set out its position on future funding to UNRWA following careful consideration of Catherine Colonna's final report, UNRWA's response and the ongoing UN Office for Internal Oversight Services investigation into these allegations.

We have seen an increase in the number of aid trucks getting into Gaza and some aid has now moved from Ashdod Port into Gaza, but more needs to be done. We need progress on the UN's minimal operating requirements, including more visas and driver approvals granted, as well as more trucks permitted to cross into Gaza. We also need to see an expansion of the types of aid allowed into Gaza and the provision of electricity, water and telecommunications, to both the north and the south of Gaza.

Ministers continue to press these points with Israeli counterparts.

## ■ Horn of Africa

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[25497\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, how many full-time equivalent staff from his Department work on programmes relating to the Horn of Africa.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The FCDO employs 480-499 full-time equivalent staff in UK missions overseas and in Africa Directorate at headquarters covering the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan). Further support on the Horn of Africa is provided by other teams across the rest of the organisation. The UK delivers a wide range of programmes across the region, benefiting millions of people.

## ■ Nigeria: Christianity

**Jim Shannon:** [\[24919\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if his Department will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the religious dimension of the recent attacks against Christians by (a) jihadist groups and (b) Fulani militants in (i) Northern Nigeria and (ii) the Middle Belt.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

In North East Nigeria, terrorist groups like Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa have sought to undermine the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) by attacking those who do not subscribe to their extremist views. Separately, intercommunal violence and criminal banditry in the North West and Middle Belt has a devastating effect on all faith and non-faith communities, including Christians. The root causes of this intercommunal violence are often complex, and include competition over resources and disruption to traditional ways of life created by environmental degradation, in addition to religious factors. The Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria programme (SPRING) will support Nigeria to address the root causes of conflict in the Middle Belt, including natural resource management challenges. The programme will aim to help 1.5 million women and men benefit from reduced violence in their communities, and support 300,000 people to better adapt to the effects of environmental degradation.

## ■ Oppression

**Catherine West:**

[\[24983\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, whether he has had recent discussions with his international partners on transnational repression.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The UK Government is committed to working with international partners to build our collective resilience to all forms of foreign interference including transnational repression (TNR). The Foreign Secretary attended the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in April in Capri. The resulting communiqué included language which condemned the targeting of activists, critics, and journalists through TNR activity. Officials regularly engage with like-minded international partners bilaterally and in multilateral fora, such as the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism, to share knowledge and identify opportunities to collaborate to effectively counter TNR activity. The UK will continue to engage with international partners through bilateral and multilateral channels to address this issue.

## ■ South America: Water

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[24863\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, whether his Department plans to take steps with (a) NGOs and (b) charities to tackle deficiencies in water (i) quality and (ii) access in South American countries due to El Niño.

**David Rutley:**

The FCDO is a significant contributor to global humanitarian pooled funds which are activated to respond to a humanitarian crisis such as those caused by El Niño. This includes the UN Crisis Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and the NGO Start Fund. Since June 2023, the Start Fund has provided £750,000 across the region to support responses to water, health and food security impacts of drought, particularly in Venezuela, Guatemala and Colombia, with these responses targeting around 25,000 people.

## ■ Sustainable Development

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[25100\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of progress made towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK recommitted to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 2023 UN General Assembly and the International Development White Paper places the SDGs at the forefront of UK development efforts. To get the SDGs back on track, we are working in partnership to deliver: more money, better spent. The UK is taking action to deliver the quantum leap in financing needed, but finance alone is not enough. In March 2024, the UK convened an SDG Wilton Park event with partners from around

the world to discuss what actions will accelerate SDG progress, with a focus on delivering across multiple Goals at once.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

**Jim Shannon:**

[24918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to reduce A&E waiting times.

**Helen Whately:**

Our Delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services sets out the range of measures being taken to improve accident and emergency waiting times. The plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/delivery-plan-for-recovering-urgent-and-emergency-care-services/>

Backed by £1 billion of dedicated funding, the National Health Service delivered 5,000 additional core hospital beds in 2023/24, and will maintain this capacity expansion in 2024/25, to support patient flow through hospitals. Accident and emergency waiting times improved year-on-year in 2023/24 for the first time since 2009/10, not including the first year of the pandemic. The NHS Planning Guidance, published in March 2024, commits to further improvements in emergency care performance in 2024/25, with more information available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/operational-planning-and-contracting/>

### ■ Air Pollution: Housing

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[25170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will (a) issue guidance and (b) provide resources to local authorities to help tackle household air pollution.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government is taking significant and wide-ranging action to drive improvements to air quality, as set out in our Environmental Improvement Plan, including by providing over £883 million to help local authorities develop and implement local nitrogen dioxide reduction plans, and to support those impacted by these plans.

The Government has published guidance for private and social landlords on understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould, following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak from a severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home, and is additionally investing £10 million into the Healthy Homes pilots, working with selected local authorities to test measures to improve enforcement on damp and mould in private rented sector housing, while boosting the capability and capacity of enforcement teams in the

greatest areas of housing and health need. Further information on the guidance for private and social landlords is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/damp-and-mould-understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-for-rented-housing-providers/understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-of-damp-and-mould-in-the-home--2>

## ■ Air Pollution: Monitoring

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[25169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential (a) viability and (b) merits of creating a national indoor air quality observatory to monitor (i) levels and (ii) the potential health effects of indoor air pollution.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department continues to work collaboratively across the Government to address the impact of air pollution. We are taking significant and wide-ranging action to drive improvements to air quality, as set out in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Environmental Improvement Plan. The United Kingdom Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) Cleaner Air Programme also aims to help reduce people's exposure to air pollution, tackle disparities in exposure, and improve outcomes for all, including through increasing the evidence base and improving awareness and understanding of the health impacts of air pollution. The UKHSA has published a study quantifying the health burden in the population of England from key respiratory conditions associated with residential exposures to damp, mould, and formaldehyde.

## ■ Asthma

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[25264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of asthma (a) acute admissions and (b) deaths in the last 12 months.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England has advised that admissions data for asthma show that it follows the seasonal pattern seen in past years of falling, lower rates in the spring and summer months, and increasing, higher rates in the winter months. There is no published mortality data for asthma available for the past 12 months. The most recent data published by the Office for National Statistics and NHS England covers the period up to 2022.

## ■ Cancer: Health Services

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[25386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to reduce waiting times for cancer (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment in Merseyside.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department is taking steps to reduce cancer diagnosis and treatment waiting times across England, including Merseyside. The Government is working jointly with NHS England on implementing the delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlogs in elective care, and plans to spend more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to help drive up and protect elective activity, including cancer diagnosis and treatment activity. Additionally, as outlined in the 2024/25 NHS England Planning Guidance, NHS England are providing over £266 million in cancer service development funding to Cancer Alliances to support delivery of the operational priorities for cancer.

The latest published cancer performance data for Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) shows that in March 2024, 76% of patients referred met the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS), which aims to ensure patients have cancer diagnosed or ruled out within 28 days of referral from a general practice or screening services. This surpasses the 75% standard and shows an improvement of 5.8% since March 2023.

Similarly, the latest performance data for Cheshire and Merseyside ICB shows that of those referred for cancer treatment in March 2024, 92.4% met the 31-day wait from a decision to treat to first or subsequent treatment of cancer combined standard, and 75.4% met the 62-day referral to first definitive treatment for cancer combined standard. According to data from NHS England, this is above national cancer performance for both treatment standards.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[25387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to increase the proportion of people who are treated within 62 days of referral for cancer treatment.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[25388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to increase the proportion of people who receive treatment for cancer within 31 days of a decision to begin that treatment.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[25389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to increase the proportion of people who are provided a cancer diagnosis within 28 days of their referral for testing.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department is taking steps to reduce cancer diagnosis and treatment waiting times across England, including the time between an urgent general practice referral and the commencement of treatment for cancer for patients. The Government is working jointly with NHS England on implementing the delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlogs in elective care, and plans to spend more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to help drive up and protect elective activity, including cancer diagnosis and treatment activity. Additionally, as outlined in the 2024/25 NHS

England Planning Guidance, NHS England is providing over £266 million in cancer service development funding to Cancer Alliances, to support delivery of the operational priorities for cancer.

To help achieve the cancer waiting times standards, NHS England is streamlining cancer pathways. This includes implementing non-symptom specific pathways for patients who present with non-specific symptoms, as well as timed cancer pathways focused on the most challenged pathways, such as lower gastrointestinal and skin cancer. The pathways aim to support improvements in operational performance and patient experience, as well as providing models to support sustainable improvement.

Furthermore, to improve cancer treatment we are maximising the pace of the roll-out of additional diagnostic capacity. We are currently delivering the second year of the three-year investment plan for establishing community diagnostic centres (CDCs). We are ensuring timely implementation of new CDC locations and upgrades to existing CDCs, with capacity prioritised for cancer diagnostics. As of April 2024, 160 CDCs are operational, and have delivered almost 8 million tests, checks, and scans since July 2021. Additionally, we are supporting advances in radiotherapy. Since 2016, we've invested £162 million into cutting-edge radiotherapy equipment to replace or upgrade over 100 radiotherapy treatment machines.

We are committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for patients, and our approach is seeing success. Almost 344,000 people received their first cancer treatment in the 12 months to March 2024. Further, 2023/24 is the best year so far for the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS), with the latest performance data showing that NHS England hit the FDS target for the second month in a row at 77.3%, above the standard of 75%. We have also reduced the 62 day or over cancer referral to treatment backlog, to pre-pandemic levels.

## ■ Dental Services

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[25524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many courses of treatment were delivered by NHS general dental practitioners in each month between January 2019 to May 2024.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The Dentistry Recovery Plan will make dental services faster, simpler, and fairer for patients, and will fund approximately 2.5 million additional appointments, or more than 1.5 million additional courses of dental treatment. We will further support dentists by raising the minimum Units of Dental Activity (UDA) rate to £28 this year, making National Health Service work more attractive and sustainable. NHS dental activity, as measured by Courses of Treatments delivered, has increased by 23% between 2021/22 and 2022/23. The number of UDAs commissioned and delivered is published each month on the NHS Business Services Authority Open Data Portal, which currently holds data from April 2016 to January 2024. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://opendata.nhsbsa.net/dataset/english-contractor-monthly-general-dental-activity>

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [25527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which NHS dental practices were listed as accepting new NHS adult patients on 1 (a) March and (b) May 2024.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

Our Dentistry Recovery Plan, backed by £200 million, will make dental services faster, simpler, and fairer for National Health Service dental patients. It will fund approximately 2.5 million additional appointments, or more than 1.5 million additional courses of dental treatment. A New Patient Premium is supporting dentists to take on new patients, and as of 8 April, nearly 500 more practices have said they are open to new patients, compared to the end of January 2024. The Find a Dentist website allows people to see which practices have said they are accepting new patients, and is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

## ■ Health Professions

**Sir Robert Buckland:** [25215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure public (a) safety and (b) clarity in the healthcare roles of (i) physician associates and doctors and (ii) other NHS staff.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The introduction of regulation by the General Medical Council (GMC) will provide a standardised framework of governance and assurance for the clinical practice and professional conduct of Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) and Physician Associates (PAs), and make it easier for employers, patients, and the public to understand the relationship between these roles and that of doctors.

Whilst statutory regulation is an important part of ensuring patient safety, it is also achieved through robust clinical governance processes within healthcare organisations, which are required to have systems of oversight and supervision for their staff.

NHS England is working with the relevant professional colleges and regulators to ensure the use of associate roles is expanded safely and effectively, and that they are appropriately supported, supervised, and integrated into multidisciplinary teams. NHS England has written to trusts to remind them of their responsibilities in this area, with further information available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/ensuring-safe-and-effective-integration-of-physician-associates-into-departmental-multidisciplinary-teams-through-good-practice/>

We are clear that AAs and PAs are not, and should never be, referred to as medical practitioners, doctors, or consultants. It is the responsibility of professionals and their



employers to ensure professional titles are used appropriately. As set out in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines, all healthcare professionals directly involved in a patient's care should introduce themselves and explain their role to the patient. The GMC has published interim standards for AAs and PAs in advance of regulation, which make it clear that professionals should always introduce their role to patients and set out their responsibilities in the team.

## ■ Health Services: Costs

**Karin Smyth:** [\[24952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate she has made of the cost to (a) integrated care boards and (b) NHS England of commissioning specialised services in the (i) 2022-23 and (ii) 2023-24 financial years.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[24953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the nine statutory joint committees formed between integrated care boards and NHS England regions on specialised commissioning.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[24954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) training and (b) support on specialised services is provided for staff working in integrated care boards in the (i) East of England, (ii) Midlands and (iii) North West following full delegation of commissioning in 2024-25.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[24955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate she has made of the proportion of specialised services that met national standards in the (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24 financial years.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[24956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has she made of the adequacy of the progress towards full delegated commissioning for Integrated Care Boards by April 2025 in (a) the South West, (b) the South East, (c) London and (d) the North East.

**Helen Whately:**

The total spend on commissioning specialised services was £22.7 billion in 2022/23 and £25 billion in 2023/24. As formal delegation of specialised services to integrated care boards (ICBs) begins from 1 April 2024, all spend on commissioning these services in previous years has been the responsibility of NHS England, and not the ICBs. For 2024/25, NHS England is delegating £5.3 billion of commissioning resource to ICBs in the three regions, where delegation will begin from April 2024. This figure excludes high-cost drugs and devices spend.

The nine joint committee arrangements arose from a robust process, which included a readiness assessment, the Pre-Delegation Assessment Framework, made between

the ICBs and NHS England regional teams, followed by a National Moderation Panel, and final decision taken by the NHS England Board. The NHS England Board papers for February 2023, December 2023, and March 2024 are available, respectively, at the following links:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/board-2-feb-23-item-7-delegation-of-spec-comm.pdf>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/specialised-commissioning-2024-25-next-steps-with-delegation-to-integrated-care-boards/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/specialised-commissioning-update-on-specialised-services-for-delegation/>

The process concluded that a transitional year of joint commissioning would offer the most secure and stable transition towards delegation. There is a comprehensive programme structure in place to support the ICBs in the four regions that are working towards delegation in April 2025, to support them in being ready to take on the responsibilities. NHS England is continuing to work alongside ICBs to ensure that delegation agreements are in place, including ensuring appropriate collaborative arrangements are developed to support ICB commissioning of specialised services. These arrangements will be monitored by NHS England through its assurance processes for specialised services.

A webinar series for commissioning staff, including colleagues in ICBs, was delivered in 2023 across different aspects of specialised services, and there are additional webinars planned in 2024. There has been, and will continue to be, local engagement between regional commissioning teams and ICB teams, as the future operating model is co-developed. A suite of support materials has been shared with teams and continues to be updated. As examples, these include: Commissioning Change Management Business Rules; Finance and Accounting Standard Operating Procedure; and the Contracting Standard Operating Procedure.

NHS England develops services specification and clinical policies through its Clinical Reference Groups. There are 250 published service specifications which include clinical pathway, quality, and other relevant standards, which are specific to the clinical service. Regional commissioning teams, overseen by the statutory joint committees, are responsible for implementing the specifications in their commissioning of services, along with assessing compliance against national standards. NHS England has developed Specialised Services Quality Dashboards alongside service specifications, which provide additional data to monitor the quality of services.

## ■ Heart Diseases: Women

**Gill Furniss:**

[23909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of including material on (a) diagnosing and (b) detecting cardiovascular diseases in women's health hubs.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 1 May 2024]:* No specific assessment has been made. We are investing £25 million in women's health hubs, so that women can get better access to care for menstrual problems, contraception, menopause, and more. Integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for commissioning services that meet the needs of their local population, and will determine the exact services that their women's health hub will provide, so long as they deliver the core services set out in the Women's Health Hubs: Core Specification, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/womens-health-hubs-information-and-guidance/womens-health-hubs-core-specification>

Future expansion of women's health hubs will reflect the need to meet women's health needs holistically. This could also include developing care pathways into wider health and public services, including those for cardiovascular disease, however hubs should not create an additional step in the patient journey, or delay referral for specialist or urgent care where required.

## ■ Hospitals: Southport

**Damien Moore:**

[25024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information her Department holds on the number of people who (a) were under the age of 18 and (b) from Southport constituency who attended (i) Alder Hey Children's Hospital Trust and (ii) Ormskirk District General Hospital Children's Accident and Emergency Departments in each year from 2002-2023.

**Helen Whately:**

Whilst the information is not available in the format requested, NHS England publishes information on accident and emergency attendance, which is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/hospital-accident--emergency-activity>

Accident and emergency attendance data is available for Adler Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust from 2008/09. The following tables respectively show the accident and emergency attendance for patients between zero and 17 years old in each of the last three years, and the accident and emergency attendance for patients between zero and 19 years old each year from 2008/09, at Adler Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust:

YEAR	ALDER HEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL TRUST	SOUTHPORT AND ORMSKIRK HOSPITAL NHS TRUST
2022/23	67,985	34,615
2021/22	69,220	31,850
2020/21	42,155	16,100

YEAR	ALDER HEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL TRUST	SOUTHPORT AND ORMSKIRK HOSPITAL NHS TRUST
2019/20	60,590	32,395
2018/19	61,190	32,095
2017/18	59,815	31,610
2016/17	58,157	44,104
2015/16	58,537	40,388
2014/15	55,817	36,339
2013/14	56,212	35,059
2012/13	57,388	34,218
2011/12	56,728	35,027
2010/11	58,842	28,428
2009/10	57,873	27,225
2008/09	59,290	27,088

## Notes:

1. Accident and emergency data is published at a National Health Service trust level, not at hospital site level, and therefore attendance data is not available by constituency; and
2. on the 1 July 2023, Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust was dissolved and its services transferred to Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

## ■ Joint Replacements: Post-operative Care

**John McDonnell:**

[\[25605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to ensure that best practice guidelines for prosthetic infection are implemented across elective surgery clinical care pathways.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Government is working with NHS England to improve perioperative care. This should ensure best practice guidelines are implemented across surgery clinical care pathways, including for prosthetic infections. In May 2023, NHS England published guidance setting out five core perioperative care requirements relating to the care of adult patients awaiting planned inpatient surgery. These measures address the key objective of identifying health needs as early as possible in perioperative pathways, and then using time on the waiting list to optimise health. The NHS England National Elective Recovery and Outpatients programme is working with NHS England regional teams to help oversee and support compliance, and will continue to do so throughout 2024/25.

## ■ Liver Diseases: Women

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[24743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she has taken to tackle changes in the level of premature deaths caused by liver disease in women under 75 between 2001 and 2022.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

Through the 2021 Drugs Strategy, we are making the largest ever single increase in drug and alcohol treatment and recovery funding, with £780 million of additional investment. Of this, £532 million is being invested to rebuild local authority commissioned drugs and alcohol treatment services in England. This is in addition to the funding invested through the Public Health Grant

By February 2024, the funding had enabled an additional 9,878 people to benefit from treatment for alcohol problems, where alcohol was their only substance misuse problem, and a further 6,258 people where, as well as their alcohol problems, they were also being treated for problems associated with non-opiate drug use.

Local authorities are responsible for understanding the drug and alcohol treatment needs of their local communities, and planning and commissioning services to meet that need, including ensuring women have good access to the most effective treatment. The Department supports them in doing this, with data and guidance.

The National Health Service's piloting of early diagnosis and prevention through 19 community diagnostic hubs reached over 7000 people in 2022/23, and is identifying undiagnosed liver disease. The Community Liver Health Check pilot provides FibroScans in one-stop community clinics, where patients also have other investigations as required.

Beyond treatment and early diagnosis, we are committed to tackling alcohol harms, including reducing consumption levels, and in 2023 the Government introduced reforms to alcohol duty, meaning products are taxed directly in proportion to their alcohol content.

## ■ Maternity Services

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[25319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will take steps to implement the recommendations of MBRRACE-UK's report entitled Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care: Lessons learned to inform maternity care from the UK and Ireland Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths and Morbidity 2019-21, published in October 2023.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The recommendations made in the Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the UK's (MBRRACE-UK) report have informed a series of work programmes to improve maternity safety. This includes ongoing work delivered through NHS England's Three-Year Delivery Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Services, which sets out how care will be made safer, more personalised, and more equitable for women, babies, and families. This is supported by an additional investment of £186 million a year to improve maternity and neonatal care, compared to 2021, on top of an additional £35 million over three years, from 2024/25 to 2026/27.

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[25320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will take steps to ensure that NHS England facilitates the dissemination of the findings of the maternal, newborn and infant clinical outcome review programme delivered by MBRRACE-UK.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The maternal, newborn, and infant clinical outcome review programme, delivered by Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the UK (MBRRACE-UK), forms part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme, which is commissioned and managed on behalf of NHS England by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership.

MBRRACE-UK publishes annual data and surveillance reports on their website, and holds a national learning event to disseminate information and audit findings. NHS England supports this approach and reviews all audit recommendations after publication with a range of stakeholders. NHS England's Three-Year Delivery Plan for Maternity and Neonatal services also highlights how NHS England will use MBRRACE-UK's reports to monitor trends and themes at both a national and local level.

## ■ NHS: Carbon Emissions

**Gordon Henderson:**

[24753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS England net zero supplier roadmap, for what reason NHS England's (a) target date for reaching net zero emissions by 2045 and (b) scope to include reporting of global emissions differ from the requirements laid out in the guidance entitled Procurement Policy Note 06/21: Taking account of Carbon Reduction Plans in the procurement of major government contracts.

**Gordon Henderson:**

[24754]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the level of alignment of NHS suppliers with NHS England's requirement for suppliers to commit globally by 2027 to achieve net zero in 2045.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 compels the National Health Service to take action on climate and environmental issues, including by reducing its emissions. The NHS is committed to reducing its environmental impact, whilst delivering the best possible patient care and outcomes, as well as the best possible value for taxpayers.

The Climate Change Act 2008 requires all areas of the public sector to reduce their emissions, although the pace of change will differ between different segments of the public sector, depending on cost, feasibility, and innovation. The NHS in England has committed to reaching Net Zero by 2045. To achieve these goals, the NHS will require the support of its suppliers. In 2021, NHS England published the NHS Net Zero Supplier Roadmap, which sets out a series of milestones to support NHS suppliers in aligning with the NHS's Net Zero ambitions. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/>

The latest milestone, implemented from April 2024, sets out Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) requirements for NHS suppliers aligned to the Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 06/21. As set out in PPN 06/21, NHS suppliers' CRPs need to cover, at a minimum, their emissions in the United Kingdom, and outline their commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

NHS England launched the Evergreen Sustainable Supplier Assessment in June 2023, which enables a two-way conversation with suppliers and the NHS. This online, voluntary self-assessment and reporting tool allows suppliers to understand how to align with the NHS Net Zero and sustainability ambitions. NHS England will continue to engage with regulators, suppliers, and industry bodies ahead of implementing future roadmap milestones, to inform policy development. Guidance setting out the detailed requirements of April 2027 will take into account suppliers' feedback and readiness, and NHS England will aim to publish it well in advance of April 2027 to ensure suppliers have sufficient time to prepare.

**■ Paediatrics: Intensive Care****Rachael Maskell:** [\[22978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of developing a national strategy for paediatric (a) intensive therapy units and (b) rehabilitative services.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department has no current plans to undertake such an assessment. Guidance on the delivery of paediatric critical care services is a matter for NHS England and the relevant professional bodies. Integrated Care Boards are responsible for the commissioning of paediatric rehabilitative services.

An NHS England review of paediatric critical care services was published in 2019, with a further National Specialty Report on Paediatric Critical Care produced in 2022.

**■ Prescription Drugs: Sales****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[24803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to tackle the online sale of prescription-only medications without a prescription.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The sale and supply of prescription-only medicines is regulated by the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (HMR). The HMR provides inspection and enforcement powers for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and creates criminal offences in respect of non-compliance with those regulations. At this time, the Department has no plans to legislate the online sale of prescription-only medicines without a prescription.

**■ Ritlecitinib: Shropshire****Mark Pritchard:** [\[25645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when she expects Litfulo to be made available to NHS patients in (a) Shropshire, (b) Telford and (c) Wrekin.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) makes recommendations on whether all new licensed medicines should be routinely funded by the National Health Service, based on an assessment of their costs and benefits.

On 27 March 2024, NICE published final technology appraisal guidance recommending ritlecitinib (Litfulo) for treating severe alopecia areata in people 12 years old and over. The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended by NICE within three months of the publication of its final guidance.



## ■ Surgery: Waiting Lists

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[25263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce regional variations in the length of NHS elective care waiting lists.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Published management information from NHS England estimates that as of April 2024, three quarters of those waiting for 65 weeks are concentrated in 41 trusts. The National Health Service and Department are providing targeted regional and national intervention to these specific trusts with the largest backlogs, through a programme of challenge and support.

## ■ Visual Impairment: Rehabilitation

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[25289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data her Department holds on the provision of vision rehabilitation support services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department does not collect or hold this information. However, the Department is working with local authorities and other organisations to identify the data needed to support the delivery of adult social care, and provide insight into adult social care outcomes.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Animal Experiments: Licensing

**Henry Smith:**

[\[24752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many licences were active that authorise use of the forced swim test as of 3 May 2024; and how many licences were amended to no longer authorise use of this test since the letter from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to the Animals in Science Committee on 1 March 2024.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The Home Office committed to review all licences authorising the use of the forced swim test (FST) under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 by the end of March 2024 and has subsequently liaised with licence holders where necessary to implement the recommendations of the Animals in Science Committee.

Since 1 March 2024, three project licences have been amended to remove authorisation of the FST, one project licence that authorised the FST has expired, and two project licences that authorised the FST have been revoked.

As of today, three project licences authorise the use of the FST. The Home Office is engaging with the relevant licence holders to ensure the recommendations of the Animals in Science Committee are implemented in full for those licences.

## ■ Asylum: Mental Health

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[25399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of detaining asylum seekers that have experienced torture on their mental health.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

The Home Office takes the welfare and safety of people in its care very seriously and we are committed to ensuring the proper protection and treatment of vulnerable people in detention.

The Home Office recognises that some groups of people can be at particular risk of harm in immigration detention. This is the basis of the Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention policy. In accordance with the policy, people considered to be vulnerable, including those suffering from serious mental health conditions and victims of torture, are detained only when the risk factors in their case are outweighed by the immigration considerations.

People entering detention have a medical screening undertaken by a nurse within two hours of their arrival at an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) which seeks to identify any immediate or long-term healthcare risks. Subject to them providing consent, everyone detained in an IRC is also given an appointment with a doctor for a physical and mental examination which takes place within 24 hours of their arrival at the IRC.

Everyone in detention also has access to a complete range of medical care throughout their period in an IRC including primary care, dentistry, substance misuse treatment services, mental health care and welfare services. Depending on the outcomes of the reception screening and the doctor's appointment, clinical pathways into other healthcare services such as mental health or welfare services may be initiated.

## ■ Asylum: Rwanda

**John McNally:**

[\[24781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which private companies have been contracted by his Department to provide services to the (a) UK government and (b) Rwandan government, to assist in the delivery of the processes outlined in the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

The Department uses a number of suppliers to undertake detention and returns activity, MEDP being a workstream within this area. The key suppliers that will be involved with MEDP will be:

Mitie Care and Custody Ltd – via the immigration escorting contract

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/8e94f338-6049-48f7-8b82-9dea24af8857?p=1>.

CWT – via the immigration travel service contract.

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/36f67d6d-2b26-4ecb-88c6-41291aa8af37?origin=SearchResults&p=1>.

Services provided to the Rwandan Government by private companies are for the Government of Rwanda to procure.

**Nadia Whittome:**

[25398]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the commencement of detention operations undertaken by his Department following the passage of the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024 on levels of contact with people whose asylum claims have been deemed inadmissible.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

The Home Office routinely monitors levels of compliance for individuals who are required to report as a condition of their bail. We have a range of interventions available to us to maintain contact, including face to face reporting, contact by telephone, digital reporting and notifications from the accommodation providers where they reside.

#### ■ **British Embassy Khartoum: Home Country Nationals**

**Layla Moran:**

[25318]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of local staff of the British Embassy in Khartoum who have been resettled in the UK in the last three years.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Home Office do not hold this information.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) do not hold central data of anyone who has resettled in the UK as they would have done so on their own accord. The FCDO has not facilitated any resettlement of Sudanese CBS to the UK in the last 3 years.

#### ■ **Deportation: Rwanda**

**Stella Creasy:**

[25486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of individuals deemed eligible for removal to Rwanda that (a) have (i) partners and (ii) spouses and (b) are a dependent of an individual who has been granted (A) asylum and (B) other leave to remain.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

It would be inappropriate to start giving out numbers. This is operationally sensitive information.

Everyone considered for relocation will be screened and have access to legal advice. Decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis, and nobody will be relocated if it is unsafe or inappropriate for them.

For those with family links in the UK, who want to be considered for entry to the UK, they should seek to do so via legal and safe routes. Nobody should put their lives into the hands of criminal people smuggling gangs by making dangerous and irregular journeys.

## ■ **Drugs: Misuse**

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[25086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Captogan has been found in the UK; and whether his Department is taking steps to prevent it becoming available.

**Chris Philp:**

In December 2021, the Government launched its ten-year drugs strategy, to cut crime and save lives. As part of this, £300 million has been allocated to fund activity to break drug supply chains from end-to-end, This includes restricting upstream flow, securing the UK border, and ensuring we remain agile in the face of changing threats.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) regularly assess the threat posed to the UK by the trafficking of illicit drugs. At this time, we are not aware of any captagon on UK streets and to date, no instances of captagon being seized at a UK border have been recorded; however, shipments have been seized in Europe.

As such, the UK will continue to seek coordinated global action to address the effects of the captagon trade, in close cooperation with our regional partners.

Beyond this, the UK Government and its law enforcement partners are leveraging our extensive international networks to maximise cooperation with other governments to tackle drug trafficking upstream. This includes identifying and disrupting organised crime groups aiming to exploit the UK, and seizing drugs before and during their journey to the UK.

Additionally, we are also funding Border Force and the NCA to develop and deliver innovative intelligence-led approaches to securing our border which keeps pace with changes to routes and methods used by criminals.

## ■ **Entry Clearances: Families**

**Deidre Brock:**

[\[24775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been given entry clearance to the UK on the basis of family life as (a) a partner, (b) a parent and (c) exceptional circumstances in compliance with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights in each year since 2012.

**Deidre Brock:** [24776]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been given leave to remain on the basis of (a) family life as a (i) partner and (ii) parent and (b) exceptional circumstances in compliance with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights in each year since 2012.

**Deidre Brock:** [24777]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who were given (a) entry clearance and (b) leave to remain on the grounds of family life as a partner under Immigration Rules Appendix FM were granted access to public funds following a successful change of conditions application in each year since 2012.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The number of applications for Entry Clearance and to stay in the UK that are made on the basis of family life as a partner or parent and any exceptional circumstances in compliance with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the number of applicants granted access to public funds following a successful entry clearance or leave to remain change of conditions application, do not form part of any current transparency data or migration statistics and is not published.

The transparency data does, however, include a range of processing data and the latest data can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration).

## ■ Hate Crime: Disability

**Marsha De Cordova:** [25032]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to recommendation 90(c) of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' Report on follow-up to the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, advance unedited version published on 22 March 2024, if he will take steps to ensure that protections for disabled people under hate crime laws are nationally consistent.

**Laura Farris:**

Hate crime is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland and falls within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Executive respectively.

In England and Wales, we have a robust legislative framework to respond to all forms of hate crime, including disability hate crime. Whilst the police are operationally independent and work in line with the College of Policing's operational guidance to respond to hate crime, we expect the police to fully investigate these abhorrent offences and work with the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.

**■ Home Office: Pay****Deidre Brock:** [\[24774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff in his Department are on a maximum payscale below (a) £34,500 and (b) £38,700.

**Chris Philp:**

Within the Home Office, as of March 2024, there are 31,936 staff that have a maximum payscale below (a) £34,500 and 37,096 staff that have a maximum payscale below (b) £38,700.

**■ Immigration: Detainees****Kate Osborne:** [R] [\[25081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government Response to the recommendation in paragraph 47 of the Report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) on its visit to the United Kingdom from 27 March to 6 April 2023 (CPT/Inf (2024) 09) that a healthcare professional be present during all Assessment, Care in Detention and Teamwork (ACDT) interviews in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs), if he will take steps to address resourcing constraints of healthcare staff in order to meet the needs of mentally vulnerable people in detention.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

Healthcare services in immigration detention facilities in England are commissioned by NHS England. We take our responsibility towards detained individuals seriously and work closely with NHS England to ensure the health and safety of people we detain is safeguarded.

Healthcare staff attend Assessment, Care in Detention and Teamwork (ACDT) reviews where possible, and particularly if there are health concerns with the individual in question or a specific request for healthcare attendance has been made. [DSO 01/2022 Assessment care in detention and teamwork](#) provides guidance on the care and management of individuals under the ACDT process.

**■ Oppression****Catherine West:** [\[24982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to (a) assess instances of and (b) help tackle transnational repression.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The UK will not tolerate transnational repression and will stand up for the rights of all people to live here safely and freely. The National Security Act 2023 represents a step change in our ability to counter foreign interference, and provides the security services and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to deter, detect, and disrupt modern-day state threats.

We do everything we can to keep citizens safe and the country secure. This involves taking a proactive approach to countering the most acute forms of state-directed threats to individuals. Anyone who thinks they might be a victim should report incidents or suspicious activity to the Police.

The Defending Democracy Taskforce, working across Government, is reviewing the UK's response to transnational repression to ensure we have a robust and joined up response across government and law enforcement.

I recently announced new training for frontline officers to increase their understanding of threats that foreign powers present, and enhance their ability to combat these.

We will also be reforming our systems and processes within government to more effectively deal with transnational repression.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: Crimes of Violence

**Dame Andrea Jenkyns:**

[25279]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of illegal immigration on levels of violent crime.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

The Government does routinely publish details of the nationalities of those serving a prison sentence which can be found at [Offender management statistics quarterly - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly). However, no assessment of the impact of illegal migration on violent crime has been carried out.

## JUSTICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Jerome Mayhew:**

[902791]

What steps his Department is taking to reduce delays in judicial processes.

**Gareth Bacon:**

We remain committed to tackling the outstanding caseloads across our courts and tribunals and have introduced a range of measures to achieve this aim.

While the listing of cases is an independent judicial function, we have consistently invested in judicial recruitment to ensure we have the capacity to deliver effective judicial processes. Since 2018, we have recruited around 1,000 judges and tribunal members annually, across all jurisdictions.

Criminal courts Over 90% of all criminal cases are heard at the magistrates' courts, where we heard 100,000 cases a month on average across 2023. While the outstanding caseload in the magistrates' courts has slightly increased in recent months due to an increase in the number of cases coming to court, the caseload remains well below its pandemic peak and stood at 370,700 at the end of December 2023, and cases continue to be progressed quickly.

To aid our efforts in the magistrates' courts, we invested £1 million in a programme of work to support the recruitment of more magistrates. We aim to recruit 2,000 new and diverse magistrates this year, and similar numbers for each of the next couple of years.

At the Crown Court, we remain committed to reducing the outstanding caseload. We delivered 107,700 sitting days in the most recent financial year (FY23/24) and judges have worked tirelessly to complete more cases. The latest data shows cases progressed through the Crown Court more quickly throughout 2023, with the median time from receipt to completion reducing from 167 days in the first quarter of 2023, to 125 days in the last quarter.

We are also investing more in our criminal courts. In August 2023, we announced we are investing £220 million for essential modernisation and repair work of our court buildings, up to March 2025.

Family Court In March 2024 the Family Justice Board agreed a new set of priorities for the family justice system, with a clear focus on closing the longest running cases and increasing the proportion of public law cases concluding within the 26-week statutory timeline.

We announced in the Spring Budget an additional £55 million to improve productivity, support earlier resolution of family disputes and reduce the number of cases coming to court. This includes creating a digital advice tool for separating couples, piloting early legal advice and supporting the expansion of the private law Pathfinder model. The Department for Education are investing an extra £10 million to deliver new initiatives to address the longest delays in public law.

We have provided the flexibility for judges to sit virtually across regional boundaries, so that judges can be deployed where they are needed most, to reduce the caseload and waiting times.

We are also investing up to £23.6 million in the family mediation voucher scheme, which we intend will allow for its continuation up to March 2025. As of May 2024, over 28,600 families have successfully used the scheme to attempt to resolve their private law disputes outside of court.

#### Civil courts

With regards to civil cases, we are taking action to ensure those that do need to go to trial are dealt with quickly. We have a significant volume of judicial recruitment underway for District and Deputy District Judges, are digitising court processes and holding more remote hearings, and are increasing the use of mediation.

The requirement for small claims in the county court to attend a mediation session with the Small Claims Mediation Service will start this spring and is expected to help parties resolve their dispute swiftly and consensually without the need for a judicial hearing.

The HMCTS Reform Program has introduced technology that delivers simplified and transformed digital ways of working for civil court users and judges such as the online



money claims process and the damages claims service, offering accessible and responsive services.

Tribunals With regards to the tribunals, we continue to work with the Department for Business and Trade on further measures to address caseloads in the Employment Tribunal, where the deployment of legal officers, recruitment of additional judges and a new electronic case management system have helped the Tribunal to manage its caseload which remains below its pandemic peak.

We have rolled out the HMCTS digital reform programme in the Immigration and Asylum and Social Entitlement chambers so that anyone challenging an immigration or welfare benefits decision can lodge their appeal, track progress and receive the results all online.

HMCTS continues to invest in improving tribunal productivity through the recruitment of additional Judges, deployment of Legal Officers to actively manage cases, the development of modern case management systems and the use of remote hearing technology.

#### ■ **Parc Prison: Staff**

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[25242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison (a) officers and (b) staff have been investigated for (i) drug smuggling and (ii) corruption at HMP Parc in each of the last four years.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

#### ■ **Prisons: Construction**

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[25498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release entitled First Rapid Deployment Cells unveiled to boost prison places, published on 3 March 2023, how many such cells have been built as of 9 May 2024.

**Edward Argar:**

As part of our commitment to build 20,000 prison places, the largest prison build programme since the Victorian era, we have so far delivered c.730 Rapid Deployment Cells (RDCs) across 13 sites, and we are pushing ahead with hundreds more.

#### ■ **Prisons: Nitazenes**

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[25240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the level of availability of nitazenes in prisons.

**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[25241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether mandatory random drug testing in prisons includes testing for nitrazenes.

**Edward Argar:**

Since February 2024, all prisoners subject to mandatory drug testing in prisons have been tested for fentanyl, a potent synthetic opioid. We are working closely with our contracted drug testing provider to further improve our capabilities to test prisoners for other synthetic opioids, including nitazenes.

Forensic testing of suspected drug finds was made available to all public sector prisons in April 2023. Our contracted forensic analysis provider has capability to detect synthetic opioids including all fentanyls and nitazenes.

All prisons have a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and we are aware of the threat synthetic drugs present. Our current assessment is that there is a low prevalence of Nitazenes in prison custody. However, we are alert to the risks and continue to monitor this.

Our £100 million investment in tough security measures, such as X-ray body scanners, is helping tackle the supply of illicit drugs into prisons.

To prevent the smuggling of drugs through the mail, we have also invested in next-generation drug trace detection machines. As of March 2024, every public sector prison now has this cutting-edge technology.

**■ Upper Tribunal: Staff****John McNally:**[\[24780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training he plans to provide to staff responsible for assisting with the work of the upper tribunal in relocating asylum seekers to Rwanda; who will provide that training; what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of that training; and whether he plans to issue a contract for the recruitment of those staff.

**Gareth Bacon:**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is responsible for the administration of the Upper Tribunal (Immigration & Asylum Chamber) and has been working with the Ministry of Justice to increase capacity in the justice system in preparation for the commencement of the Illegal Migration Act.

An additional 25 hearing rooms have been prepared with remote hearing technology to allow for either in-person or remote hearings to maximise flexibility.

Approximately 100 additional staff have been recruited to support the Upper Tribunal's work and are currently undertaking training ready for the commencement of the Illegal Migration Act. These staff have been recruited on Fixed Term Contracts following external campaigns on the basis of fair and open competition. This training is being delivered internally within HMCTS as part of existing programmes of operational training.

This training is in relation to HMCTS processing of applications and appeals pertaining to individuals under the IMA scheme and is separate to any training given to Home Office staff in support of the decision making or removals of illegal migrants.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Omagh Bombing Inquiry

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[24854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to ensure legal representation is made available to police veterans called to the Omagh Bombing Inquiry.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

*[Holding answer 13 May 2024]:* Policing in Northern Ireland is a devolved matter but we understand PSNI will be providing legal support to retired police officers called to give evidence to the Omagh Bombing Inquiry.

## SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### ■ Artificial Intelligence: Government Departments

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[24976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2024 on Government Departments: Artificial Intelligence, whether the detailed policy for the Algorithmic transparency recording standard has been agreed across all departments; and whether he has a planned timeline for compliance.

**Saqib Bhatti:**

We are implementing the mandatory rollout of the ATRS in phases, with the current, first phase focusing on the 16 largest ministerial departments, plus HMRC.

The Department of Science, Innovation and Technology and the Central Digital and Data Office are working with these departments to map their in-scope algorithmic tools and draft their first ATRS records accordingly. These departments have now all reviewed a draft version of the scope and exemptions policy. We expect to circulate a finalised version of the policy by the end of May.

Regarding timelines for the wider rollout, expect these Phase One departments to publish their first ATRS records by the end of July. Departments finding no tools in scope will be required to submit a nil return. This will be followed by the next phase which involves extending the mandatory rollout to the remaining ministerial departments, and relevant arm's-length bodies, from July onwards which the Central Digital and Data Office will monitor.

## ■ Bioengineering: Infrastructure

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[25491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what progress her Department has made on assessing the infrastructure needs for engineering biology companies across application areas looking to scale up in the UK.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Department ran a call for evidence in 2023 to assess the needs of the engineering biology sector. This call for evidence included specific asks on infrastructure needs. This consultation has been supplemented through continued engagement with industry since the publication of the National Vision for Engineering Biology in December 2023. As set out in the National Vision for Engineering Biology, DSIT are developing plans to support infrastructure for engineering biology companies.

## ■ Horizon Europe: Manufacturing Industries

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[25490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps her Department is taking to increase awareness of Horizon Europe funding opportunities among British manufacturers.

**Andrew Griffith:**

This Government is committed to maximising UK applications to Horizon Europe.

We are engaging closely with representatives of the manufacturing industry, as well as wider businesses and academia, through our new sector engagement systems group. In addition, this Government has appointed National Contact Points to provide expert advice on Horizon Europe.

To encourage UK researchers and businesses of all kinds to apply, we are delivering a series of popular roadshow events across the UK, with the next event in Glasgow on 12 June. This follows a successful multichannel advertising campaign.

## ■ Life Sciences Council

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[25493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, when she next plans to meet the Life Sciences Council; how many times meetings of the Life Sciences Council have been rescheduled in the last three years; and on what date the Life Sciences Council last met.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The last meeting of the Life Sciences Council took place on Tuesday 21 November 2023. Since May 2021, the Life Sciences Council has been rescheduled twice, in May 2022 and May 2024. The Office for Life Sciences are currently agreeing a date for the next meeting of the Council with industry co-chairs. Once agreed, Officials will circulate the rescheduled date to members.

**TRANSPORT****■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Navendu Mishra:**[\[25092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the number of electric vehicle charging points in Stockport constituency.

**Anthony Browne:**

As of 1st April 2024, there were 34 total public electric vehicle charging devices in the Stockport constituency, 18 of which were rated 50kW or above, according to the electric vehicle charging platform Zapmap.

The £381 million Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund will support local authorities such as Stockport Council in England to work with industry and transform the availability of EV charging for drivers without off-street parking.

**■ Eurostar: Kent****Stephen Morgan:**[\[25669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with Eurostar on the potential merits of stopping their services at stations in Kent.

**Huw Merriman:**

My officials engage regularly with Eurostar and, alongside other issues, continue to discuss the potential reinstatement of services at Kent stations once it is commercially viable for them to do so.

I met with Eurostar in December 2023 and, as I also made clear to the House last October, I emphasised the UK Government's desire to see the return of international services to Ebbsfleet and Ashford as soon as reasonably possible, particularly given the important benefits they provide for people and businesses in Kent.

**■ High Speed 2 Line: Costs****Louise Haigh:**[\[25510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of the rescope HS2 project; what recent estimate he has made of the benefit cost ratio of that project; and whether he plans to update the estimated costs of HS2 using 2024 prices.

**Huw Merriman:**

In light of the Network North announcement, the scope of HS2 is now being reviewed to make sure only what is required for the reduced scheme is being delivered, including the revised approach to Euston. Once this work has been done, we will publish a cost range and benefit cost ratio for the revised HS2 scheme as part of an updated business case for the HS2 programme. The Department will publish this

work when it is complete. HS2 records costs in 2019 prices and in nominal terms. Decisions over inflation methodologies and indices to express the wider programme's costs are ongoing between the Department and HM Treasury.

## ■ High Speed 2 Line: Euston Station

**Louise Haigh:** [\[25509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the status is of the planned development corporation for Euston and associated civil engineering works.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Department is working through considerations around the use of a development corporation, or suitable alternative, to oversee development at Euston HS2 station and the proposed 'Euston Quarter'. The Department continues to define and develop a range of development models and financing mechanisms to best meet the objectives of the 'Euston Quarter' including via discussions with our key stakeholders and delivery partners.

**Louise Haigh:** [\[25511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent representations he has received on public funding for the Euston development corporation and associated civil engineering works.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Government remains committed to delivering a privately financed HS2 Euston station as part of a transformed 'Euston Quarter' outlined in the Network North paper. The Department is working alongside partners to deliver comprehensive regeneration across the 'Euston Quarter' which is set to be led by a Development Corporation or similar. The Government's ambition remains to make best use of funding from alternative sources to enable the delivery of HS2 to Euston, and the creation of a transformed 'Euston Quarter', while ensuring that funding is underpinned by contributions from those people and businesses this development supports.

## ■ Local Transport Fund

**Alicia Kearns:** [\[25085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's planned timescale is for issuing guidance to local authorities on allocating funding for the Local Transport Fund.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department is working with His Majesty's Treasury to agree the funding profile for the Local Transport Fund as well as the split between capital and revenue funding. The Department will provide advice for local transport authorities shortly on the scope, process and accountability framework for the new funding, to ensure that local authorities can develop delivery plans to make the most of it.

## ■ Motorcycles

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[25461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that users of electric bikes classed as a motorcycle or moped comply with legal requirements on (a) registration, (b) taxation, (c) holding a driving licence and (d) wearing a helmet; and whether he has had discussions with the (i) Secretary of State for the Home Department and (ii) individual police forces on enforcement of those requirements.

**Guy Opperman:**

All electric bikes and similar vehicles that do not meet the requirements of the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles Regulations (1983), as amended, are motor vehicles, and must fully comply with all of the normal requirements such as MOT, tax, insurance, helmets etc.

Enforcement is a matter for the police.

## ■ Railways

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[25668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to grow the international rail sector.

**Huw Merriman:**

The Government fully supports the growth of international rail passenger services given the environmental, social and economic benefits they provide.

My officials continue to engage on a regular basis with infrastructure managers and European partners to discuss the potential for new routes and potential market entrants, particularly given the unique requirements of operating through the Channel Tunnel. My officials welcome engagement with prospective operators where there is a credible proposition to develop new services.

## TREASURY

### ■ Bank Services: Highlands of Scotland

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[24282\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with banks on the potential impact of the removal of mobile bank services on people in (a) Bonar Bridge, (b) Lairg, (c) Helmsdale and (d) Dornoch.

**Bim Afolami:**

Decisions to open or close a branch or mobile banking service are commercial decisions for firms and the Government does not intervene. However, it is imperative that banks and building societies recognise the needs of all customers, including those who need to use in-person services.

Guidance from the FCA sets out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches, including mobile branches, or the number of free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of planned closures on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs, and put in place alternatives, where this is reasonable.

Alternative options to access everyday banking services can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking and via the Post Office or Banking Hubs.

### ■ Help to Buy Scheme: Individual Savings Accounts

**Alistair Strathern:**

[\[25600\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the potential merits of increasing the purchase price limits on ISAs to exceed £250,000.

**Bim Afolami:**

The Government keeps all aspects of savings policy under review, and any changes of this kind would be made at a relevant fiscal event.

## WALES

### ■ Tata Steel: Port Talbot

**Jo Stevens:**

[\[25247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether the Tata Steel / Port Talbot Transition Board has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of blast furnace closures on jobs in the supply chain.

**David T C Davies:**

This Government is supporting Tata Steel with £500 million towards building an electric arc furnace, securing the future of steelmaking at Port Talbot. This will protect 5,000 steel jobs and thousands more in the supply chain. The Tata Steel/Port Talbot Transition Board has been set up to support those affected by Tata Steel's decarbonisation transition, backed by a £100 million fund. Of that funding, £80 million is provided by the UK Government and £20 million will be provided by Tata.

To address the potential impact on the supply chain, I have formed a dedicated Supply Chain Sub-Group within the structure of the Transition Board. This group consists of representatives from UK Government, Welsh Government, local government, and Tata Steel UK. This group is actively mapping affected supply chains and developing targeted interventions to specifically support impacted businesses.



**Jo Stevens:**

[25248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the Fifth Tata Steel / Port Talbot Transition Board Statement, published on 25 April 2024, if he will publish the local economic action plan.

**David T C Davies:**

The Tata Steel/Port Talbot Transition Board has been set up to support those affected by Tata Steel's decarbonisation transition, backed by a £100 million fund. Of that funding, £80 million is provided by the UK Government and £20 million will be provided by Tata.

The Transition Board commissioned the development of a Local Economic Action Plan to assess the economic impact in South Wales, as well as provide the Transition Board with advice on how to support and grow the local economy.

At the Fifth Tata Steel/Port Talbot Transition Board meeting, the Board endorsed the Local Economic Action Plan and its use as a broad roadmap to help guide the Board when recommending how the £100 million fund should be used to support those affected. The Board agreed that a summary of the Local Economic Action Plan should be published in due course.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Attendance Allowance: Employment

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[24973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in receipt of Attendance Allowance are in paid employment.

**Paul Maynard:**

The requested information is not available.

### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Advisory Services

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[24761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which advice agencies the Government is providing funding to in 2024-25; and what level of funding is being provided to those agencies.

**Paul Maynard:**

The ARA [DWP annual report and accounts 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118841/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2022-to-2023.pdf) contains 22/23 which is the latest published. 23/24 has not been audited or laid yet.

Page 163 lists all public bodies under the umbrella of DWP.

Main estimates and DEL Budgets are here [Main Supply Estimates 2023 to 24 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118841/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2022-to-2023.pdf).

Main and Supplementary for DWP are here [Work and Pensions Committee - Estimate memoranda - Committees - UK Parliament](https://www.parliament.uk/work-and-pensions-committee/estimate-memoranda).

**■ Disability: Cost of Living**

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the average extra costs that disabled people face as a result of their disability compared to people who are not disabled.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has made an estimate of the average extra costs that people with less severe mental health conditions face as a result of their conditions compared to the general population.

**Mims Davies:**

No such estimate has been made.

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. Over recent years, the government has demonstrated its commitment to supporting the most vulnerable with one of the largest support packages in Europe. The total support over 2022- 2025 to help households and individuals with higher bills amounts to £108 billion – an average of £3,800 per UK household.

We provided a Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 in June/July 2023 to people in receipt of certain disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This is in addition to the £150 payment paid in September 2022.

We estimate that nearly 60 per cent of individuals who received an extra costs disability benefit would have received the means-tested benefit Cost of Living Payments, worth up to £900.

We also increased extra costs disability benefits by 10.1 per cent from April 2023 and by 6.7% from April 2024 in line with the Consumer Price Index.

**■ Employment: Mental Health**

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech on welfare of 19 April 2024, what the evidential basis is for the statement that people with less severe mental health conditions should be expected to engage with the world of work.

**Mims Davies:**

Evidence shows that good work is generally good for health<sup>1</sup>. The Government therefore has an ambitious programme of initiatives to support people with mental health conditions, who are able, to start, stay and succeed in work. This includes:

- Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies, which combines psychological treatment and employment support for people with mental health conditions;

- The Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care programme, a Supported Employment model (place, train and maintain) delivered in health settings, aimed at people with physical or common mental health disabilities to support them to access paid jobs in the open labour market; and
- WorkWell, which is being established as a new early-intervention work and health support and assessment service in England, with the aim of preventing and reducing economic inactivity among disabled people and people with health conditions.

[1Is work good for your health and well-being? An independent review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/reviews/individual-placement-and-support-in-primary-care)

## ■ Pension Credit

**Dame Angela Eagle:**

**[25171]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the uptake of Pension Credit in (a) Wallasey constituency, (b) Wirral, (c) the North West and (d) United Kingdom.

**Paul Maynard:**

To raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up, the Department launched a nationwide marketing and communications campaign in April 2022.

Nationally, the campaign has included advertising on TV, broadcast radio and in newspapers; in medical centre and Post Office screens; as well as advertising on buses and digital street displays. Online marketing activity has also included social media, internet search engines and sponsored advertising on targeted websites that pensioners, their friends and family are likely to visit.

We have also been promoting Pension Credit at a local level in regional newspapers (including Liverpool Echo, Blackpool Gazette, Bolton News, Lancashire Evening Post, Manchester Evening News); and on local radio (stations such as Capital radio in Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester and Greatest Hits Radio in Blackpool and Bolton).

There is a strong indication that the campaign has had a positive impact and has resulted in an unprecedented number of Pension Credit applications.

The Department is building on this success through a range of creative no-cost media campaigns to boost awareness of the benefit. We are also engaging with stakeholders, including other Government Departments, Councils, and charities, in order to harness their help and support to raise awareness through their networks and channels. For example, we will be holding a Pension Credit Week of Action commencing on 10 June. As in previous years, this will be an opportunity to

collaborate with all our partners to maximise awareness of Pension Credit and to encourage eligible pensioners to make a claim.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of people for whom the funds spent on Personal Independence Payments (PIP) would provide talking therapy for in place of PIP in (a) Wirral, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK.

**Mims Davies:**

Such information is not available as no decisions on detailed policy design have yet been made. The consultation, *Modernising Support for Independent Living: The Health and Disability Green Paper*, is instead about opening up a broader conversation about how we could reshape the current welfare system to provide better targeted support to those who need it most.

Part of the Green Paper explores alternative ways of supporting people to live independent and fulfilling lives. This could mean financial support being better targeted at people who have specific extra costs, but it could also involve improved support of other kinds, such as physical or mental health treatment.

The Green Paper was published on Monday 29 April and the 12 week consultation will close on Monday 22 July.

We encourage everyone to respond to the consultation so that we are able to hear from as many people as possible on these important issues, including disabled people, people with health conditions, their representatives, and other stakeholders.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his department's consultation entitled *Modernising support for independent living: the health and disability green paper*, published on 29 April 2024, what steps he is taking to help ensure that disabled people can respond to that consultation.

**Mims Davies:**

To help ensure that disabled people and people with long term conditions can access and respond to *Modernising Support for Independent Living: The Health and Disability Green Paper*, the Green Paper was published in standard and five alternative formats:

- Large print
- Braille
- Easy Read
- British Sign Language (BSL)
- Audio

All formats can be accessed via the web page [here](#).

We encourage everyone to respond to the consultation, so that we are able to hear from disabled people, people with health conditions, representatives, and others on these important issues.

It is possible to respond via the online form, via email or by post. If anybody has difficulty responding, they can ask a representative to support them or respond on their behalf.

### ■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's consultation entitled Modernising support for independent living: the health and disability green paper, published on 29 April 2024, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of condition-based assessments on people with multiple health conditions.

**Mims Davies:**

Modernising Support for Independent Living: The Health and Disability Green Paper was published on 29 April 2024. The associated consultation will last for 12 weeks, ending on 22 July. Throughout this period we will continue to listen to and work with disabled people, people with health conditions and their representatives.

The consultation aims to hear views on whether we should have a condition-based assessment. We understand that many people have more than one health condition, and if this proposal is taken forwards following the consultation, we will consider in the detailed policy design how a condition-based approach would work for people with multiple conditions.

### ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[25084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to allow beneficiaries to claim two years of a deceased person's state pension contributions in the event that they die before state pension age.

**Paul Maynard:**

Whilst recognising the emotive nature of this issue and having sympathy for people in this position, the Government does not have plans to make any changes in this area,

Where a spouse, civil partner or, where there is a dependent child, cohabiting partner, passes away, Bereavement Support Payment is available to help working age people through the difficult period following a bereavement. Bereavement

Support Payment is a contributory benefit based on the National Insurance contributions of the deceased person.

Pension Credit provides a safety-net for those over the State Pension age on low-incomes.

## ■ UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[25027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the advance unedited report from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entitled Report on follow-up to the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, published on 22 March 2024.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[25028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to accept the recommendations of the advance unedited report from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entitled Report on follow-up to the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, published on 22 March 2024.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[25029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the advance unedited report from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entitled Report on follow-up to the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, published on 22 March 2024, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure non-regression of the Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (a) principles and (b) standards.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[25030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled people receive adequate financial support through the benefit system; and with reference to the advance unedited report from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entitled Report on follow-up to the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, published on 22 March 2024, if he will take steps to implement human rights-based cumulative impact assessments of the potential impact of welfare reforms on disabled people.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[25031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to recommendation 90(f) of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' Report on follow-up to the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, advance unedited version published on 22 March 2024, if he will (a) review the Universal Credit system and (b) take steps to (i) identify the additional costs of living with disabilities and (ii) ensure that the level of social security benefits take adequate account of such costs.

**Mims Davies:**

As requested by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Government will submit a report by March 2029 with information on how we are implementing the Committee's recommendations outlined in their latest report published in April 2024. The Government, through the Disability Unit in the Cabinet Office, has already begun considering the recommendations from this report.

The Government continues to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee's 2016 inquiry recommendations through many policies that improve disabled people's lives.

These include the Disability Action Plan, the National Disability Strategy and providing unprecedented health and employment support through our £2.5bn Back to Work Plan as well as our Chance to Work Guarantee.

We are also improving the health and disability benefits system, enhancing the accessibility of homes and transport, and continuing other work outlined in our various published follow-up reports and in our dialogue with the Committee.

The Government is providing an unprecedented cost of living support package worth £108 billion over 2022 to 2025 which included £20 billion for two rounds of Cost of Living Payments. This support importantly helped to shield people from the impact of inflation, preventing 1.3 million people from falling into absolute poverty after housing costs in 2022/23.

Since 2010, the Government has overseen significant falls in poverty with 1.1 million fewer people in absolute low income after housing costs in 2022/23 compared to 2009/10

**■ Universal Credit****Margaret Greenwood:**[\[24759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households his Department plans to send migration notices to as part of the Move to Universal Credit in 2024-24 in (a) the UK, (b) Merseyside and (c) Wirral.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government remains committed to moving all legacy benefit customers to Universal Credit (UC). Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 19th April, we now plan to notify all remaining customers in scope of migrating to UC by the end of 2025.

**Margaret Greenwood:**[\[24760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria his Department is using to identify vulnerable people receiving legacy benefits during the managed migration process Move to Universal Credit.

**Jo Churchill:**

DWP provides a tailored service that recognises those with complex needs at any point throughout their journey and ensures appropriate support is quickly made available. There is a range of support available to individuals, including a dedicated DWP telephone line, face to face support in the local Jobcentre, and independent support through Help to Claim, delivered by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland.

DWP have developed and tested a new 'enhanced support' journey for ESA and Income Support customers who require more support to claim. This process is now in place for these customer groups and involves outbound telephony, system checks and home visits, dependent on individual support needs.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department is planning to provide extra staff to support legacy benefit claimants in 2024-25 as part of the Move to Universal Credit.

**Jo Churchill:**

To support customers who are involved in Move to Universal Credit (UC) the Department has introduced a dedicated DWP telephone line, face to face support in the local Jobcentre, and independent support through Help to Claim, delivered by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Jobcentres will be offering face-to-face support for legacy benefit claimants required to transfer to Universal Credit; and which ones will be offering that support.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Jobcentres will be offering face-to-face support for legacy benefit claimants required to transfer to Universal Credit under the Move to Universal Credit programme in (a) Merseyside and (b) Wirral; and which ones will be offering that support.

**Jo Churchill:**

We currently provide assistance and support through a variety of channels, including face to face in all of our jobcentres across the United Kingdom.

We have a dedicated team in place to support customers in receipt of a Migration Notice to transition to Universal Credit including a dedicated telephone line for queries.

We continue to learn what we need to put in place for customers receiving a Migration Notice to support their transition to Universal Credit.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[24765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number and proportion of Tax Credit claimants that have received migration



notices under Move to Universal Credit and who have had to repay Tax Credit debt in (a) the UK, (b) Merseyside and (c) Wirral.

**Jo Churchill:**

As of November 2023, 100 Tax Credit claims, in Merseyside, and less than 5 Tax Credit claims, in the Wirral that have migrated to Universal Credit (UC) have had a deduction for a non-fraud Tax Credit debt from their UC award.

UC claims in Northern Ireland are administered by the Department for Communities.

Proportions of the Tax Credit caseload cannot be provided as Tax Credit claims are administered by HMRC. HMRC publish statistics on the number of families benefiting from Child Tax Credit (CTC) and/or Working Tax Credit (WTC) in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Latest publication can be found here:

[Commentary - Child and Working Tax Credits statistics: Provisional awards - April 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/commentary-child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-april-2023)

Notes:

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.
2. The figures are of distinct Universal Credit households that have migrated from Child Tax Credits and/or Working Tax Credits that also had a deduction taken from their UC entitlement to repay a non-fraud Tax Credit debt. Any household with deductions in more than one assessment period will only be counted once.
3. "Merseyside" has been interpreted as the sum of the Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens & Wirral local authority areas.
4. Data has been provided for deductions taken up to November 2023, in line with the latest available UC Household Statistics.
5. Figures are provisional and are subject to retrospective change as later data becomes available.

■ **WorkWell**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[24965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department took to engage with (a) disabled people and (b) disabled people's organisations when developing the Work Well programme.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[24966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria his Department used to select the pilot areas for the WorkWell programme.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[24967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how his Department plans to measure the effectiveness of the WorkWell programme pilots.

**Mims Davies:**

The 15 WorkWell pilot areas, which were announced on 7 May, will receive funding to locally design and lead their integrated work and health support services to meet the needs of their local populations. Pilot areas will be engaging end users, including disabled people, in the design and delivery of these services.

The lessons we learn from WorkWell will be critical to our longer-term work and will bolster the evidence base around what works to support disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work.

Prospective WorkWell pilot areas submitted applications which were scored against four criteria published in the WorkWell Prospectus on gov.uk ( [www.gov.uk/government/publications/workwell](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workwell) ):

- Their understanding of the geography and demography of their chosen footprint;
- Their approach to work and health strategy integration;
- Their proposed delivery model for their WorkWell service;
- Their experience of and approach to, governance and working effectively with delivery partners across local systems.

In addition, a decision was taken to ensure that at least one site was selected in each of the 7 NHS England regions, and at least two of the 15 areas would be classified as predominantly rural.

The Department has commissioned an independent consortium of evaluators to carry out a national evaluation of WorkWell that will look to measure the effectiveness of the pilot, using surveys, interviews and econometric measures of success.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Education: Standards

**Martyn Day:**

[24264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the requirement for Academy schools to provide parents with an annual report of their child's progress.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 May 2024. The correct answer should have been:**

**Damian Hinds:**

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

The department has not made any recent assessment of this requirement. The requirements on academies in relation to reporting on pupils' progress to parents are set out in **paragraph 32(1)(f) of the Schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** paragraph 24 of Schedule 1 to The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. These regulations can be accessed here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/made>. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made>.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Civil Service

**Minister without Portfolio (Esther McVey):**

[\[HCWS464\]](#)

The Government has a plan to deliver a brighter future for Britain, with long-term economic security and opportunity: where hard work is always rewarded; where ambition and aspiration are celebrated; where young people get the skills they need to succeed in life; where families are supported, where those who have worked hard all their lives have the dignity they deserve in retirement; and, with security at home and abroad.

The Civil Service is crucial to the delivery of that plan. We want to cut waste and inefficiency so civil servants can better support our frontline services. In that light, this Government wishes to ensure that all public spending on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ('EDI') is proportionate, meeting all statutory requirements, and represents value for money.

Last October, and re-affirmed by the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement, the Government commissioned a review of EDI expenditure across the Civil Service, to identify current spend on roles and activities, and to understand whether existing expenditure is effective and efficient.

The review found that across 95 Civil Service organisations total EDI expenditure for the 2022-23 financial year was £27.1 million. We do not believe that this represents value for money.

We have also been informed by the Inclusion at Work Panel's report from March 2024 which found that many employers want to 'do the right thing', but are implementing EDI initiatives without an evidence base, and many do not know the impact these initiatives are having or whether they represent value for money. In a growing number of cases, particularly relating to positive discrimination and protected beliefs, the report found that EDI interventions are proving to be counterproductive.

In response to these findings, today the Cabinet Office is publishing the Civil Service EDI Expenditure Guidance. This includes an end to all external spending on EDI activity, unless cleared and authorised by Ministers. In addition:

- There will be centralised EDI guidance for departments and Arm's-Length Bodies and EDI learning will be regulated through the Civil Service Learning Framework unless authorised by Ministers through the spend control.
- Standalone EDI roles will also cease to exist outside of HR as Secretaries of State and Permanent Secretaries are expected to consolidate them into existing HR teams.

- Diversity content included in Civil Service job adverts will also be standardised to ensure diversity policy is clearly and consistently shared. This will enable civil servants to focus on their specific job role and on delivering for the taxpayer.

Support for disability will be excluded from these changes, recognising the particular needs of disabled staff. As set out in the Government's National Disability Strategy (2021) and the Disability Action Plan (2024), we will continue to support them and give them the help to achieve their goals and excel.

We are also publishing Guidance on Diversity and Inclusion and Impartiality Requirements. This meets the commitment made in Action 62 of the Inclusive Britain Report.

The guidance makes clear that civil servants must not allow their personal political views to determine their actions or any advice they give related to diversity and inclusion in any part of their employment. This includes when carrying out government duties, such as developing policy, or engaging in learning and development or participating in staff networks. It will ensure civil servants can carry out their work while retaining the confidence of Ministers and the public, and uphold the political impartiality required by the Civil Service Code.

Further guidance on diversity staff networks will follow, and we will seek to publish additional data on historic spending to assist transparency in this area. We will also consider how such best practice can be embedded across the public sector.

We want to ensure that everyone has the equal opportunity to go as far in life as their ambition will take them. As set out in the Inclusive Britain report, lack of opportunity should not be seen through the prism of identity politics. We do not believe that any group is less intrinsically capable than any other – we know that while ability is spread across the country that has not always been the case when it comes to opportunity.

That is why we have already moved over 18,000 roles out of London, including to new offices across the United Kingdom. Diversity in the civil service should never just be measured in terms of race or sex; it should also be about background and differences of opinion – and, above all, merit.

Increasing social mobility and ending geographical inequalities are core to levelling up. It is essential that we mirror this ambition across the Civil Service to ensure that those developing and delivering our policies reflect and draw upon the widest range of experiences and skills that exist across the populations we serve.

Copies of the associated guidance will be placed in the Library of both Houses, and published on gov.uk.

#### ■ **UK COVID-19 Inquiry response costs for Quarter 4 23/24**

**Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Alex Burghart):**

[\[HCWS462\]](#)

The Minister of State, Baroness Neville-Rolfe DBE CMG, has today made the following statement:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government acted to save lives and livelihoods, prevent the NHS being overwhelmed, and deliver a world-leading vaccine rollout which protected the nation. In establishing the UK COVID-19 Inquiry, the Government recognised the unprecedented and wholly exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, and the importance of examining as rigorously as possible the actions the state took in response, in order to learn lessons for the future.

As such, the Inquiry is unprecedented in its scope, complexity and profile, looking at recent events that have profoundly impacted everyone's lives.

The Government remains fully committed to transparency throughout this process. The UK COVID-19 Inquiry publishes its own running costs quarterly; the most recent update, covering costs for Quarter 4 of the 2023/2024 financial year, was published on 9 May. The Government's response to the Inquiry is a significant undertaking and accordingly, the Government has updated Parliament on the UK Government costs associated with responding to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry.

Ensuring a comprehensive and timely response to the Inquiry requires significant input from a number of key government departments, including the Cabinet Office, the Department for Health and Social Care, the UK Health Security Agency, the Home Office and HM Treasury, many of which are supported by the Government Legal Department (GLD).

Figures provided are based upon a sample of departmental costs, and are not precise figures for accounting purposes. While every effort has been made to ensure a robust methodology, complexities remain in trying to quantify the time and costs dedicated to the Inquiry alone.

It should be noted that alongside full time resource within departments, Inquiry response teams draw on expertise from across their organisations. The Senior Civil Servant staff costs associated with appearing as witnesses, preparing witnesses and associated policy development work on the Covid Inquiry are significant. Those costs are not included in the costs below.

### **Breakdown of Staff & Costs**

The Government's response to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry is led by Inquiry Response Units across departments.

- Number of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff: 265 Full Time Equivalents (Q4)
- Cost of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff: £5,100,000 (including contingent labour costs) (Q4)
- Financial year 2023/24, total cost of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff: £18,000,000 (including contingent labour costs)

	QUARTER 1-3	QUARTER 4	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
Cost of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff (including contingent labour costs)	£12,900,000	£5,100,000	£18,000,000
Number of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff (Full Time Equivalents)	249	265	

### Total Inquiry Response Unit Legal Costs

Inquiry response units across government departments are supported by the Government Legal Department, co-partnering firms of solicitors, and legal counsel. These associated legal costs (excluding internal departmental advisory legal costs) for January - March 2024 are below.

- Total legal costs: £5,300,000 (as of Q4)
- Financial year 2023/24, total legal costs: £26,200,000

	QUARTER 1-3	QUARTER 4	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
Total legal costs	£20,900,000	£5,300,000	£26,200,000

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Second UK Farm to Fork Summit

#### Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Steve Barclay): [\[HCWS460\]](#)

*Today the Prime Minister will host the second UK Farm to Fork Summit alongside government Ministers at No.10 Downing Street, recognising the crucial importance of the farming and food sector. The annual event will bring together representatives from across the supply chain to discuss some of the key challenges and growth opportunities that lie ahead, reaffirming our plans to bolster food security and support a resilient and profitable food and farming sector. The event will build on the progress made since last year's successful Summit, including work to embed fairness in supply chains, investment to unlock innovative new technologies, cutting unnecessary red tape and boosting exports of our great British food.*

Despite the challenges farmers have faced in recent months, with the wettest 18 months on record in England, as well as the impacts of Covid and the war in Ukraine, food businesses have continued to put food on our plates day in day out. The Summit therefore reflects the crucial importance of the farming and food sector to our nation and provides an opportunity to explore how to turbocharge the sector as an engine for growth. To coincide with the event, the government has set out a new package of measures to boost food security and support domestic production. This includes plans to:

**Boost the production of UK fruit and vegetables.** Today we have published a draft of the first ever UK Food Security Index, which will allow us to monitor short-term trends across the UK. It complements the three-yearly UK Food Security Report which focuses on longer-term trends. Alongside the Index, we have published our Blueprint for Growing the UK Fruit and Vegetable Sector, which aims to boost production of fresh produce and reduce reliance on imports. This is backed by our new Horticulture Resilience and Growth Offer, where Defra will look to double to £80m the amount of funding given to horticulture businesses when compared to the EU legacy Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme, which will be replaced from 2026 onwards. An improved, comprehensive, and simplified offer will recognise the Producer Organisation model while at the same time bringing individual businesses within scope for support, with up to £10m being made available to help orchard growers access the equipment, technology and infrastructure they need to produce more great British fruit.

**Provide further support for farmers affected by the recent wet weather.** Building on our commitment to extend the Farming Recovery Fund to support farmers who have been flooded, temporary adjustments will be made for farmers and land managers where the wet weather has led to difficulties carrying out the requirements of our Environmental Land Management Schemes. Next week we will be setting out the detail of the £75 million fund to support internal drainage boards (IDBs) to accelerate recovery from the winter 2023-24 storms and provide opportunities to modernize and upgrade assets that support resilience for farms and rural communities.

**Invest in innovation to help our food system to be even more productive and resilient thanks to British science.** We have responded to the Shropshire Review, ensuring that the sector has the labour it needs and funding to support greater automation in the sector. This includes extending the seasonal visa route for five years (2025-2029) with 43,000 visas available for horticulture and 2,000 for poultry in 2025 to address immediate need. We will agree a taper for this period with industry, supporting them to transition away from migrant workers by increasing by up to £50m the existing support for agri-innovation available from within the farming innovation budget. We are also unlocking the opportunities of gene editing with £15m investment into Genetic Improvement Networks, helping to boost access to more resilient crop varieties, that require fewer inputs and cut farmer costs. And we will launch a new Endemics Disease Scheme with over £80m of funding and an Infrastructure Grant for Laying Hens with over £20m of funding as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway.

**Grasp opportunities to add value at all stages of the supplychain** including supporting farmers to get a fair price for their products by announcing the next steps in



*the supply chain reviews for eggs, fresh produce and pigs. In all three sectors we are introducing legislation to enhance fairness and transparency. We are also appointing the new Supply Chain Adjudicator, Richard Thompson, who will focus on ensuring fairness in the supply chain is effectively enforced, and making up to £3m support available for new and mobile abattoirs through the Farming Investment Fund. This builds on the Small Abattoir Fund which opened last year to boost the sustainability and efficiency of red meat and poultry smaller abattoirs across England. We will also remove the 16-week derogation period for the labelling of free-range eggs produced by hens that are under mandatory housing orders due to avian influenza. And we are confirming the appointment of a Commissioner for the Tenant Farming sector, delivering on a commitment in our response to the Rock Review. The commissioner will provide a neutral, confidential point of contact and advice for tenants, landlords and advisors who have concerns about poor behaviour.*

**Support the next generation of farmers and workers within the food system, helping to build a high-skilled workforce that attracts the best domestic minds.** We are already collaborating with the Food and Drink Sector Council on how to make the sector more attractive to the next generation. We will further improve awareness of job opportunities and career paths through the development of regional recruitment strategies, reviewing the current education and skills offerings in the food supply chain, and creating a public facing workforce data product for the food supply chain.

*Fulfilling the Prime Minister's priority to turbocharge the farming and food sector as an engine for growth, the government will continue to work hand-in-hand with the industry to champion UK food and drink, both at home and abroad, helping the food supply chain to grow, manufacture and sell more British food. A new Defra-chaired Senior Officials Food Leadership Group will bring together Whitehall departments to help drive progress.*

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Drug and Alcohol Treatment Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Public Health, Start for Life and Primary Care) (Andrea Leadsom):**

[\[HCWS463\]](#)

The government's landmark ten-year drug strategy From Harm to Hope committed to developing a comprehensive workforce strategy to rebuild the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce. Improving and expanding treatment and recovery services is central to the drug strategy mission, and this cannot be achieved without a resilient, well-trained, and properly supported workforce. The strategy also highlighted the importance of naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal drug, in preventing deaths, and our commitment to reviewing legislation to make it more easily accessible for those at risk.

The drug strategy was backed by an additional initial three-year investment of £532 million between 2022 and 2025 to improve the capacity and quality of drug and alcohol treatment. This funding is supporting the expansion of the workforce by the end of 2024/25 with:

- 800 more medical, mental health and other regulated professionals
- 950 additional drug and alcohol and criminal justice workers
- Additional commissioning and coordinator capacity in every local authority

We know that recruitment and retention of a high quality drug treatment workforce is crucial to ensuring we can deliver a world class drug treatment system. In the first year of this additional funding, the sector recruited over 170 medical, mental health and other regulated professionals and 1,250 drug and alcohol workers. The 2022/23 drug strategy recruitment targets for nurses, social workers and pharmacists were achieved.

We are today publishing the strategic plan for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce. The strategic plan has been developed by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and NHS England through extensive sector engagement. It sets out the path to developing a sustainable, multidisciplinary drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce, equipped with the skills to reduce the harm of problematic drug and alcohol use and help more people initiate and sustain recovery, by 2034.

The key elements of the plan are to:

- provide clarity on the roles required to deliver effective drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services through the development and implementation of the capability framework
- develop training programmes in line with the capability framework and standardise and accredit training for drug and alcohol workers
- increase the professional mix in the sector, attracting and retaining more medics, nurses, psychologists, social workers and pharmacists
- significantly improve the quality and coverage of clinical supervision and enhance clinical governance systems
- develop the pipeline of regulated professionals entering the system.

In addition, we are also today publishing the government response to the consultation Proposals to expand access to take-home naloxone supplies. This consultation ran for 6 weeks and sought views on proposed changes to who can supply naloxone without a prescription. We received over 300 responses spanning all four nations of the UK and included responses from a variety of organisations and individuals such as charities, NHS trusts, housing services and drug and alcohol treatment workers. Of these responses, approximately 95% agreed with the proposals we set out.

The volume of responses and breadth of support for the changes we outlined from across the UK demonstrates the importance of expanding access to this life-saving medication. On this basis, we are proceeding with plans which will do this through two routes:

- Firstly, by expanding the list of services and professionals named in legislation who are able to supply take-home naloxone without a prescription.

- Secondly, by establishing a registration service enabling professionals and services not named in the legislation to, subject to appropriate training and safeguarding, supply take-home naloxone.

These changes, alongside the publication of the strategic plan, mark an important step forward. Widening access to naloxone will prevent the number of deaths from opioid overdose, and the workforce plan provides a foundation for better and more consistent training, career progression and longer-term workforce planning for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce. This is a clear demonstration of this government's ongoing commitment to making the ambitions of the drug strategy a reality and delivering world-class treatment and recovery systems of care across England.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ High Streets Update

**Minister for Levelling Up (Jacob Young):**

[\[HCWS461\]](#)

Today, we publish the response to the High Street Rental Auction consultation that was launched last year. We sought views on matters relating to the delivery of High Street Rental Auctions and today I am pleased to announce the findings. This is a significant step in responding to landlords, tenants, industry bodies and local authorities, clarifying the design of this important new power.

Amongst a number of topics, the consultation response outlines how Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards will operate in relation to a High Street Rental Auction, and responds to questions raised on the new permitted development right which will be introduced. This is a significant milestone prior to the publication of guidance and the launch of High Street Rental Auctions.

The high street is the beating heart of every town and city. A thriving high street is the centre of a community, a place for socialising, shopping and doing business. They are a snapshot of a place, signalling how well the regional economy is faring. However, our high streets are facing tough times, and when retail and hospitality businesses are under stress the blight of vacant buildings tends to follow. Empty properties lead to a vicious spiral of decline, where fewer shops lead to less visitors, and our once vibrant town centres dwindle.

The Government is working hard to revive the nation's high streets. We designed High Street Rental Auctions to allow all councils to level up economic growth in their communities and improve pride in place. High Street Rental Auctions, which will apply to England only, are part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which will allow local authorities to require landlords to let their empty high street shops through an auction, achieving a rental lease of between 1 and 5 years for a suitable high street use. This permissive power will be further articulated in secondary legislation, with the powers coming into force this summer.

I will be writing to local authorities and sector stakeholders reminding them of the introduction of this new power and the significant role it will play in tackling vacancy.

I will place a copy of the consultation response in the Library of both Houses.