



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 17 May 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (04:24 P.M., 17 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

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ **Business: Redundancy**

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[25442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle companies that make employees redundant without (a) giving notice and (b) following a consultation process.

Kevin Hollinrake:

While we recognise that tough decisions such as redundancies remain a commercial matter, it's important that employees are treated fairly and that correct process is followed.

The Government has a robust package of measures to address non-compliance including:

- potential disciplinary action for officeholders who fail to consult following appointment on insolvency,
- a financial penalty on employers who fail to engage with employees and;
- potential prosecution for failure to notify the relevant competent authority when proposing redundancies.

Whether an employer met consultation requirements for collective redundancy would be a matter for an employment tribunal to decide, having heard detailed evidence on the facts of the case.

■ **Department for Business and Trade: Food**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[25413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what her Department's policy is on the procurement of (a) food and (b) drinks produced in Britain for use in its canteens and restaurants.

Alan Mak:

This information is not centrally held. The Government Property Agency are responsible for the procurement of food and drink for the Department for Business and Trade.

■ **Post Offices: Wales**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[26184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of devolving (a) the Post Office in Wales and (b) her Departmental powers to Wales.

Kevin Hollinrake:

There are no plans to devolve the Post Office in Wales. Post Office delivers essential services across all four nations of the UK thanks to the network of 11,500 branches and the Government-set access criteria. Our focus is on supporting businesses and growing the economy across the UK.

■ Universal Service Obligation**Helen Hayes:**[\[26183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if she will take steps to help strengthen (a) the quality of service targets in the universal service obligation and (b) the effectiveness of Ofcom's enforcement of those targets by Royal Mail.

Kevin Hollinrake:

It is for Ofcom, as the independent regulator, to monitor and enforce Royal Mail's delivery of the universal service obligation. The Government does not have a role in Ofcom's regulatory decisions.

Ofcom fined Royal Mail £5.6m for failing to meet its obligations in 2022/23. It continues to hold Royal Mail to account and has said it will take appropriate further enforcement action as required in response to failure to meet quality of service targets. I have also raised concerns with Royal Mail's parent company and will continue do so if service levels fail to improve.

I note that Ofcom's recent call for inputs on the future of the universal postal service set out the importance of reliability and affordability in consumers' expectations for postal services and that it will consider if further safeguards are necessary to ensure people's needs are met.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Cabinet Office:Enterprise Rent-A-Car****Emily Thornberry:**[\[25194\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the contract agreed by his Department with Enterprise Rent-A-Car on 19 April 2024, procurement reference CCVH23A01, if he will publish the specification of requirements set out in schedule 20 of that contract.

Alex Burghart:

It is Cabinet Office policy to publish Contracts with a value of over £10,000 on Contracts Finder within 30 days of Contract Award. Crown Commercial Service, Cabinet Office's procurement arm, has published the Contract Schedules in accordance with the publication timescales and the information is now available.

■ Consumers: Protection

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[25465\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of issuing a statement of principle that all services should be provided in-person where possible.

Alex Burghart:

The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone has affordable access to public services, whether online or offline.

Departments are required by the Government's Service Standard to provide support via alternative channels for all their online services to all users, including disabled people, people with other legally protected characteristics, people who do not have access to the internet and/or lack the skills and/or confidence to use it.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Public Participation

Andrew Bridgen: [\[25230\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make a cost benefit analysis of the introduction of direct democracy.

Alex Burghart:

The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy whereby, through general elections, voters are entitled to elect an MP to represent them in the House of Commons. Parliament is responsible for making legislation and has, on occasion, made provision for specific issues to be considered by the electorate through referendums.

■ Minister without Portfolio: Departmental Responsibilities

Sarah Olney: [\[26193\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much his Department has spent on matters relating to common sense at the instruction of the Minister without portfolio within the Cabinet Office since her appointment.

John Glen:

The Minister's official role is the Minister without Portfolio, a role which has a large scope across government. The Minister supports the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, to identify where our public sector delivery is inhibited by bureaucracy and inefficiencies. The Minister's overarching aim is to ensure efficiency and value for money for the taxpayer.

Further information on the Minister without Portfolio's role can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/esther-mcvey>.

■ Public Sector: Solar Power**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[25726\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department plans to publish guidance on the installation of solar technology on the (a) central Government and (b) wider public sector estate.

Alex Burghart:

The Cabinet Office plans to issue high-level guidance to central government, specifically covering the central government estate and published for an internal-to-government audience, in the coming months. Further guidance, for the wider public sector, may follow.

The Office of Government Property has published the [Net Zero Estate Playbook](#) on gov.uk, providing guidance to support government property organisations to decarbonise their estates. This includes recommendations of how to reduce operational energy use, such as through improving renewable energy generation where appropriate through multiple channels, including solar technology.

Government is committed to driving forward the renewable energy agenda, both on its own estate and beyond, and the UK has halved its emissions ahead of every other major economy.

■ Shared Services Connected**John Healey:** [\[25160\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral statement made by the Secretary of State for Defence entitled Defence Personnel Data Breach of 7 May 2024, Official Report, column 469, who will lead the Cabinet Office review of Government contracts with Shared Services Connected Ltd; and what estimate he has made of when that review will be completed.

John Glen:

The review of Shared Services Connected Ltd is being led by the Government Security Group in the Cabinet Office. The timelines for this review are still being determined as part of the commissioning process.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**■ Layan Nasir****Sir Desmond Swayne:** [\[24356\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what representations the Church has made to the Israeli government to secure the release of Layan Nasir from administrative detention.

Andrew Selous:

On 9th April the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, issued the following short statement in response to the news that Layan Nasir, a member of an Anglican congregation in the occupied West Bank, had been arrested by Israeli forces.

"I'm shocked and deeply concerned by this news. Together with our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters, I pray for Layan and her family - and for the congregation of St Peter's Anglican Church in the Occupied West Bank. Please pray for Layan's safety and swift release." The Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, joined the Archbishop's call for prayers and her release.

On 28th April the Archbishop renewed his appeal for the release of Layan Nasir, who I understand is being held in Damon Prison, in Israel. A spokesperson for Lambeth Palace told Sky News:

"He is deeply concerned to learn that she is now facing administrative detention for four months, without charge and with no due process for her, her family, or lawyers to challenge this. Such processes against what is already a deeply threatened minority are contrary to commitments given over the years. This, along with daily harassment of Christian laity and clergy in East Jerusalem, indicates the predicament that many Christians now face in the West Bank and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As the Occupying Power, the State of Israel is obliged by International Law to protect those at risk."

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Guli Francis-Dehqani, met with members of the family of Layan Nasir last week during a visit to the Occupies Palestinian Territories. I understand from Church House officials that conversations are ongoing with both the Israeli and the British Government regarding Layan Nasir's release from administrative detention.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Charities: Food Technology****Andrew Bridgen:****[25229]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to provide support to (a) Coalville CAN and (b) other charities that provide cooking lessons for children and elderly people.

Stuart Andrew:

There is a range of funding available for organisations that are working to support and improve their communities. The 'Find a grant' service is a search function which helps organisations search for government grants. The filtering system allows you to select grants which are open to applications from non-profits (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-government-grants>).

The National Lottery Community Fund also hosts a number of funding programmes (<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding>).

At a more local level, most areas of the country have Community Foundations that manage at least one local grant fund or can offer guidance (<https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/>)

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Food

Sir John Hayes: [25409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her Department's policy is on the procurement of (a) food and (b) drinks produced in Britain for use in its canteens and restaurants.

Julia Lopez:

DCMS does not own any canteens or restaurants. The canteen facilities we use are provided by our landlords, and we have no involvement in the provision of food and drink to those facilities. For our London headquarters, this is overseen by the Government Property Agency.

■ George Beaumont

Andrew Bridgen: [25233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Sir George Beaumont.

Julia Lopez:

May 2024 marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the National Gallery. Sir George Beaumont played a crucial role in the Gallery's creation, both campaigning for its formation and donating his own art to what has become one of our greatest institutions. He died just three years later in 1827. Two hundred years on from when the Gallery was founded for the nation, it continues to bring great paintings and people together.

The Gallery is marking its bicentenary with an exciting year of activities, special displays, online events, exhibitions, and significant loans to other galleries across the UK – with everyone, everywhere welcome. The Arts Minister, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, was delighted to have attended the gallery last week to take part in the official start to the celebrations.

■ Sports: Facilities

Thangam Debbonaire: [25249]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to ensure there are no uninsulated overhead electricity cables at domestic sport facilities.

Stuart Andrew:

The safety, wellbeing and welfare of everyone taking part in sport is absolutely paramount. It is for individual sports clubs to carry out risk assessments and put in place mitigations that will improve player safety.

Sport England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport arm's length body for grassroots sport, is not a regulator of community sport but does provide guidance to help sports clubs carry out risk assessments, as do national governing bodies of sport.

For each new sports facility built, there is a legal obligation shared between developers, designers and contractors to promote health and safety. This applies throughout the entire project cycle from design and construction through to operation, maintenance and demolition. This obligation is given in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations -

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/index.htm>. Any breach of these regulations is a criminal offence.

In addition, Sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 outline ongoing duties to protect workers and members of the public from risk.

The Health and Safety Executive and others, including the Energy Networks Association, have also produced guidance in relation to safety around overhead lines.

■ Theatres: Government Assistance

Damien Moore:

[25553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department has taken to support (a) small and (b) independent theatres.

Julia Lopez:

His Majesty's Government is committed to supporting the arts and cultural sector, including theatres. This is primarily through the Arts Council England whose funding for National Portfolio Organisations has increased to £444.6 million per annum, funding a record 985 organisations, including 214 new organisations outside of London.

Arts Council England invests in nearly 200 theatres or theatre companies that produce, commission, and present theatre, in addition to arts centres, festivals and outdoor theatre companies. These range from large theatres in cities - Liverpool Theatres, Manchester Royal Exchange, Sheffield Theatres - to smaller theatres and theatre companies often with a particular specialism, such as theatre for children, theatre with a disability focus, theatre companies that co-create with different communities or theatre companies that are designed to tour. Overall investment in theatre has increased through the current round of the Arts Council's National Portfolio programme – both in terms of the number of organisations supported, and the volume of funding which is now more than £110 million per annum.

A number of theatres are also regularly supported through the Arts Council's open access National Lottery Project Grants programme which has a budget of £116.8 million a year. This is a rolling programme and is open to artists and companies across the country.

DEFENCE**■ Air Force: Israel**

Matt Western: [\[25309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Air Force flights have travelled to Israel (a) since October 7 2023 and (b) between October 2022 and October 2023.

Leo Docherty:

There have been 59 Royal Air Force aircraft that have travelled to Israel from 7 October 2023 to 9 May 2024. There were 15 Royal Air Force flights to Israel from October 2022 to October 2023.

Matt Western: [\[25313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the purpose of UK military flights travelling to Israel since 7 October 2023 has been.

Leo Docherty:

Royal Air Force operated planes travelling to Israel since 7 October 2023 have been used by Ministers, officials and UK Armed Forces personnel conducting diplomatic and defence engagement, and to transport life-saving medical supplies.

■ Ajax Vehicles

John Healey: [\[26056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many programme milestones the Ajax programme has missed since 2010.

James Cartlidge:

Between 2010 and the programme reset in 2023, four programme milestones were missed. Following signature of the new contract in September 2023, no milestones have been missed.

John Healey: [\[26059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of when Ajax will have completed its reliability growth trials.

James Cartlidge:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given on the 23 November 2023 to Question 2256.

Attachments:

1. Ajax Vehicles: Procurement [2256 - Ajax Vehicles Procurement.docx]

■ Ajax Vehicles: General Dynamics Land Systems

John Healey: [\[26060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department last made a payment to General Dynamics Land Systems UK in relation to the Ajax programme.

James Cartlidge:

The most recent payment against the main General Dynamics Ajax contract was made on 14 May 2024.

■ Antisubmarine Warfare: Climate Change

Mark Pritchard: [\[25201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of climate change on anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

Mark Pritchard: [\[25202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of climate change on the counter-sonar capabilities of the continuous at sea deterrent.

James Cartlidge:

The Royal Navy continuously monitors the potential impacts of climate related risks to ensure its equipment remains suitable for future operating parameters.

Whilst for security reasons I cannot go into detail regarding operational capabilities, I can confirm that Defence is committed to making preparations for the more extreme conditions that climate change may bring, in order to maintain operational advantage.

■ Apache Helicopters: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois: [\[25453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost is of the AH-64E Apache programme.

James Cartlidge:

The initial procurement of the UK Apache 64E utilised US Government Foreign Military Sales and is currently forecast to cost is £1.793 billion against an approval of £1.999 billion. The long term training and support for Apache 64E is supplied by Boeing Defence UK and the current five year Long Term Training and Support Contract has a value of £341,199,072.50. This does not include operating costs of the Apache 64E which are accounted for separately.

■ Armed Forces

Damien Moore: [\[25550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to improve the combat readiness of the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

Our Armed Forces are always ready to protect and defend the UK and we continue to meet all operational commitments, including participating in every single NATO mission.

The Defence Command Paper 23 sets out our plan to deliver a credible warfighting force, generated and employed to protect the nation and help it prosper now and in the years to come. This plan will deliver the biggest transformation and strengthening of our national defence since the Cold War.

To support this, defence spending will increase to £87 billion a year by the end of the decade. As part of this, we're investing £10 billion in munitions production to ensure we have rapid production capacity and stockpiles of next generation munitions.

■ **Armed Forces: Data Protection**

John Healey: [\[25153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which external organisation his Department has commissioned to conduct an independent investigation into the armed forces payment data breach reported on 6 May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has commissioned the independent investigation under an existing cyber incident response contract. The MOD is unable to disclose which external organisation has been commissioned at present for national security reasons.

John Healey: [\[25154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral statement entitled Defence Personnel Data Breach of 7 May 2024, Official Report, column 466, when the investigation into that data breach will be concluded.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The investigation into the network compromise is ongoing and is expected to file an initial report at the end of June.

John Healey: [\[25155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has found evidence that personal data has been copied out of the subcontractor's IT system by a malign actor following the armed forces payment data breach reported on 6 May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The investigation into the network compromise is ongoing and at this time there is no evidence to suggest that any data has been exfiltrated.

John Healey: [\[25158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) serving armed forces personnel and (b) veterans had their addresses accessed during the armed forces payment data breach reported on 6 May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

There is no evidence that data has been exfiltrate or accessed.

We are still analysing the data and not able to give an answer but, early findings are that only a small proportion of the data includes addresses.

John Healey: [\[25159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) full-time, (b) reservist and (c) former armed forces personnel reported suspicious activity related to their bank account to his Department following the data breach reported on 6 May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As of 9 May, no personnel had reported suspicious activity related to their bank account following the data breach reported on 6 May 2024.

■ **Armed Forces: Housing**

Luke Pollard: [\[26274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts were made to (a) single living accommodation and (b) Service Family Accommodation properties for maintenance issues in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland in each year between 2017 and 2022.

James Cartlidge:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 14 May 2024 to question 24821.

Attachments:

1. Armed Forces: Housing [24821 - Armed Forces Housing.docx]

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

Rachael Maskell: [\[25506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 56 of the Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the UK to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, published on 22 June 2023, whether he plans to accept the recommendation that a child from a separated family should not be enlisted if only one parent gives consent.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Applicants under the age of 18 are only accepted with the written consent by all appropriate persons – that is to say those with legal parental responsibility or a legal guardian. If an agreement cannot be reached, a parent can apply for a Specific Issue Order or Prohibited Steps Order. A judge will then make a decision based on the applicant's best interests.

Rachael Maskell: [\[25507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 56 of the Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the UK to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, published on 22 June 2023, whether he plans to accept the recommendation that an enlisted child should not be subject to a longer minimum service period than an enlisted adult.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Under 18 recruits are able to leave up to the day before their 18th birthday via a variety of mechanisms such as Discharge As Of Right or Discharge Under 18. Prior to their 18th birthday, they make an informed choice as to whether to remain in service beyond this age. These rights are exclusive to those Under 18, providing additional safeguards appropriate to their age. Subsequent adult service is only committed to having completed this period of enhanced rights and having attained the age of 18. Individuals who decide to leave the Armed Forces are supported for up to two years post discharge to gain a route into further education, training or employment.

■ **Army: Recruitment****Rachael Maskell:**[\[25508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what guidance his Department issues to parents of potential army recruits under the age of 18 on their child's discharge rights.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Discharge as of Right (DAOR) is discussed during the candidate career discussion and the candidate Basic Training Readiness preparation briefs. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend these sessions and ask any questions.

DAOR information is also provided in the candidate final offer, in the Terms and Conditions of Service section, which parents/guardians can view via the application portal. DAOR is touched upon in the Commanding Officer Welcome Brief at Army Foundation College Harrogate for the U18 recruits and their parents/guardians who attend that establishment.

■ **Artillery****Mr Mark Francois:**[\[25460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many 155mm artillery pieces are in operational service with the Army.

James Cartlidge:

I am withholding this information as the figures for artillery systems held by the Ministry of Defence are to be published at an undetermined future date. This information will be published in the form of the UK Armed Forces Equipment and Formations 2024, which will be accessible here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations>

■ **Artillery: Procurement****Mr Mark Francois:**[\[25457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost is of the new boxer-related 155mm artillery programme.

James Cartlidge:

I am unable to confirm the cost of the programme as it is subject to negotiation.

■ **Catterick Garrison****Luke Pollard:**[\[26255\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 280 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Meggido Lines.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at Meggido Lines 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.

Luke Pollard:[\[26256\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

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

Luke Pollard:[\[26257\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 13 May 2024, to Question 24549.

Luke Pollard: [26258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at Peronne Lines as of 14 May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

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

■ Chinook Helicopters: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois: [25455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost is of the CH-47ER programme.

James Cartlidge:

Portfolio data is published annually in support of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Annual Report which includes a budget baseline and the latest HM Treasury approved estimates in respect of whole life costs.

The current report is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications//infrastructure-and-projects-authority-annual-report-2022-23>

Mr Mark Francois: [25456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost is of the CH-47 programme.

James Cartlidge:

For the current CH-47 Chinook fleet which has been in-service for the UK since 1980 the annual core sustainment costs are circa £160 million.

■ D-Day Landings: Anniversaries

Dr Matthew Offord: [25475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department plans to take to commemorate the D-Day landings.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is the lead Department for the Government's National UK D-Day 80th anniversary and is working across Whitehall and with external stakeholders to lead a programme of official commemorations in the UK and in France, ensuring our Normandy Veterans are the VIPs for this significant anniversary.

The UK's National Commemorative Event in Portsmouth will once again highlight this nation's major contribution as a leading partner in the Western Alliance. The programme will commemorate the service and sacrifice of all who fought under British command on D-Day, by honouring our veterans, securing their legacy within our youth and demonstrating the UK's global role in defence and security alliances.

The official programme includes:

UK:

A National Commemoration on Southsea Common, Portsmouth on 5 June – an audience of 4,000 and live BBC One broadcast.

In France on 5 June:

A Royal British Legion service of commemoration in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Bayeux War Cemetery, with up to 50 Normandy veterans present and 1,500 guests.

A CWGC led Bayeux Cathedral Service in partnership with the MOD for 1,000 guests.

A CWGC and MOD partnered BBC One live broadcast from Bayeux War Cemetery when all 4,144 graves will be illuminated.

In France on 6 June:

A National Commemoration at the British Normandy Memorial in Ver sur Mer with up to 50 Normandy veterans present and an audience of 2,500, live broadcast on BBC One. It is the first time, during a major commemorative year, that this event will take place at the Memorial following its official opening in 2021.

■ Defence Business Services: Civil Servants

John Healey:

[\[25430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) full-time equivalent and (b) part time civil servants there were at Defence Business Services in each year since 2010.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The below table shows the number of full time and part time core workforce individuals within Defence Business Services (DBS) as at 31 March for each year.

YEAR	FULL TIME	PART TIME	GRAND TOTAL
2012	1,538	335	1,873
2013	1,352	255	1,607
2014	1,296	259	1,555
2015	1,807	436	2,243
2016	1,739	438	2,177
2017	1,780	464	2,244
2018	1,754	469	2,223
2019	1,852	489	2,341
2020	1,972	520	2,492

YEAR	FULL TIME	PART TIME	GRAND TOTAL
2021	1,414	413	1,827
2022	1,461	411	1,872
2023	1,460	414	1,874
2024	1,556	379	1,935

DBS was established in July 2011, therefore the earliest data provided is from 31 March 2012. The major changes in staff levels on 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2021 are the result of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) merging with DBS on 1 April 2014, and UK Security Vetting (UKSV) leaving DBS on 1 April 2020.

■ Defence Equipment: Production

John Healey: [\[25161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to appoint a defence production envoy.

John Healey: [\[25162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what powers the defence production envoy will have.

John Healey: [\[25163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, to whom the proposed envoy to oversee production of weapons and ammunition will report.

John Healey: [\[25164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for joint working between the (a) proposed envoy to oversee production of weapons and ammunition and (b) Minister for Defence Procurement.

John Healey: [\[25165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what powers he plans to give the proposed envoy to oversee production of weapons and ammunition in the context of (a) managing contracts and (b) spending.

John Healey: [\[25166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what process he plans to use to select the proposed envoy to oversee production of weapons and ammunition.

John Healey: [\[25167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for joint working between the (a) proposed envoy to oversee production of weapons and ammunition and (b) head of Defence Equipment and Support.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Defence is working closely with other Government Departments to outline the scope of the envoy role and we will confirm further details in due course.

■ **Defence: Manufacturing Industries**

Damien Moore: [\[25555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to help support small and local businesses within the defence industry.

James Cartlidge:

The MOD recognises the vital contribution that Small and local businesses make within the defence industry. UK MOD is continuously working to address issues that limit access for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to defence opportunities, both directly with the department and through prime suppliers' supply-chains. MOD's SME Action Plan outlines the actions and commitments we have made to support SMEs seeking to work in defence. Increasing the diversity of the defence supply-chain helps us to identify and exploit innovation and improves the resilience of the defence industry overall.

■ **Gaza: Armed Forces**

Matt Western: [\[25310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether armed forces personnel have been deployed in Gaza since 7 October 2023.

Leo Docherty:

No UK Armed Forces personnel have been on the ground in Gaza in any capacity since 7 October 2023.

■ **HMS Argyll**

Dave Doogan: [\[26276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse of HMS Argyll's refit and LIFEX upkeep programme has been since 2022.

James Cartlidge:

The cost of the upkeep programme for HMS Argyll is not yet finalised and is subject to final agreement with the delivery contractors. This cost will be partially offset by the revenue generated from her sale to BAE, the repurposing of some of her equipment across the Surface Fleet, and the benefits that increased training opportunities within the shipbuilding industry will deliver.

■ HMS Excellent**Luke Pollard:** [\[25959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to HMS Excellent 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: [\[25960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to HMS Temeraire 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: [\[25961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Horsea Island 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: [\[25962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to Institute of Naval Medicine 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: [\[25963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to HMS Gannet 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: [\[25975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to HMNB Portsmouth 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 information required to answer the hon. Member's questions is held by Ministry of Defence contractors. Defence Infrastructure Organisation officials are working with them to produce a consolidated response which will take some time. I will write to him by early June 2024, and a copy of this letter will be placed in the Library of The House.

■ Indo-pacific Region: Military Alliances**Catherine West:** [\[25302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies on the UK's defence position in the Indo-Pacific region of the Australian national defence strategy.

Leo Docherty:

I welcome the recent release of Australia's inaugural National Defence Strategy. The United Kingdom and Australia consult closely on our respective defence and security strategies and the themes and challenges identified in the National Defence Strategy have clear parallels in the refreshed Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper. Both countries' strategies prioritise cooperation with partners, particularly in the Indo Pacific, to strengthen collective security.

The UK has delivered on its ambition for a tilt to the Indo-Pacific and is now putting our approach on a long-term strategic footing, working with Australia and others. The UK and Australia also both recognise that the security and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are inseparable. We continue to work closely with Australia to defend global rules and norms.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**Damien Moore:**[\[25551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of updating the Integrated Defence Review in 2024.

Leo Docherty:

The Integrated Review Refresh published in March 2023 updated the 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy which anticipated some but not all the global turbulence of the previous two years including Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The refreshed Integrated Review published in March 2023 set out our new approach through an updated strategic framework delivered through four pillars. The department continues to work to implement and deliver its ambition. A decision to refresh the Integrated Review is for the Prime Minister and currently no such decision has been made.

■ Israel: Arms Trade**Matt Western:**[\[25311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government has sold arms to Israel since 1 April 2024.

James Cartlidge:

The UK government has not sold arms to Israel since 1 April 2024.

■ Israel: Defence Equipment**Matt Western:**[\[25312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the origin of (a) munitions and (b) hardware used by the Israel Defence Force in the drone strikes that killed World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza on 1 April 2024.

Leo Docherty:

The Government is carefully reviewing Israel's Fact Finding and Assessment Mechanism (FFAM)'s initial findings of their investigations into the killing of World Central Kitchen aid workers and welcome the suspension of two officers as a first step. The findings of the investigation must be published in full and followed up with a wholly independent review to ensure the utmost transparency and accountability.

We continue to monitor the situation in Israel and Gaza closely but are not commenting on specific licences.

■ Israel: Military Aid

Kenny MacAskill: [\[26282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether an RAF Shadow R1 plane landed at Nevatim air base in Israel on 13 February 2024.

Leo Docherty:

We will not comment on operational activity.

■ Japan: Military Alliances

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[26081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Japan-UK Reciprocal Access Agreement, signed on 11 January 2023, whether he plans to deploy armed forces to the South China Sea in proximity to Taiwan.

Leo Docherty:

The UK-Japan Reciprocal Access Agreement enables UK and Japanese military personnel to operate and exercise together in each other's countries. There are no plans to utilise the RAA in the South China Sea.

■ Kendrew Barracks

Luke Pollard: [\[25336\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 1180 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Kendrew Barracks.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at Kendrew 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.

■ **Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Procurement**

Mr Mark Francois: [\[25454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost is of the P-8 Poseidon programme.

James Cartlidge:

In regard to the cost of the P-8 Poseidon programme, I refer to the answer given on 23 October 2023 to Question 200750.

■ **Military Aircraft: Helicopters**

John Healey: [\[25420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many airframes his Department plans to purchase for the New Medium Helicopter programme.

James Cartlidge:

There has been no change to the advertised requirement of a range of up to 44 platforms in the New Medium Helicopter Contract Notice that was published in May 2022. The results of the contract competition will inform the number of airframes to be delivered.

■ **Ministry of Defence: CCTV**

John Healey: [\[25433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many CCTV cameras manufactured by (a) Hikvision and (b) Dahua have been installed on his Department's sites in each year since 2010.

James Cartlidge:

We take the security of our personnel, systems and establishments very seriously and have a range of measures in place to ensure the integrity of our arrangements. These measures are kept under constant review and adjusted according to the threat. It is, however, long standing policy that we do not comment on the detail of those arrangements.

John Healey:

[\[25434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many CCTV cameras manufactured by (a) Hikvision and (b) Dahua are installed on his Department's sites.

James Cartlidge:

We take the security of our personnel, systems and establishments very seriously and have a range of measures in place to ensure the integrity of our arrangements. These measures are kept under constant review and adjusted according to the threat. It is, however, long standing policy that we do not comment on the detail of those arrangements.

■ Ministry of Defence: Data Protection

John Healey:

[\[25152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what information his Department holds on whether personal data belonging to (a) current and (b) former armed forces personnel has been published online following the armed forces payment data breach reported on 6 May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Department has found no evidence of personal data that belongs to current and former Armed Forces personnel being published online following the armed forces payment data breach reported on 6 May 2024. This will continue to be monitored.

John Healey:

[\[25421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personal data incidents affecting suppliers to his Department have been reported to the Information Commissioner's Office in each year since 2010.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The requirement to record personal data incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours came into force in May 2018 under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. The figures requested per year are as follows:

2018 1

2019 2

2020 2

2021 1

2022 1

2023 0

2024 1

■ Ministry of Defence: Harland and Wolff**Maria Eagle:** [\[22879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when (a) he, (b) Ministers and (c) officials in his Department last met Harland and Wolff.

Maria Eagle: [\[25772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to answer Question 22879 tabled by the Rt hon. Member for Garston and Halewood.

James Cartlidge:

Meetings with Harland and Wolff take place regularly at an Official level. I last met with them on 13 March 2024.

Details of Ministers' meetings with external individuals and organisations are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK.

■ MOD St Athan**Luke Pollard:** [\[25569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at MOD St Athan.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 780 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at MOD St Athan.

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.

■ MOD Stafford**Luke Pollard:** [\[25335\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 1,110 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at Beacon Barracks.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at Beacon 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.

■ Nadav Popplewell

Kenny MacAskill: [\[26280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department shared intelligence on the location of British hostage Nadav Popplewell in Gaza with the IDF.

Leo Docherty:

We will not comment further on detailed intelligence matters.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[26281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the claim by Hamas that British hostage Nadav Popplewell has died as a result of an IDF airstrike.

Leo Docherty:

The UK Government is working with partners across the region to secure the release of hostages, including British nationals. We continue to do all we can to secure the release of the hostages. It would not be right to comment further until the facts of the matter are ascertained.

■ RAF Cosford

Luke Pollard: [\[25566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at RAF Cosford.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 1,590 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at RAF Cosford.

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.

■ RAF Digby

Luke Pollard: [\[25339\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

I am withholding this information on the grounds of National Security as its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ RAF Halton

Luke Pollard: [\[25570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at RAF Halton.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 920 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at RAF Halton.

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.

■ RAF Mona

Luke Pollard: [\[25567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at Mona Airfield.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

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

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.

■ RAF Valley

Luke Pollard: [\[25568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at RAF Valley.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 350 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at RAF Valley.

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.

■ RAF Wittering

Luke Pollard: [\[25338\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 1,050 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at RAF Wittering.

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.

RFA Fort Victoria**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[25459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of when RFA Fort Victoria will (a) complete her refit and maintenance and (b) re-join the operational fleet.

James Cartlidge:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 22 April 2024 to Question 21373 for the hon. Member for Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport (Mr Pollard).

Rivet Joint Aircraft: Procurement**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[25452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost is of the Boeing RC-135 Rivet Joint aircraft.

James Cartlidge:

The total cost of the three RC-135 Rivet Joint (RAF Airseeker) aircraft is an estimated £576 million..

Royal Fleet Auxiliary: Staff**John Healey:**[\[22854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average amount of time is that an (a) officer and (b) rating serves in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Making the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) an attractive and rewarding employer remains of paramount importance and promoting retention efforts to extend the length of service of our sailors enables the RFA to retain skilled personnel.

The table below provides the average length of service on exit by trained RFA Personnel between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2023.

RANK	MEAN	MEDIAN
Officer	15 years 3 months	8 years 6 months
Rating	13 years 9 months	11 years 4 months

Average Length of Service (LOS) has been calculated by the length of current service, against the difference between the sailor's joining and exit dates.

Data has been provided for all exits from the RFA, including Resignation Under Age 60, Resignation Aged 60 or Over, and Other Wastage including Dismissal, Forced Early Retirement, Medical Discharge, Contract of Employment not offered, Offer of Employment Rejected and Death Whilst in Service.

■ St George's Barracks

Luke Pollard:

[\[25337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel are based at St George's Barracks, North Luffenham as of May 2024.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As at 1 January 2024, there were 360 UK Armed Forces Service personnel stationed at St George's Barracks, North Luffenham.

Please note the following caveats:

1. The number of UK Armed Forces Service Personnel stationed at St George's Barracks, North Luffenham 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.

EDUCATION**■ Schools: Finance****Munira Wilson:**[\[25590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will list the school related schemes that have received notice that funding will be (a) reduced and (b) ended since 1 January 2024.

Damian Hinds:

This government is committed to providing a world class education system for all children and has invested significantly in education to achieve that.

Including the additional funding for teachers' pay and pensions, funding for both mainstream schools and high needs is £2.9 billion higher in 2024/25 than in 2023/24. The overall core school budget will total £60.7 billion in 2024/25, which is the highest ever level in real terms per pupil. This means school funding is set to have risen by £11 billion by 2024/25 compared to 2021/22.

■ Schools: Rochdale**George Galloway:**[\[26075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the reduction in the level of real-terms funding since 2010 on schools in Rochdale constituency; and if she will make it her policy to increase the level of real-term funding for schools in Rochdale constituency to 2010 levels.

Damian Hinds:

This government is committed to providing a world class education system for all children and has invested significantly in education to achieve that. Overall school funding, including the recently announced additional pensions funding, is rising to £60.7 billion in 2024/25, which is the highest ever level in real terms per pupil. This means that real terms funding for schools in England has increased rather than decreased since 2010.

Through the National Funding Formula (NFF), funding is distributed fairly based on the needs of each school and their pupils and all schools attract a per pupil increase in funding. Mainstream schools in the Rochdale Constituency are attracting an extra £1 million in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 through the schools NFF, which is an increase of 1.9% per pupil in their pupil-led funding. This means schools in the Rochdale Constituency will attract over £112.1 million, based on the schools NFF. Constituency figures are based on an aggregation of school-level allocations through the NFF, and final allocations will depend on the local authority's funding formula.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO**■ District Heating****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[26302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if she will take steps to ensure that (a) tenants and (b) leaseholders are not adversely financially impacted by communal heating schemes.

Amanda Solloway:

Protecting heat network consumers is a priority for Government. The Government is introducing regulation, as recommended by the Competition and Markets Authority, to protect Heat Networks consumers. From 2025, Ofgem will be appointed as the heat network regulator. The regulatory framework will include standards for fair prices as well as additional protections to ensure that all heat networks consumers receive a quality service.

■ Energy Supply**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[25728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether the report on multi-region loose volume coupling by transmission system operators following the March 2022 Specialised Committee on Energy meeting will be made publicly available.

Andrew Bowie:

I can confirm that the report will be made publicly available in due course.

■ Geothermal Power**Andrew Bridgen:**[\[26165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if she will update her Department's policy paper entitled Geo-engineering: the Government's view, published on 4 May 2020.

Amanda Solloway:

The policy paper entitled Geo-engineering: the Government's view, updated on 4 May 2020, describes the Government's position on greenhouse gas removals (GGRs) and solar radiation management (SRM). The Government is not deploying SRM and has no plans to do so. The GGR business model update, published in December 2023, sets out the Government's plans and policies on GGRs. Officials will continue to develop policy on these matters and will make any necessary updates to the policy statement in due course.

■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**Grahame Morris:**[\[26118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what the average cost of fees is for a recipient of a pension through the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme.

Justin Tomlinson:

In the year to September 2023, Scheme expenses totalled £36m. The number of members in receipt of a pension at 30 September 2023 is 112,057. Therefore, the cost of scheme expenses per member in receipt of a pension is £321.27.

Grahame Morris:[\[26119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many former miners are not yet eligible to receive their mineworkers' pension.

Justin Tomlinson:

There are currently 34 members who are not in receipt of a pension and are under age 50 and therefore not yet eligible to receive their MPS pension.

Grahame Morris:[\[26120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 14 May 2024 to Question 25469, how many of the (a) former miners and (b) widows of former miners receiving a Mineworkers' Pension Scheme pension are aged (i) over 90, (ii) 80 to 89, (iii) 70 to 79, (iv) 60 to 69, and (v) below 60 years of age.

Justin Tomlinson:

The breakdown by age of former miners in receipt of pensions and dependents at 30 September 2023 is as follows:

AGE	FORMER MINERS IN RECEIPT OF	
	A PENSION	DEPENDENTS
	6259	1439
60-69	37513	3500
70-79	27157	6239
80-89	14133	8982
90+	2959	3876

■ Nuclear Fusion: Government Assistance

Damien Moore:[\[25945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent steps her Department has taken to support (a) companies and (b) individuals in the development of fusion technology.

Andrew Bowie:

The Government has announced its plan to launch the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) procurement process on 22nd May. This multi-stage competition, which offers the chance to bid for up to hundreds of millions of pounds in the initial contract period until 2029, will seek to find industry partners in engineering and

construction, to form a world-leading public-private alliance led by UK Industrial Fusion Solutions Ltd (UKIFS). Meanwhile, UK Research and Innovation invest in research grants for fusion, doctoral training and support fusion companies through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's prosperity partnership.

■ Renewable Energy: Finance

Dave Doogan:

[\[26275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 30 April 2024 to Question 23797 on Renewable Energy: Finance, what approximate capacity her Department expects to be successful for the Contracts for Difference AR6.

Andrew Bowie:

National Grid ESO are now reviewing the applications against Contracts for Difference qualification criteria. The volume of capacity successful will depend on a range of factors including the volume of eligible applications, and subsequent bid prices. We cannot pre-judge the outcome of AR6.

■ Rolls-Royce SMR: Government Assistance

Dave Doogan:

[\[26277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 13 May 2024 to Question 25350 on Rolls-Royce SMR: Government Assistance, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the decision by Rolls Royce not to pursue plans for a heavy pressure vessel plant in Deeside on the return on capital; and how much and what proportion of the grant has been allocated to Rolls Royce.

Andrew Bowie:

Under the Low Cost Nuclear programme, the Government has given a grant of up to £210 million to Rolls-Royce SMR Ltd to support development of the Rolls Royce Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design, potentially capable of deployment across the UK in the early 2030s. Whilst part of the work of the Programme has supported the design of key factories and engagement with potential locations, decision on deployment are outside of this funded programme and are a commercial matter for Rolls Royce SMR Ltd.

For the current phase of the Low Cost Nuclear programme Rolls Royce SMR have been allocated a total grant of £139.3 which equates to 66.3% of the total grant of £210m awarded. The assessment of Value for Money of activities Rolls Royce is undertaking under the grant funding agreement is in line with Green Book principles.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agricultural Products: UK Trade with EU****Stephen Farry:**[\[25597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to negotiate a sanitary and phytosanitary agreement with the EU.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) is the world's biggest zero tariff, zero quota trade agreement, and we actively use its mechanisms to continuously secure improvements to the trading relationship. In particular, the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) chapter of the TCA creates a framework to agree to further trade facilitations, including potential reductions in the frequency of import checks, where justified.

The UK proposed an equivalence mechanism for SPS measures during the 2018-20 negotiations for the TCA. The EU did not accept this.

We remain open to discussions with the EU on additional steps to further reduce trade friction, but these cannot be on the basis of future alignment with EU rules. This would compromise UK sovereignty over our own laws.

■ Air Pollution: Grants**Afzal Khan:**[\[22137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the recipients of the £6 million air quality grant will be announced for the 2023-24 period.

Robbie Moore:

I had concerns that the Local Air Quality Scheme would not deliver the most positive outcomes for local air quality at this particular time and so I have asked Defra officials to consider redesigning the Scheme in the future, to be able to better deliver those positive outcomes and therefore enhanced value for money for taxpayers.

Afzal Khan:[\[22138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to increase the air quality grant for 2024.

Robbie Moore:

I had concerns that the Local Air Quality Scheme would not deliver the most positive outcomes for local air quality at this particular time and so I have asked Defra officials to consider redesigning the Scheme in the future, to be able to better deliver those positive outcomes and therefore enhanced value for money for taxpayers.

■ Animal and Plant Health Agency: Inspections

Stella Creasy: [\[26128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the projected spend by (a) central and (b) local government is on Animal and Plant Health Agency inspectors in 2024-25.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) undertakes a very broad range of statutory inspections across Great Britain to protect animal, bee and plant health. These can relate to animal welfare, TB, biosecurity of (including pests, disease outbreaks and invasive species), trade or scientific research.

These inspections can be proactive (for example a bovine TB visit) or reactive (due to an outbreak). Direct staff and employers on costs for these inspection services are £44.7m. These costs are funded by Defra and the Devolved Administrations. APHA does not have inspectors funded by local government.

■ Animal Experiments

Patrick Grady: [\[25499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to end the use of LD50 testing on animals.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The UK supports work to develop New Approach Methodologies which can provide information on chemical hazards and risk assessment without the use of animals.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is the UK regulatory authority for veterinary medicines. The VMD assesses applications submitted by the veterinary pharmaceutical industry in line with national and international regulations and guidance to ensure safe and effective veterinary medicines of good quality are marketed. These requirements may therefore necessitate animal testing either to develop and register new veterinary medicines or for routine product quality control, to ensure the continued quality, safety and efficacy batch to batch. Non-animal tests are not always available. The VMD is committed to phasing out the use of animals for testing purposes where possible, in accordance with the principles of 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement). Furthermore, the UK is a signatory to the European Pharmacopoeia (which sets minimum quality standards of medicines) and the European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals used for Experimental and Other Scientific Purposes. This commitment to the 3Rs is also enshrined in the UK's Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 under which scientific procedures in animals are regulated.

For veterinary medicines significant progress in non-animal testing has been made in recent years, including the possibility of replacing animals by in vitro suitable cell cultures in LD50-type testing methods, and the relevant regulatory quality standards and testing requirements have been revised accordingly for these specific medicines.

Many Marketing Authorisation Holders for these specific medicines have already, and more recently, introduced these changes to their authorised medicines, which will reduce the number of animals used. Implementation of new tests for existing products can be a complicated process, requiring extensive validation and it is not always possible to replace all of the existing animal tests with in vitro non-animal replacements for each existing authorised product. The relevant UK Competent Authority for regulation of these medicines will continue to monitor the use of animals in these tests and to recommend use of non-animal tests where possible.

The Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation (the hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs, Andrew Griffith) recently announced that the Government will publish a plan to accelerate the development, validation and uptake of technologies and methods to reduce reliance on the use of animals in science, which will be published in the summer. He also requested that we double our investment in research to achieve these approaches next year to £20 million across the system in 2024/25.

LD50 testing is not required for preclinical development of novel medicines. Quality control testing of some authorised medicines relies on LD50 testing to ensure each batch meets expected quality standards. UK regulators follow the principles of the 3Rs. Significant progress has been made on validating alternative methods which do not use animals, including the possibility of replacing mice by in vitro suitable cell cultures in LD50-type testing methods, and the relevant regulatory quality standards and testing requirements have been revised accordingly for these specific medicines.

■ BSE

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[25781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will hold discussions with his counterparts in the devolved Administrations on bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The UK has a comprehensive surveillance programme in place to monitor the level of BSE over time and check on the continued effectiveness of our BSE controls. It was the effectiveness of these controls that recently identified a case in Scotland. Defra officials have engaged closely with Scottish counterparts on this matter, as they do regularly on animal disease issues more broadly with officials from all UK administrations under the Animal Health and Welfare Framework.

■ Cats and Dogs: Electronic Training Aids

Gill Furniss:

[\[26188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timetable is for bringing forward legislative proposals to ban the use of electronic shock collars on (a) cats and (b) dogs.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The Government remains committed to banning electronic training collars controlled by hand-held devices that administer electric shocks to cats or dogs.

We will pursue new regulations to deliver this commitment on a revised timeline. Parliamentary business will be announced in the usual way.

Coastal Areas: Environment Protection**Damien Moore:**[\[25554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to preserve psammosere environments in (a) Southport constituency and (b) across the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

The sand dune habitats of the Sefton Coast benefit from a range of legal protections - as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar site and National Nature Reserves (NNRs).

Natural England (NE) works proactively with landowners, land managers, developers, and the public to ensure these important habitats are protected. The Sefton Coast Partnership has a key role in bringing stakeholders together to ensure dune habitats are conserved. The Sefton Coast was a location in the Dynamic Dunescapes project which actively restored dune habitats by removing scrub, helping dune re-mobilisation, and utilising livestock grazing to manage vegetation.

In England, we have set four legally binding targets for biodiversity, to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030; to reverse species decline by 2042; to reduce the risk of species extinction; and to restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat, which will include psammoseres. These targets, alongside other targets on water and air quality for example, will drive action to create and restore habitats, reduce pressures on nature, and recover species.

A recently published paper, [Environment Act Habitat Target – Definitions and Descriptions](#), developed jointly by Defra and Natural England, provides detail for those involved in on-the-ground activities to restore or create wildlife-rich habitats. It includes the list of wildlife-rich habitats, of which several are coastal, for example, littoral sand and muddy sand, coastal vegetated shingle and coastal sand dunes.

Natural flood management is a key part of our solution to tackling flood and coastal erosion risks. We will double the number of government funded projects which include nature-based solutions to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk. Actions such as dune restoration not only help to reduce flood risk, but also provide other environmental benefits to wider areas. In February we awarded £25 million of funding to 40 schemes around England for improving flood resilience through a new natural flood management programme.

The Environment Agency's Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef (ReMeMaRe) initiative is working to restore our estuarine and coastal habitats, including saltmarsh,

to benefit people and nature. The initiative involves Defra arms-length bodies, and a partnership network of environmental non-governmental organisations. It has a mission to restore 15% of the current extent of our key estuarine and coastal habitats (such as saltmarsh, seagrass, native oyster reefs) by 2043.

Natural England is also undertaking climate change risk and vulnerability assessments across the SSSI network and developing site adaptive plans to identify climate vulnerable habitats, including sand dunes, and guide management to improve their resilience.

■ **Countryside: Access**

Andrew Selous:

[\[25183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the National Cycle Network in providing access to nature.

Rebecca Pow:

The National Cycle Network spans 12,000 miles of signed routes for walking, wheeling and cycling including over 5,000 miles of traffic-free paths. Since 2018, the Government has provided over £80m to Sustrans to upgrade the National Cycle Network. Upgrades include moving routes from busy roads, improved surfacing and better accessibility, helping to increase access to green spaces for all and benefiting both physical and mental health.

■ **Crops: Climate Change**

Catherine West:

[\[25517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure home grown crops are resilient to climate change, in the context of increased (a) rainfall and (b) warmer weathers.

Catherine West:

[\[25518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales on steps to improve crop resilience.

Sir Mark Spencer:

Our fantastic British farmers are world leaders and carefully plan their planting to suit the weather, their soil type and their long-term agronomic strategy. I understand the increasing importance of farmers having access to crop varieties that are resistant to climate change and variable weather conditions, to maintain crop quality and yields.

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.

One of these responses, the recent Precision Breeding Act, is a major step in unlocking growth and innovation in technologies like gene editing and supports Defra's efforts to reinforce food security in the face of climate change. Through the Act we want to encourage researchers and commercial breeders to be at the forefront of capturing the potential benefits of precision breeding for British farmers and consumers. For instance, research into wheat that is resilient to climate change is currently underway at the John Innes Centre. Gene editing techniques have been used to identify a key gene in wheat that can be used to introduce traits such as heat resilience whilst maintaining high yield. This could help to increase food production from a crop that 2.5 billion people are dependent on globally.

Also included in the NAP3, Defra's flagship breeding research programme, the Genetic Improvement Networks (GINs) on Wheat, Oil Seed Rape, Pulses and Vegetable crops identify genetic traits to improve productivity, sustainability, resilience and nutritional quality of our crops. The GINs also provide a platform for knowledge exchange for breeders, producers, end users and the research base, and a means for the delivery of scientific knowledge, resources and results to add value to wheat crops.

The £270 million Farming Innovation Programme also supports industry-led research and development in agriculture and horticulture. All projects support productivity and environmental outcomes that will benefit farmers and growers in England. In our latest 'climate smart' farming themed competition, we awarded over £11 million to projects investigating novel approaches to growing and managing crops. Previous competitions have also supported crop-related research.

■ Fisheries: Regulation

Tim Loughton:

[\[26026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what date the Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Bylaw 2021 will be approved.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Bylaw 2021 has not yet been submitted to Defra for approval.

■ Flood Control: North West Leicestershire

Andrew Bridgen:

[\[25232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve flood defences in North West Leicestershire constituency.

Robbie Moore:

The Government is investing £5.6 billion between 2021 and 2027 to better protect communities across England from flooding and coastal erosion. This investment includes a record £5.2 billion capital investment programme, a £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme, £170 million for economic recovery from flooding and over £30 million of funding for flood incident management.

In the £5.2 billion capital investment programme, funding is consistently distributed across the country wherever the risk is greatest and the benefits are highest. The Environment Agency administer this funding to maintain flood and coastal risk management (FCRM) assets across NW Leicestershire and is responsible the management of flood risk from watercourses designated Main River. They complete routine maintenance on assets with support from partners/contractors and this programme includes regular vegetation management, blockage removal and conveyance work to keep watercourses clear.

Packington was impacted by flooding in September 2023 and the Environment Agency are working with Leicestershire County Council (LCC) to assess what improvements can be made locally, such as improved flood warnings, property flood resilience (PFR) and natural flood management (NFM) mitigation measures.

A further 63 properties in the constituency were affected by flooding during Storm Babet in October 2023, and 43 impacted by Storm Henk in January 2024. In the current national 6-year programme, more than £0.5 million of government investment is planned by the Environment Agency to support schemes led by LCC at Breedon on the Hill, Diseworth & Long Whatton. Again, a variety of PFR, NFM and other flood alleviation measures will be utilised, aiming to better protect more than 60 properties.

The Environment Agency has also improved local flood modelling information and used this to work with developers to reduce flood risk in Ashby-de-la-Zouch .

■ **Furs: Imports and Sales**

Ruth Jones: [\[25582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's policy is on the (a) import and (b) sale of fur in the UK.

Sir Mark Spencer:

We have committed to explore potential action in relation to animal fur, as set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. We are continuing to build our evidence base on the fur sector, which will be used to inform any future action on the fur trade. We have also commissioned a report from our expert Animal Welfare Committee into the issue of what constitutes responsible sourcing in the fur industry. This report will support our understanding of the fur industry and help inform our next steps.

■ **Furs: Zoonoses**

Ruth Jones: [\[25581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the risk of infectious zoonotic diseases (a) mutating in and (b) spreading from fur farms to other mammals; and what steps he is taking to mitigate that risk.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 (2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland). Fur farming is legal in some EU countries. Where outbreaks of

SARS-CoV-2 and avian influenza virus have occurred in fur farms in Europe in recent years, the governments in those countries took action to cull the affected farms to mitigate the risk of spread.

Nevertheless, together with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) we are keeping a close eye on the findings of zoonotic pathogens such as SARS-CoV-2 and avian influenza in mink, foxes and other animals farmed for fur and the possible risk to human and animal health. We are vigilant to changes in risk and continue to use our established systems which include international disease monitoring programmes in the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and UKHSA to monitor the situation the outcomes of which are reviewed through our Veterinary Risk Group (VRG) and the [Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance \(HAIRS\) group](#). The HAIRS group have published a [risk assessment on the transmission from animals to humans of influenza of avian origin](#) and on the [risk SARS-CoV-2 infection in UK captive or wild Mustelidae populations presents to the UK human population](#). There is no direct exposure to infected fur farms for kept or wild mammals in the UK and there is no evidence to suggest an increased risk to wildlife.

International collaboration and knowledge exchange on avian influenza and other zoonotic pathogens is facilitated through discussions between the UK Chief Veterinary Officer and representatives from our national and international reference laboratories, and their counterparts in the EU and globally through the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the QUADs alliance and allied projects. Including through the joint WOAHO-FOA Scientific Network on animal influenza [OFFLU](#).

■ Hornets

Tim Farron: [\[25464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings Ministers in his Department have held on Asian hornets in the last 12 months.

Rebecca Pow:

The Asian hornet is an invasive non-native species, and a current GB alert species, which means that systems are in place to detect and then implement contingency plans to rapidly eradicate them in order to prevent establishment.

It is regularly discussed as an item on the agenda of monthly Minister-led meetings reviewing biosecurity priorities. In addition, officials have provided one briefing meeting specifically on Asian hornets in the last 12 months.

■ Pets: Travel

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[25076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to lay the Windsor Framework (Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals) Regulations before Parliament.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The Government is continuing to take forward work on the arrangements for the movement of pet animals under the Windsor Framework and will set out further detail in due course.

Plants: Northern Ireland**Andrew Bridgen:**[\[25224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which (a) plants, (b) trees and (c) seeds are not allowed to be sent to Northern Ireland from Great Britain as a result of the Windsor Framework.

Sir Mark Spencer:

The Windsor Framework provides for simplified arrangements for the movement of plants and plant products between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, meaning a phytosanitary certificate is not required and that a wider variety of plants can move.

We have secured the lifting of a ban on the movement of twelve plant species - apple, Japanese / delavay privet, European crab apple, common hawthorn, Norway maple, Japanese maple, sycamore maple, field maple, English oak, sessile oak, European beech and, most recently, hazel. We are in active dialogue with the EU Commission on a number of other species which industry has proposed as priorities. We will continue to engage with industry to ensure the smooth movement of additional plant species. Further details can be found on Defra's online Plant Health Portal. All information on high-risk plants, including the latest information on the plants' dossiers and those where the bans have been lifted, can be found at the 'Plant Portal' [here](#).

River Mersey: Water**Navendu Mishra:**[\[25089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 April 2024 to Question 17003 on River Mersey: Water, when he expects the Environment Agency's national programmes report on its investigation into chemical failures and historic sources of chemicals across the Mersey catchment to be published.

Robbie Moore:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given on 4 March 2024, UIN 17003. The Environment Agency's national programmes investigating persistent chemical failures and historic sources of chemicals across England are on-going, and there are therefore no plans to publish a specific report on the Mersey.

In 2025, the Water Framework Directive classifications for the water bodies in the Mersey catchment will be subject to a new assessment and published. Data informing the current classifications is available on Gov.uk at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/landing>.

As stated in the original response, the Environment Agency has national programmes investigating persistent chemical failures and historic sources of chemicals across

England. These programmes are on-going, and there are therefore no plans to publish a specific report on the Mersey. In 2025, the Water Framework Directive classifications for the water bodies in the Mersey catchment will be subject to a new assessment and published. Data informing the current classifications is available on Gov.uk.

■ Shellfish: Inspections

Tim Farron: [\[24878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many inspections of shellfish waters his Department has conducted in each year since 2015.

Robbie Moore:

Defra is responsible for designating shellfish water protected areas. Investigations are carried out by other organisations that have a role in water quality in shellfish waters, such as the Environment Agency and water companies (if directed to do so by the Environment Agency). Defra does not oversee these investigations to provide a figure.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Bilateral Aid: HIV Infection

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[26105\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will publish details of his Department's bilateral expenditure that has directly targeted tackling HIV and AIDS in (a) 2021, (b) 2022 and (c) 2023.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK remains a significant funder in the HIV response. In (i) 2021 and (ii) 2022 total bilateral expenditure for HIV and AIDS was (i) £5,831,984 and (ii) £10,035,256 respectively. Of this total Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office bilateral spend was (i) £4,548,553 and (ii) £9,916,750 for 2021 and 2022 respectively. This includes our funding to the Clinton Health Access Initiative to further improve access to essential HIV medicines and our funding to the Robert Carr Fund to support initiatives with grassroots organisations, including key populations, as part of the global HIV response.

Figures for 2023 are not yet available. They will be published in Autumn 2024.

■ Jimmy Lai

Andrew Western: [\[25599\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, whether UK consular officials (a) have been granted consular access to Jimmy Lai and (b) are able to visit him in prison.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Ministers and officials continue to raise Jimmy Lai's case at the highest levels with the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities and have been clear in our calls for his release, while continuing to press for consular access. Our repeated requests for consular access have been declined by the local authorities on the grounds the Chinese government does not recognise dual nationality and therefore considers Jimmy Lai to be exclusively Chinese. Consular access to dual nationals relies upon the agreement of the detaining state and is not covered in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

■ **Manahel al-Otaibi**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[25366\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what (a) assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of and (b) representations he has made to his Saudi counterpart on the case of Manahel al-Otaibi.

David Rutley:

The FCDO is closely monitoring the case of Manahel al-Otaibi and the British Embassy in Riyadh will continue to attempt to attend trials where possible. The Minister for the Middle East and Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon regularly raises individual freedom of expression cases with the Saudi authorities, alongside other human rights concerns, including in January with the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission. Saudi Arabia remains a FCDO human rights priority country, in part due to continued restrictions on freedom of expression.

■ **Nigeria: Education**

Fiona Bruce: [\[26113\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, if he will hold discussions with his Nigerian counterpart on the effectiveness of the Safe Schools Initiative for supporting the education of (a) girls, (b) religious minorities and (c) other children in conflict-affected areas of northern Nigeria.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

Special Envoy for Girls Education, Helen Grant MP, will meet the Nigerian Education Minister on May 20 to discuss Nigeria's upcoming programme of education reform. The UK and Nigeria are signatories of the Safe School Declaration which commits governments to protect education from violence. The UK supports the implementation of the Safe Schools Initiative in Nigeria through its Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises (EiEPC) programme. This provides assistance to children affected by conflict in Borno and Yobe states, allowing them to learn foundational skills, increase their resilience and strengthen systems which support formal and non-formal education during emergencies.

■ Sarm Heslop**Anna McMorrin:** [\[26195\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, whether he has had recent discussions with the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands on the disappearance of Sarm Heslop.

David Rutley:

His Majesty's Consul General Miami has raised the disappearance of British woman, Sarm Heslop with the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Americas, Caribbean and Overseas Territories) was due to speak to the Governor earlier this month and is seeking a call with the Governor at the earliest opportunity.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Defibrillators****Ian Byrne:** [\[26007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to expand (a) access to and (b) provision of public automatic external defibrillators.

Ian Byrne: [\[26008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions she has had with (a) the British Heart Foundation and (b) other relevant organisations on the survival rate of people who suffer cardiac arrest outside of hospital.

Andrew Stephenson:

Department officials met with the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and NHS England in November 2023 to discuss access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and AED cabinets. Officials also attended a workshop co-hosted by the BHF and NHS England in January 2024, on the same issue.

To improve survival rates for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest cases, the Government launched a new £1 million one-off fund that will expand community access to AEDs. The grant was made available from September 2023. We estimated 1,000 new defibrillators would be provided by the fund, with the potential for this to double as most applicants would be asked to match the funding they receive partially or fully. To date, the grant has successfully delivered 2,000 AEDs.

Applications for AEDs are selected in line with criteria to provide AEDs where there is greatest need. The criteria include remote communities with extended ambulance response times, places with high footfall and high population densities, hotspots for cardiac arrest including sporting venues and venues with vulnerable people, and deprived areas.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Food**Sir John Hayes:** [\[25412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what her Department's policy is on the procurement of (a) food and (b) drinks produced in Britain for use in its (i) canteens and (ii) restaurants.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department follows the Government's mandatory Buying Standards for the food in its canteens and restaurants. This includes, in respect of the use of fresh produce, menus that are designed to reflect the natural growing or production period for the United Kingdom. In-season produce is highlighted on menus.

■ Genetically Modified Organisms: Food**Virginia Crosbie:** [\[26295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to ensure (a) clear and (b) transparent labelling of genetically modified foods.

Virginia Crosbie: [\[26296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to ensure traceability in the food chain for foods that contain genetically modified ingredients.

Andrea Leadsom:

Genetically modified organism (GMO) labelling rules stipulate that foods sold in Great Britain that contain genetically modified ingredients must be labelled. This labelling gives consumers the choice on whether to consume such foods containing, or consisting of, GMO ingredients, and the choice to avoid such foods, should they wish to do so. In the case of food sold loose, or where food has been cooked in genetically modified products such as cooking oil, this must appear on a notice, menu, ticket, or label which can be easily read by customers.

Information about any characteristic or property which renders a food consisting of or containing genetic modifications different from its conventional counterpart, such as its composition, nutritional value, the intended use of the food or feed, or any health implications for certain sections of the population, must also be included.

The Government maintains a list of GMOs authorised for use in food and feed. It is compulsory that the product adheres to mandatory traceability and labelling requirements, and that the product developer provides monitoring reports to the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland on an annual basis.

■ Joint Replacements: Post-operative Care**John McDonnell:** [\[25603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether her Department has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of adopting the (a) Infection &

Orthopaedic Management (INFORM), (b) British Orthopaedic Association and (c) other guidelines for the treatment and management of prosthetic joint infections.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK Health Security Agency manages a national surveillance programme, the Surgical Site Infection (SSI) Surveillance Service, which enhances the quality of patient care by providing hospitals with a framework for collection and comparison of their rates of SSI against national benchmarks. This information is used to review and guide clinical practice, to reduce the risk of infection following surgery. Hip and knee replacements are two of the 17 categories of surgery under surveillance by hospitals. Surveillance in at least one orthopaedic surgical category per quarter, per financial year is mandatory for all National Health Service hospitals undertaking orthopaedic surgery, with hip and knee replacements being the most numerous.

■ **Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists**

Grahame Morris:

[\[26116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been waiting for more than 12 months for (a) knee and (b) hip replacement surgery.

Andrew Stephenson:

Waiting list management information shows that there were 3,469 people waiting for more than 12 months for hip replacement surgery, and 5,714 people waiting for more than 12 months for knee replacement surgery, as of 5 May 2024.

The National Health Service has been hit by the most disruptive industrial action in its history, and as of April 2024, approximately 1.4 million hospital appointments have been rescheduled since December 2022. The NHS is working incredibly hard to ensure that those who have been waiting the longest receive treatment as soon as possible, and staff are going above and beyond to make this happen.

■ **Naloxone**

Grahame Morris:

[\[23721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether she plans to place opioid-overdose reversal Naloxone alongside existing public access defibrillators.

Andrea Leadsom:

[Holding answer 30 April 2024]: The Department is working to expand access to naloxone, and to increase the availability of this life saving medicine. We will shortly update legislation to enable more services and individuals to provide take-home supplies of naloxone without a prescription. This follows a public consultation in which the responses were overwhelmingly supportive of our proposals. The consultation outcome is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-to-expand-access-to-take-home-naloxone-supplies>

These changes mean naloxone can be given to a family member or friend of a person who is known to be using opiates, and to professionals working with people who use these drugs, to save lives in the event of an overdose.

Whilst the government has no current plans to place naloxone alongside public access defibrillators, we are committed to making naloxone as accessible as possible to those who need it. We are therefore considering the feasibility and potential benefits of a range of options, including making naloxone available in locked boxes in public places.

We have also launched a £5 million fund to tackle drug deaths across the United Kingdom, which is funding research projects that are considering other innovative ways to make naloxone more readily available. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/5-million-fund-to-tackle-fatal-drug-deaths-across-the-uk>

■ **NHS: Correspondence**

Sir Charles Walker:

[26093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will hold discussions with Royal Mail on the potential merits of treating NHS letters as first class post, in the context of possible reforms to the second class delivery service.

Andrew Stephenson:

My Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has written to Royal Mail regarding proposed reforms to the universal postal service, to ask what consideration has been given to patients and National Health Service impacts. A meeting with the Group Chief Executive of Royal Mail is currently being considered.

■ **NHS: Databases**

Sir David Davis:

[23380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data sets will flow into the Federated Data Platform; and what her planned timetable is for each of those data sets to be (a) visible and (b) in use on the Federated Data Platform by participating hospital trusts.

Andrew Stephenson:

[Holding answer 1 May 2024]: The NHS Federated Data Platform will deliver measurable improvements for patients. It will allow people to be discharged quicker, and for waiting lists to be shortened, through making better use of data.

It will securely bring together information already available to trusts, in hospital health records, waiting lists, and theatre and staff rosters, to better manage patient care. Each NHS organisation will be the data controller for their instance of the platform. Data will always remain under the full control and protection of the NHS and is only visible to approved users.

The NHS Federated Data Platform will provide trusts and integrated care boards, on behalf of local integrated care systems, with a set of core capabilities and nationally developed products, to support five key National Health Service priorities: elective recovery; care-co-ordination; vaccination and immunisation; population health management; and supply chain management.

A suite of products will sit under each of the use cases. A product is a software solution to address a particular NHS need, for example a patient discharge product which brings together data to help support discharge teams in hospitals in getting patients the right care in the right place. As each product is developed or transitioned to the NHS Federated Data Platform, a privacy notice will be published, setting out the data that will be utilised within the product. These are available at the following link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/privacy-notice/how-we-use-your-information/nhs-federated-data-platform-privacy-notice/fdp-products-and-product-privacy-notice/>

The NHS Federated Data Platform is being implemented in phases, with the first phase, from March to July 2024, being a transition of existing National Data Platform products to the national instance of the NHS Federated Data Platform, and the transition of 44 pilot sites to local instances. The second phase, from May 2024 to March 2027 and following the successful transition phase, is the rollout of instances of the platform to new trusts and integrated care boards. Once trusts and boards have their local instance of the platform, they can choose to use any of the nationally commissioned products, and develop new or additional products locally, to address local issues. This is when the data will become visible to approved users.

■ NHS: Pay

Dan Carden:

[\[26212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when she plans to announce the pay award for NHS workers for 2024-25.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department has submitted its evidence to the NHS Pay Review Body, the Doctors and Dentists Pay Review Body, and the Senior Salaries Review Body, in order for them to make recommendations on a pay uplift for National Health Service workers for 2024/25. We will carefully consider the pay review bodies' comments and recommendations when we receive them, and will respond in due course.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Special Educational Needs

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[25687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of trends in the special schools eye care service budget on service delivery.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[25688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Special Schools Eye Care service is fully funded.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[25689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will take steps to ensure that the budget for the Special Schools Eye Care Service is not reduced so that (a) children with Special Educational Needs can receive free eye care in schools and (b) optometrists can afford to continue providing the service.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[25690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of cutting the special schools eye care budget on children with special educational needs.

Andrea Leadsom:

NHS England has committed to invest up to £12.7 million annually for the provision of sight tests and associated optical vouchers in special educational settings. This represents an approximate 87% increase compared to the current budget. This additional investment has the potential to increase coverage from 4% of special educational settings to 100%. This is a new additional budget for providing sight tests and vouchers in these settings, and so represents a recurrent increased investment in sight testing and the sight testing sector. Service delivery will continue within the proof-of-concept settings, to ensure continuity of service, whilst the required regulatory changes are laid in Parliament to underpin wider rollout during 2024/25.

■ Social Services

Colleen Fletcher: [\[26174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England who have unmet care needs; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure those care needs are met.

Helen Whately:

Local authorities are responsible for assessing individuals' care and support needs and, where eligible, for meeting those needs. Where individuals do not meet the eligibility threshold, they can get support from their local authorities in making their own arrangements for care services, as set out in the Care Act 2014.

We recognise that some people still experience challenges in accessing the care and support they need, when they need it. That is why ensuring that people find adult social care fair and accessible is one of the three main objectives of our 10-year reform vision for adult social care. To achieve this vision, we are supporting local authorities to address workforce pressures, drive improvements in their local area, and better streamline their assessment processes.

To support this, the Government has made available up to £8.6 billion in additional funding over the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, to support adult social care and discharge. This includes up to £1.5 billion of additional grant funding for adult social care for 2024/25, compared to 2023/24, alongside a 2% increase to the adult social care precept for local authorities with social care responsibilities, uptake of which will generate a further £609 million in 2024/25. In addition, the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund, worth almost £2 billion over two years, is designed to support increased adult social care capacity, improve market sustainability, and enable local authorities to make improvements to adult social care services.

■ Social Services: Migrant Workers

Alex Cunningham: [\[26146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the salary threshold for visas for social workers on the recruitment of social workers from overseas.

Helen Whately:

Social workers are recruited under the Health and Care Worker visa, and therefore are exempt from the salary threshold of £38,700 required by the Skilled Worker visa. Social workers recruited from overseas are subject to national pay scales, and therefore must be paid in line with the National Health Service agenda for change pay scales.

HOME OFFICE

■ Abortion: Demonstrations

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[25404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to publish a response to the consultation entitled Abortion clinic safe access zones: non-statutory guidance, published on 11 December 2023.

Chris Philp:

We anticipate commencing Section 9 of the Public Order Act 2023 shortly.

■ Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[25134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how his Department has spent revenues received through the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme in each year since 2017.

Tom Tugendhat:

The Home Office's share of ARIS receipts represents the core funding that would otherwise be paid by HMT as part of the regular Spending Review.

That funding supports Home Office investment in priority front line activity, including supporting and safeguarding victims, delivering the policy response to Economic Crime and the National Cyber Strategy, and delivering statutory obligations.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[25142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the annual cap on his Department's receipts from the asset recovery incentivisation scheme has been in each financial year from 2017-18 to 2022-23.

Tom Tugendhat:

The Home Office annual cap for the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme is set by HM Treasury. This is reviewed at the time of the Spending Review

Table 1 provides the agreed annual cap for each financial year from 2017/18 to 2022/23

Table 1: Home Office ARIS annual cap set by HM Treasury, financial years 2017/18 to 2022/23

FINANCIAL YEAR	VALUE OF RECEIPTS THAT ARE ABOVE THE ARIS CAP
2017/18	£184m
2018/19	£184m
2019/20	£184m
2020/21	£184m
2021/22	£184m
2022/23	£184m

■ Asylum: Children

Alex Cunningham: [\[26147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many young people have been referred onto the National Transfer Scheme in each of the last three months.

Alex Cunningham: [\[26149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many young people have been referred by Kent County Council to the National Transfer Scheme in each of the last three months.

Alex Cunningham: [\[26150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many young people are awaiting allocation to a transfer to an authority under the National Transfer Scheme.

Alex Cunningham: [\[26151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many young people have been (a) allocated to a local authority and (b) have yet to be relocated under the National Transfer Scheme.

Michael Tomlinson:

The most recently available information is regularly published on the government website.

Alex Cunningham: [\[26148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arrived in Kent in each of the last three months.

Michael Tomlinson:

The most recently available information is regularly published on the government website.

■ **Asylum: Republic of Ireland**

Andrew Bridgen: [\[25221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has plans to negotiate an agreement with the Republic of Ireland on the return of asylum seekers (a) from Ireland to the UK and (b) from the UK to Ireland.

Tom Pursglove:

In 2020, we agreed with Ireland bilateral non-legally binding operational arrangements which allows for the return and readmission of asylum seekers when agreed by both participants.

We will only make agreements that are in the interests of the UK, and will not accept any future deals which might increase the significant burdens already placed on the UK by the level of illegal migration.

■ **Asylum: Rwanda**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[25593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of refugees that will be deported to Rwanda (a) on the first flight and (b) in each of the 12 months following the first flight.

Michael Tomlinson:

This is operationally sensitive information.

We have been clear that the scheme is uncapped.

■ **Glencore Energy UK: Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme**

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[25143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much and what proportion of receipts recovered from Glencore Energy UK Ltd through the asset recovery

incentivisation scheme following its conviction for bribery in November 2022 accrued to his Department.

Tom Tugendhat:

Glencore Energy UK Ltd were ordered to pay £280,965,092.95. This included a confiscation order of £93,479,338.95, fines totalling £182,935,392, and payment of the SFO's prosecution costs of £4,550,362.

We cannot comment further on individual cases.

■ **Human Trafficking: France**

Martyn Day:

[\[24682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the effectiveness of processes for working with French authorities to prosecute (a) small boat gangs and (b) other people traffickers.

Michael Tomlinson:

Since the UK left the EU in January 2020, we have strengthened our bilateral relationship with France on migration. This included establishing, in July 2020, the UK-France Joint Intelligence Cell (JIC) which is located in France and has co-located UK and French officers working together to support the prosecution of small boat gangs. Since it was established, the work of the JIC has led to the dismantling of 24 organised crime groups involved in small boat crossings, with 12 of these groups being dismantled in 2023 alone.

■ **Immigration Controls: Airports**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contingency measures are in place to mitigate delays when eGates are not in use.

Tom Pursglove:

It has never been Government practice, for reasons of law enforcement, to comment on operational issues relating to border security and immigration controls. This includes offering commentary on the performance of border systems and of ePassport Gates data specifically.

The Home Office has a number of contingency arrangements in the event of a single system failure, including technical and business contingency measures.

■ **Migrant Workers: Care Workers**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[25144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the advice given to immigrants by care worker agencies on finding suitable accommodation in the UK.

Tom Pursglove:

The Department of Health and Social Care have published guidance for people applying for health and social care jobs which can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-health-and-social-care-jobs-in-the-uk-from-abroad>.

The Legal Migration and Borders Minister has met regularly with his counterpart in DHSC to discuss care worker visas.

■ National Crime Agency

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[25132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) budget and (b) headcount was for the National Crime Agency's Proceeds of Crime Centre in financial year (i) 2021-22, (ii) 2022-23 and (iii) 2023-24; and how many accreditations were issued to financial investigators in each of those financial years.

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[25136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) annual budget and (b) staff headcount has been for the National Crime Agency's Financial Intelligence Unit in each of the last three years.

Tom Tugendhat:

The UKFIU and POCC are funded through a mixture of NCA core funding and external funding.

UKFIU headcount at the end of each FY:

- 2021-22 - 144
- 2022-23 - 156
- 2023-24 – 178

UKFIU budget (external funding):

- 2021-22 – £2,435,355
- 2022-23 – £2,802,527
- 2023-24 – £4,740,000

UKFIU budget (core funding):

- 2021-22 – £192,102
- 2022-23 – £192,101
- 2023-24 – £228,000

PoCC budget

- 2021-22 – £25,781
- 2022-23 – £195,780

- 2023-24 – £72,000

Proceeds of Crime Centre headcount at the end of each FY:

- 2021-22 - 22
- 2022-23 - 21
- 2023-24 – 23

Proceeds of Crime Centre Financial Investigator accreditations:

- 2021-22 - 104
- 2022-23 - 203
- 2023-24 – 251

Proceeds of Crime Centre Financial Intelligence Officer accreditations:

- 2021-22 - 493
- 2022-23 - 628
- 2023-24 – 761

Pay costs are not delegated to project areas, so are not included in these totals.

■ **Radicalism: Reviews**

Clive Lewis: [\[26182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate he has made of when the report of the independent review of political violence and disruption will be published.

Chris Philp:

The Department is considering Lord Walney's report carefully, and will respond in due course.

■ **Shoplifting: East Midlands**

Sir John Hayes: [\[25147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to reduce shoplifting in (a) Lincolnshire and (b) the East Midlands.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises the significant impact shoplifting has on businesses, communities and consumers. The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows neighbourhood crime is down 48% compared to findings from the year ending March 2010.

However, Police Recorded Crime figures show shoplifting offences increased by 37% in the 12 months to December 2023. Statistics also show the number of people charged with shoplifting offences has risen by 46% in the year ending December 2023, showing that police are taking action.

We have recently taken significant steps nationally to improve the police response to retail crime, including shoplifting, and these are being implemented in all police forces across England and Wales.

The Government's plan – "[Fighting retail crime: more action](#)" was launched on 10 April, which highlights five areas of work this Government will drive forward to tackle retail crime:

- Introducing a standalone offence for assaults on retail workers;
- Additional electronic monitoring for prolific shoplifters;
- Working with police and businesses to roll out the latest facial recognition to catch these perpetrators;
- Championing good practice to design out crime; and
- Making it easier for retailers to report crime.

We will bring forward legislative changes to introduce a presumption towards electronic monitoring as part of a sentence served in the community for those who repeatedly steal from shops. This legislative change will provide that on the third sentencing occasion, an offender would be electronically monitored as part of any community sentence or post-release for the duration of any licence period.

The Government's plan builds on the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) [Retail Crime Action Plan](#). Through this Plan, all forces across England and Wales have committed to prioritise police attendance at the scene where violence has been used towards shop staff, where an offender has been detained by store security, and where evidence needs to be secured and can only be done by police personnel. Additionally, where CCTV or other digital images are secured, police will run this through the Police National Database to aid efforts to identify prolific offenders or potentially dangerous individuals.

This builds on the NPCC commitment that police forces across England and Wales will follow up all crimes where there is actionable evidence and the chance of identifying an offender, including shoplifting.

October also saw the launch of Pegasus, a unique private-public partnership, which involves retailers providing data, intelligence and evidence to Opal, the national police intelligence unit on organised acquisitive crime, to develop a better strategic picture and help forces crack down on serious offenders.

We are continuing to work closely with retail businesses, security representatives, trade associations and policing through the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG), which meets on a quarterly basis, to ensure the response to retail crime, including shoplifting, is as robust as it can be.

■ Slavery: Supply Chains

Andrew Bridgen: [\[25236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Independent Review into the Boohoo Group PLC's Leicester supply chain, published on 24 September 2020, what recent steps he has taken to tackle modern slavery.

Laura Farris:

Operation Tacit was set-up in July 2020 to investigate allegations of widespread exploitation and modern slavery in Leicester, and to take appropriate action where non-compliance was found. The issues uncovered included health and safety breaches, illegal working and risk of underpayment of national minimum wage.

The Director of Labour Market Enforcement (DLME) has undertaken an independent review of Operation Tacit and will publish her findings in due course.

The Home Office sponsored Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and other labour market enforcement bodies continue to work in the sector, and across the economy, to prevent, detect and investigate non-compliance.

■ UK Border Force: Patrol Craft

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many maritime boarding actions Border Force performed on (a) recreational and (b) commercial vessels in each of the last five years.

Tom Pursglove:

Border Force does not hold the data requested in an easily accessible format.

Border Force enhance UK maritime border security through intelligence-led and proactive maritime operations to deliver the right law enforcement effect in the right place, at the right time. This is in order to:

- Detect and prevent the smuggling of people and prohibited and restricted goods into the UK.
- Deter those who use commercial and general maritime to pose a threat to the UK.
- Prevent and interdict in criminal activity and preserve and secure evidence to support prosecutions where appropriate.

Reassure the public and wider maritime community whilst minimising interference into the lawful passage of people and goods within UK Territorial Waters.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many sea-faring vessels are under the command of the Border Force.

Tom Pursglove:

Border Force Maritime Command operate a fleet of vessels including five offshore Cutters, six inshore Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPV), and a range of smaller crafts to secure the UK maritime border.

Since April 2022, Border Force Maritime have deployed five dedicated rescue vessels to the Channel, formerly in support of the Ministry of Defence and currently Small Boats Operational Command. These five vessels work on rotation to provide 24 hours support to rescue operations in the Channel.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[25480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Border Force sea-fairing vessels have been out of service in each of the last three years.

Tom Pursglove:

Border Force Maritime Command operate a fleet of vessels including five offshore Cutters, six inshore Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPV), and a range of smaller craft to secure the UK maritime border. Routine maintenance on these vessels is an essential part of ensuring operational availability.

■ Visas: North Macedonia**Alex Sobel:**[\[25321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he plans to introduce a (a) visa exemption, (b) visa on arrival and (c) eVisa scheme for people from North Macedonia.

Tom Pursglove:

There are no plans to introduce a visa exemption or visa on arrival for North Macedonians. The introduction of eVisas will help travellers prove their status at the UK border in a secure, timely and efficient manner. This introduction will not be country specific.

Alex Sobel:[\[25322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas his Department has granted to applicants from North Macedonia in each year since 2020.

Tom Pursglove:

The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visas in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on visas granted, by nationality, are published in table Vis_D02 of the [Entry clearance detailed dataset](#). Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate up to the end of 2023.

■ Wildlife: Crime

Cat Smith:

[\[25256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to increase the range of wildlife crimes which have notifiable status.

Chris Philp:

This Government recognises the importance of tackling wildlife crime, which is why, along with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Home Office directly funds the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) to help tackle these crimes.

The NWCU provides intelligence, analysis and investigative assistance to the police and other law enforcement agencies across the UK to support them in investigating wildlife crime. This includes supporting cases referred by Border Force to the National Crime Agency or to individual forces. The NWCU is also the UK policing focal point for EUROPOL and INTERPOL wildlife crime activity.

The NWCU uses this information to produce strategic and tactical assessments of wildlife crime across the UK. These assessments also take into consideration the views of the Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group, which highlight priorities based on the conservation status of specific species and review all other non-priority intelligence to identify any emerging threats. It is these assessments which ultimately drive the operational response to tackling wildlife crime in the UK.

We will keep under review any legislative proposals to increase the range of wildlife crimes that have notifiable status. If a non-notifiable wildlife crime is reported to police it can still be investigated. Chief Constables have operational independence to tackle the crimes that matter most to their communities.

JUSTICE

■ Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme

Dame Margaret Hodge:

[\[25133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how funds received by HM Courts and Tribunals Service through the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme have been spent in each year since 2017.

Mike Freer:

Confiscation orders are the principal means by which the Government carries out its policy to deprive criminals of the proceeds of their crime. They are used with the intent to disrupt and deter criminality. Receipts from confiscation orders, excluding any compensation amounts, are paid to the Home Office by agreement with HM Treasury. The Home Office remains the lead department on confiscation orders, and each financial year distributes a proportion of the funds it collected to partner agencies (including the Ministry of Justice). This funding is provided by the Home

Office to respective partner agencies with a primary purpose of investing in asset recovery capabilities.

■ Cryptocurrencies: Crime

Jim Shannon: [25220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the number of convictions relating to cryptocurrency offences in each of the last five years.

Gareth Bacon:

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on the number of offenders found guilty of criminal offences in England and Wales, up to June 2023, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-june-2023>.

Information on whether offenders were convicted for offences relating to cryptocurrency is not held by the Ministry of Justice, as this may appear under various offences, such as fraud or money laundering.

■ Ministry of Justice: ICT

Matt Rodda: [26215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 May 2024 to Question 25013 on Ministry of Justice: ICT, for what reason his Department considers publishing the latest available figures on the number of red-rated systems it holds a security risk, in the context of the publication of the Central Digital & Data Office's guidance entitled, Guidance on the Legacy IT Risk Assessment Framework on 29 September 2023.

Mike Freer:

In response to question 25013, the department responded with a cautionary response to withhold releasing information on the red-rated systems due to potential security risks. However, upon revising our previous response we have concluded that we are able to release the requested figures.

These figures are already in the public domain and can be found on slide 21 of the CDDO progress update below:

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2024-0230/Future.pdf>.

■ Ministry of Justice: Ipsos MORI

Emily Thornberry: [26096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 May 2024 to Question 25190 on Ministry of Justice: Ipsos MORI, what the deliverables are for contract reference 398437/1351727 contained in Annex F of that contract.

Mike Freer:

The supplier is contracted to conduct cognitive interviews, a pilot survey, and the finalised survey pursuant to the new survey design and agreed requirements.

■ Parc Prison: Annual Reports

Beth Winter: [\[25384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has had discussion with the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Parc on the publication dates of the Annual reports for (a) 1 March 2022-31 March 2023 and (b) 1 March 2023-31 March 2024.

Edward Argar:

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP Parc write two separate reports, one for the Young Person's Unit (YPU) and one for the adult prison. Publication dates for (a) the YPU report covering 01 March 2021 – 31 March 2023, (b) the adult prison report covering 01 April 2022 – 31 March 2023, and (c) subsequent reports, are all being discussed with Ministry of Justice Officials. It is anticipated that both reports covering periods up to March 2023 will be published in Summer 2024.

■ Parc Prison: Crimes of Violence

Beth Winter: [\[25373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of a violence reduction strategy at HMP Parc.

Beth Winter: [\[25375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Action Plan: HMP Parc following the July 2022 HM Inspectorate of Prisons report, published on 11 October 2022, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of prisoners who are interviewed at the time of transfer and release in order to build intelligence at HMP Parc.

Beth Winter: [\[25376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Action Plan: HMP Parc following the July 2022 HM Inspectorate of Prisons report, published on 11 October 2022, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the recruitment to address shortfalls in health care staff at HMP Parc.

Beth Winter: [\[25377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with G4S on the number of reported (a) assaults, (b) serious assaults, (c) prisoner assaults, (d) serious prisoner assaults, (e) assaults on staff and (f) serious assaults on staff at HMP Parc in 2023.

Beth Winter: [\[25378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with G4S on trends in the (a) weight of drugs, (b) number of mobile phones and (c) number of SIM cards found in HMP Parc in 2023.

Beth Winter: [25379]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons on the number of reported (a) assaults, (b) serious assaults, (c) prisoner assaults, (d) serious prisoner assaults, (e) assaults on staff and (f) serious assaults on staff at HMP Parc in 2023.

Beth Winter: [25380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons on trends in the (a) weight of drugs, (b) number of mobile phones and (c) number of SIM cards found in HMP Parc in 2023.

Beth Winter: [25381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people of what grades worked at HMP Parc in each month of 2023.

Beth Winter: [25382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people of what grade (a) joined and (b) left the workforce at HMP Parc in each month of 2023.

Edward Argar:

HMPPS takes the findings of every HMI Prisons inspection seriously and responds to each with a detailed action plan that seeks to address all concerns raised within the inspection report. For privately run prisons, HMPPS works closely with the Prison operator to ensure that the expected standards are met, through the local controller team and contractual escalation route, if required. HMPPS officials meet with HMIP regularly to discuss the general landscape across the prison estate and will continue to do so. HMP and YOI Parc assess all prisoners who transfer into the prison including reviewing all previous information held on the prisoners to inform intelligence.

HMPPS continues to work extensively with G4S and is closely overseeing the prison to improve safety and reduce harm. All establishments are required to have a safety strategy in place, which includes actions to address violence. HMPPS remains committed to providing a safe, decent and secure environment for all committed to our care.

As HMP and YOI Parc is a privately operated prison, HMPPS do not hold data relating to the G4S workforce, and recruitment of healthcare staff is the responsibility of the Local Health Board, therefore, HMPPS are not the data holder for healthcare staffing information.

The information requested on finds in prisons is published at [HMPPS annual digest: HMPPS Annual Digest, April 2022 to March 2023 - GOV.UK](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64c143b41e10bf000e17cf9e/8.2b,8.3and8.4ofthislink.pdf), specifically in tables 8.2b, 8.3 and 8.4 of this link:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64c143b41e10bf000e17cf9e/8.2b,8.3and8.4ofthislink.pdf>. [Find s.ods.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64c143b41e10bf000e17cf9e/8.2b,8.3and8.4ofthislink.pdf)

Data on assaults are found in tables 8a-8f:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/662a24fb690acb1c0ba7e57c/Safety-in-custody-summary-q4-2023_final_table.xlsx.

■ Parc Prison: Drugs and Mobile Phones

Beth Winter:

[25374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Action Plan: HMP Parc following the July 2022 HM Inspectorate of Prisons report, published on 11 October 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the review of the current suite of available technology to detect drugs and mobile phones at HMP Parc.

Edward Argar:

The Ministry of Justice continues to focus on the use technology to disrupt the supply of drugs, mobile phones and other illicit items into prisons, including through assessing the provision of equipment across the prison estate.

Following His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons report published on 11 October 2022, HMP/YOI Parc have worked towards implementing the recommendations identified in the action plan, with a successful bid submitted via G4S for an additional itemiser and X-Ray body scanner.

Across the wider estate our £100 million Security Investment Programme, aimed at reducing crime in prisons, completed in March 2022. It included funding to reduce smuggling of illicit items, including drugs, and our measures are producing results.

This investment delivered 75 additional X-ray body scanners, resulting in full coverage across the closed adult male estate. As of October 2023, we had recorded over 46,900 positive indications, helping tackle the supply of drugs into prisons.

Furthermore, in January of this year we introduced new 400 metre Restricted Fly Zones around all closed prisons and young offender institutions in England and Wales. This makes it easier for prison staff and the police to identify illicit drones and take action to disrupt them, intercept any contraband and pursue prosecution.

Since 2016, HMPPS has helped the police secure more than 75 convictions from criminal drone activity around prisons. Those convicted have been sentenced to a combined total of over 265 years behind bars.

HMPPS is working hard to conduct assessments all across the prison estate to implement a range of physical upgrades and countermeasures to prevent drones from reaching their target destinations.

■ Parc Prison: Inspections

Beth Winter:

[25383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the next inspection by HM Inspectorate of Prisons of HMP Parc will occur.

Edward Argar:

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) is operationally independent of Government and is responsible for deciding its own inspection programme. Therefore, the Government is not normally notified of inspections in advance, except in rare cases where the Chief Inspector believes a notice period might specifically help promote improvement at a particular institution.

Under HMIP's framework each prison should be inspected at least once every five years and in practice most prisons can expect to be inspected every two to three years. HMI Prisons last inspected HMP Parc in June 2022.

■ **Parc Prison: Offensive Weapons****Nick Smith:**[\[26108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) knives and (b) other similar weapons were taken off prisoners at HMP Parc in the last six months.

Edward Argar:

Data on finds for April 2023 onwards is subject to future publication. Data to March 2024 will be released on 25th July, in the 23/24 HMPPS Annual Digest.

Figures for the number of finds within prison custody, including finds of weapons, are published once per year on a financial year basis in the HMPPS Annual Digest: HMPPS Annual Digest, April 2022 to March 2023 - GOV.UK, specifically in tables 8.2b, 8.3 and 8.4 of this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64c143b41e10bf000e17cf9e/8_Find_s.ods.

HMPPS continues to work extensively with G4S and is closely overseeing the prison to improve safety and reduce harm. All establishments are required to have a safety strategy in place, which includes actions to address violence. HMPPS remains committed to providing a safe, decent and secure environment for all committed to our care.

■ **Prisons: Construction****Sir John Hayes:**[\[25408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many new prison places have been created in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

The below table provides a summary of the number of prison places that have opened in each year since 2019. This includes places delivered as part of the 20,000 places portfolio, including two new c.1,700 place prisons and new prison places delivered through houseblocks and Rapid Deployment Cells (RDCs)

YEAR	PLACES OPENED
2019	206

YEAR	PLACES OPENED
2020	508
2021	1,064
2022	2,176
2023	2,459
Total	6,413

For simplicity, all places relating to a prison opening are included in the year that the prison opened. In practice, a new prison may take more than a year before reaching its final operational capacity.

We continue to push ahead with the largest prison expansion programme since the Victorian era – with 10,000 of the pledged 20,000 additional places on track to be delivered by the end of 2025. This will include our third new prison, HMP Millsike, delivering c.1,500 places, new houseblocks at HMP Stocken and Rye Hill, as well as hundreds more RDCs.

■ Probate: Standards

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[25290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what service level agreements his Department has in place for the operation of the probate office within HM Courts and Tribunal Service.

Mike Freer:

HMCTS has several internal service standards which have been set as a result of the action plan to recover performance in the probate service.

This includes the overall interim target of reducing average waiting times to 8 weeks for a grant of probate from the receipt of the documentation needed to process the application.

Management information published by HMCTS (which does not go through the same level of quality assurance and analysis as the Family Court Statistics Quarterly) shows the average mean length of time taken for a grant of probate, from receipt of documentation, reduced by 3 weeks in March 2024 to 9 weeks.

The digitisation of the probate service has enabled HMCTS to significantly increase the range of performance data which is available publicly by both MoJ and HMCTS and can now include more granular data on types of application received and grants issued. In addition, average grant processing time (timeliness) is published and can be interrogated using a range of filters.

A full time series of Official Statistics back to Q3 2019 is published in the Family Court Statistics Quarterly <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly> and currently covers the period up to December 2023.

More recent management information published by HMCTS (which does not go through the same level of quality assurance and analysis as the Family Court Statistics Quarterly) provides waiting time information up to March 2023 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmcts-management-information>.

■ Resomation

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: **[25308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of alkaline hydrolysis as an alternative to cremation on the UK's ability to achieve its energy security and net zero emissions targets.

Mike Freer:

The Government currently has no plans to make such an assessment.

At present, burial and cremation are the only regulated funerary methods in England and Wales. However, we are aware of the growing interest in alternative funerary methods. The Law Commission are considering, as part of its Burial, Cremation and New Funerary Methods project, the disposal of human remains. This work will consider the creation of a regulatory framework for safe and dignified new funerary methods.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Holiday Accommodation

Mark Menzies: **[24646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of existing legislation on short term holiday lets; and what powers are available to local councils to ensure prospective holiday rentals are subject to the planning system.

Lee Rowley:

We announced on 19 February that, following last year's consultation on the Introduction of a short term let use class and associated permitted development rights, we will give Councils the power to control the proliferation of short term lets. We will introduce a new use class for short term lets (C5 use) and associated permitted development rights. In addition, the Government will bring forward a new registration scheme for short term lets.

Further details of the planning changes, including the timeline for implementation, will be set out when the Government formally responds to the consultation.

■ Homelessness: Finance

Mrs Helen Grant: [\[25648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a (a) single and (b) ring-fenced support fund for homelessness.

Felicity Buchan:

This Government has made the unprecedented commitment to end rough sleeping within this Parliament and to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act. We are providing an unprecedented £2.4 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping via a range of programmes. The majority of this funding is provided through ring-fenced grants, including the Homelessness Prevention Grant and the Rough Sleeping Initiative, to make sure that resources are committed to these priorities.

The approach to future funding will be a matter for the upcoming Spending Review.

■ Tenancy Deposit Schemes

Sir Charles Walker: [\[26094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of potential conflicts of interest in circumstances where the board members of deposit protection schemes are also landlords who choose to lodge deposits with the same scheme; and if he will make it his policy to require landlords to lodge deposits with deposit protection schemes with which they have no governance involvement.

Jacob Young:

Landlords are required by law to protect a deposit in relation to most Assured Shorthold Tenancies and are free to choose with which government-authorised scheme they protect a tenant's deposit.

The TDP providers are private companies that are operationally independent of Government. TDP providers are contractually obliged to avoid any conflict of interest arising which prejudices the independence and objectivity of the service provided.

■ Travellers: Equality

Caroline Nokes: [\[26126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Government response to the Women and Equalities Committee's ninth report of Session 2017-19, Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, HC 2411, published on 2 July 2019, what progress the Government has made on developing a cross-Government strategy to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Lee Rowley:

We are not currently developing a standalone cross-Government strategy for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The Levelling Up White Paper sets out this

Government's plan to support everyone in this country to reach their full potential, irrespective of background, race, ethnicity or any other characteristics.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

■ Artificial Intelligence: Investment

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[25212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department is taking to encourage investment in the UK artificial intelligence sector.

Saqib Bhatti:

The UK's AI market is valued at over \$21 billion and is estimated to grow to over 1 trillion by 2035. Recently we have seen the largest investment (\$1 billion) into a UK AI start-up (Wayve), with several AI companies opening their European headquarters here. Google and Microsoft have recently announced plans to invest \$4.2 billion in the UK, demonstrating confidence in the UK's approach to AI. To encourage further investment, we host the annual Global Investment Summit, we have tax incentives available for AI companies, and we are delivering £1.5bn of investment into compute, all of which will strengthen our position as an attractive place to invest.

■ Defence: Research

Chi Onwurah:

[\[26155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, with reference to the press notice entitled PM announces turning point in European security as UK set to increase defence spending to 2.5% by 2030, published on 23 April 2024, whether the 5% of the defence budget to be committed to research and development will be counted as science spend; and which Department will be responsible for that expenditure.

Andrew Griffith:

The Government is delivering a record £20 billion public investment in R&D this year, which will increase to £22 billion by the end of the next Parliament. £1.6 billion of this £2 billion increase will be allocated to higher defence R&D by 2028-29. The Ministry of Defence will be responsible for this expenditure and further details will be confirmed at the next Spending Review.

■ Digital Technology: Fraud

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[25214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of malign actors imitating the interfaces of reputable sources on public trust in digital content.

Saqib Bhatti:

It is a key priority of this government to preserve the integrity of our democratic processes and safeguard the public from interference by malign state and non-state actors, including through AI-enabled threats and manipulated media.

The Online Safety Act will tackle illegal disinformation and misinformation including state-sponsored disinformation via the Foreign Interference Offence, including deepfakes and other forms of manipulated media. This means that companies will have a legal duty to take preventative action to identify and minimise their users' exposure to state-linked interference with UK society. Such content will need to be swiftly removed, requiring tangible action against state-backed attempts to undermine our democratic, political and legal processes.

In addition to our regulatory approach, the DSIT National Security Online Information Team (NSOIT) analyses attempts by foreign states to artificially manipulate the online information environment. The NSOIT works with social media platforms to support and encourage them to put in place policies that are fit for purpose, consistently enforced, and which respect freedom of expression.

■ Disinformation: Australia**Sir Robert Buckland:**[\[25213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether she has had recent discussions with her Australian counterpart on the proposed Misinformation and Disinformation Bill in that country.

Saqib Bhatti:

Ministers and officials from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology meet regularly with counterparts from other countries to share our experience and expertise and to develop common approaches to online safety. We work closely with the Government of Australia and recently signed a memorandum of understanding setting out our intention to promote regulatory coordination and jointly deliver online safety and security policy to support our citizens.

The UK government has already delivered world-leading legislation via the Online Safety Act, which captures misinformation and disinformation where it constitutes illegal content or content which is harmful to children, and which forces the largest platforms to remove misinformation and disinformation prohibited under their Terms of Service.

■ Patents: Small Businesses**Dame Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[25282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the UK Standard Essential Patents regulatory regime on the ability of SMEs to innovate on (a) artificial intelligence and (b) the Internet of Things.

Saqib Bhatti:

The Government recognises the growing importance of Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) to the UK economy. Following a Call for Views, an SME questionnaire, and additional evidence-gathering, the Government published its key objectives on SEPs in February 2024. Those objectives, which are cross-sectoral, and so encompass our approach to Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things, include helping implementers, especially SMEs, to navigate and better understand the SEPs ecosystem. Delivering against those objectives, the Government is now focussed on the introduction of key non-regulatory interventions. These include the launch of a Resource Hub in May 2024, which would be a repository of tools, guidance and other material designed to help SMEs navigate the SEPs ecosystem.

■ Subversion: Artificial Intelligence**Dan Jarvis:**[\[26168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if she will commission a report on the potential impact of AI on (a) democracy and (b) elections.

Saqib Bhatti:

The Government takes the threat disinformation and AI digitally manipulated content poses very seriously.

We have already seen examples of AI-driven election interference across the globe targeting elected leaders and seeking to influence democratic debate. To mitigate these risks, as part of the Defending Democracy Taskforce, DSIT is working across government to ensure we are ready to respond to risks to the UK's democratic processes.

SCOTLAND**■ Civil Partnerships: Scotland****Brendan O'Hara:**[\[26173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Scottish Government's request for a section 104 Order under the Scotland Act 1998 in consequence of the Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2020, if he will permit the Scottish Government to legislate accordingly.

Mr Alister Jack:

I have written to the Scottish Government to confirm the UK Government's in-principle agreement to proceed with this Scotland Act Order. My officials will continue to engage with their Scottish Government counterparts as the Order advances.

TRANSPORT■ **Electric Vehicles****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[25532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to help increase the adoption of electric vehicles.

Anthony Browne:

Government grants have been in place for over a decade to help reduce the up-front purchase price of electric vehicles, with over £1.8 billion in grant funding provided since 2011. Grants remain available for vans, trucks, wheelchair accessible vehicles and taxis. Favourable tax benefits also remain in place to support the transition to EVs.

These policies are working. March 2024 saw the highest ever recorded volume of monthly battery electric vehicle registrations in the UK, with manufacturers reporting over 48,000 vehicles sold.

As stated in the Plan for Drivers, the Government will also continue to support the uptake of zero emission vehicles, by addressing common misconceptions and showing how they can be a practical option for most drivers.

■ **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods****Andrew Bridgen:**[\[25234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has conducted a cost benefit analysis of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

Guy Opperman:

Any cost benefit analysis of individual Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) would be a matter for individual local authorities. The review into LTNs concluded they could provide some benefits, but many councils had failed to engage fully with local residents before introducing them. As a result, we have strengthened statutory guidance which will set expectations for comprehensive and in-depth local engagement, and full consideration of the needs of all road users in LTN schemes.

TREASURY■ **Money****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[25536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to reinforce the status of cash as legal tender.

Nigel Huddleston:

The forms of payment that are accepted should remain the choice of individual businesses, based on their consideration of factors such as customer preference and cost.

Nevertheless, the Government recognises that cash continues to be used by millions of people across the UK. The Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 established a new legislative framework to protect access to cash for consumers and businesses.

■ NatWest: Shares

James Wild: [\[25592\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 8 May 2024 to Question 24152 on Natwest: Shares, if he will list each adviser by (a) the purpose for which they were appointed and (b) the value of the contract awarded.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government has not published a comprehensive list of all advisers at this time, however, the publicly available list of relevant procurement contracts can be found at the government's Contract Finder website.

■ Nurseries

Munira Wilson: [\[25587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the level of usage of the workplace nursery scheme since it was introduced.

Munira Wilson: [\[25588\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to promote the workplace nursery scheme; and how much has been spent promoting that scheme in each financial year since it was introduced.

Laura Trott:

Workplace Nurseries formed part of Employer Supported Childcare (ESC), which closed for new applicants from 4 October 2018.

Employees already registered before 4th October 2018 are able to continue using the scheme for as long as the employer offers it, or as long as they stay with the employer.

ESC was replaced by Tax-Free Childcare in October 2018.

The Government continues to support parents with childcare, including through Tax-Free Childcare, the free hours childcare offer, and Universal Credit Childcare.

■ Small Businesses: Money

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[25537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to support small businesses with cash banking, in the context of closures of physical banks.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[25538\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to take legislative steps to help ensure public access to cash.

Nigel Huddleston:

In recognition that cash continues to be used by millions of people across the UK, including those in vulnerable circumstances, the government legislated through the Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 to establish a new legislative framework to protect access to cash. This establishes the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as the lead regulator for access to cash and provides it with responsibility and powers to seek to ensure reasonable provision of cash withdrawal and deposit facilities.

Following this legislation, the government published a [Cash Access Policy Statement](#). This set out that the vast majority of people should be no further than 1 mile from access to cash deposit and withdrawal services in predominately urban areas, and no further than 3 miles in predominately rural areas. The FCA is required to have regard to this statement when exercising its access to cash powers.

The government considers that this legislation will support businesses to continue accepting cash by ensuring they have reasonable access to deposit facilities.

The FCA recently held a consultation on its proposed regulatory approach: [FCA Access to Cash Consultation](#). The FCA is currently considering feedback and expects to publish its final rules in the third quarter of this year.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Carer's Allowance: Overpayments****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[25539]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many carer's allowance overpayment cases that have not been investigated by his Department; and how many such cases there were in each of the last five years.

Paul Maynard:

We are unable to provide a response as it is unclear from your question as to the information you seek.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[25540]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of taking steps to prevent the accumulation of debt among carers due to (a) delayed investigation and (b) non-investigation of overpayment alerts.

Paul Maynard:

The DWP is progressing an enhanced notification strategy for Carers' Allowance, to help claimants understand when they may have received an earnings-related overpayment, and to meet their obligation to inform the Department of changes in their income and other relevant circumstances. This will be designed to help prevent Carer's Allowance claimants accumulating debt.

As part of that, DWP is considering the most effective and efficient way of contacting customers when alerted to a potential change in the customer's income, building on existing communications. This could include targeted text messaging, email, phone calls or letters.

■ Children: Maintenance

Peter Grant:

[\[26178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of cases in which domestic abuse was disclosed were referred by the Child Maintenance Service to an Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader in (a) 2021, (b) 2022 and (c) 2023.

Paul Maynard:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) takes the issue of domestic abuse extremely seriously and recognises that domestic abuse often continues and can worsen after separation, which can have detrimental impacts on the welfare of children. CMS therefore continues to evolve and make positive changes to the way we deliver our service and to support our case workers.

We have measures in place to ensure victims and survivors of domestic abuse can access and use our services safely.

Of 29,000 new applications to the CMS in the quarter ending December 2023, 56% of applications were exempt from the application fee, largely on the grounds of domestic abuse.

The Department publishes quarterly statistics for the CMS. Latest statistics are available up to [December 2023](#). Table 2 of the of the [National tables](#) provides the volume of applications and volume of those with an exemption due to domestic abuse for the period 2021-2023.

			APPLICATION FEE EXEMPTIONS DUE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE	TOTAL APPLICATION FEE EXEMPTIONS	PERCENTAGE OF APPLICATIONS WITH AN EXEMPTION
	QUARTER OF APPLICATION				
[note 1]					
	Jan to Mar 2021	10,500	10,600	58%	
	Apr to Jun 2021	11,800	11,900	60%	
	Jul to Sep 2021	12,400	12,500	59%	
	Oct to Dec 2021	11,600	11,600	60%	
	Jan to Mar 2022	15,100	15,200	57%	

	QUARTER OF APPLICATION	APPLICATION FEE DUE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE	TOTAL APPLICATION FEE EXEMPTIONS	PERCENTAGE OF APPLICATIONS WITH AN EXEMPTION
Apr to Jun 2022	17,300	17,500	55%	
Jul to Sep 2022	17,600	17,900	53%	
Oct to Dec 2022	14,700	14,900	55%	
Jan to Mar 2023	17,600	17,800	55%	
Apr to Jun 2023	17,800	18,100	56%	
Jul to Sep 2023	18,500	18,800	54%	

Furthermore, in October 2023 the CMS introduced regulations to completely remove the application fee for all families, this came into force on the 26 February 2024.

We are also trialling the use of a single, named case worker team to help ensure victims of domestic abuse are appropriately supported. Evaluation of the trial will inform the future service we offer to survivors of domestic abuse.

CMS have procedures to prevent unwanted contact between parents and provide advice on bank accounts with a centralised sort code so their location cannot be traced. Additionally, CMS can act as an intermediary in Direct Pay cases to facilitate the exchange of bank details, which helps to ensure no personal information is shared between parents.

Further changes, The Child Support Collection (Domestic Abuse) Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 28 June 2023. On 8 May 2024, the Department published a public consultation, *Improving the Collection and Transfer of Payments*, which follows the Child Support Collection (Domestic Abuse) Act 2023. The consultation proposes to remove the Direct Pay service completely, which will go further than the measures set out in the Act and provide the same level of protection for all parents. The consultation closes 31st July 2024. The Government will then carefully consider the feedback and a response will be published. To find out more information go to: [Child Maintenance: Improving the collection and transfer of payments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-collection-and-transfer-of-payments).

We support our case workers to deliver our service by ensuring they receive appropriate training and have access to signposting and support that could be utilised to assist survivors of domestic abuse.

Through extensive Stakeholder engagement CMS reviewed their domestic abuse training in 2021. Training was delivered to all case workers to ensure they are

equipped to recognise coercive and controlling behaviour and appropriately signpost parents in vulnerable situations. All caseworkers have access to the District Provision Toolkit which contains the most up to date information for signposting to help and support for domestic abuse across England, Scotland, and Wales.

A Domestic Abuse Plan was developed which outlines key steps for caseworkers to follow to ensure victims of domestic abuse are supported. This includes advice on contacting the police if the parent is in immediate danger or calling the police on behalf of the parent if requested to do so. Additionally, the plan directs case workers to consider a referral to an Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader if a customer requires further support.

The number of ACSSL cases that have been referred by CMS colleagues, where the referral has been categorised as 'domestic abuse' are as follows:

	2021	2022	2023*
ACSSL Referrals from CMS colleagues categorised as domestic abuse	3	3	1

It should be noted that disclosure of domestic abuse does not automatically require an Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader (ACSSL) to become involved in supporting a case. Additionally domestic abuse may be reported at any stage of case, we do not gather data on all cases therefore the information requested on the proportion of referrals is not held, however given ACSSL referrals are very low this is also likely to be very low.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Email

Hywel Williams:

[\[26076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of expanding the use of e-mail to communicate with his Department's customers.

Paul Maynard:

DWP utilises technology which allows encryption with most providers of personal email services, such as Gmail or Outlook, helping this stay secure. As such, email communication with customers is currently permitted in certain circumstances, for example, where the customer has a reasonable adjustment in place.

The Department is keen to utilise the benefits provided by email communication, as part of its work in modernising customer contact channels to deliver modernised services. The department is currently exploring a number of specific possibilities to expand its use of outbound email to communicate with customers, recently testing sending of notifications via email to overseas customers in areas where the postal system is unreliable.

■ Pension Credit and State Retirement Pensions

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[26175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England (i) receive the basic state pension, (ii) receive pension credit and (iii) are eligible for pension credit but do not claim it; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all pensioners receive their full entitlement to pension credit.

Paul Maynard:

Caseload statistics are routinely published and made publicly available via [DWP Stat-xplore](#). The figures below show the Pension Credit and Basic State Pension caseloads in each area:

	PENSION CREDIT	BASIC STATE PENSION
Coventry North East Constituency	2,873	10,083
Coventry	7,168	33,981
North West	131,692	773,219
England	1,160,826	7,190,718

The latest available Pension Credit take-up statistics cover the financial year 2021 to 2022 and are available at: [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year ending 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). These statistics are only available at Great Britain level and cannot be broken down to smaller geographical areas.

We continue to promote Pension Credit through our national awareness campaign, which has been ongoing since April 2022 and has included advertising on national TV, newspapers, broadcast radio, on social media and via internet search engines as well as on screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries.

At the start of 2024 - as in previous years - the DWP wrote to over 11 million pensioners as part of the annual State Pension up-rating exercise. The accompanying leaflet included prominent messaging promoting Pension Credit using the 'call to action' messaging from the communication campaign, including how Pension Credit opens the door to other financial help such as housing costs, Council Tax and heating bills.

There is a strong indication that the campaign has had a positive impact. The latest available figures covering the 3 months to November 2023 show that there were over 28 thousand more households in receipt the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit than in May 2022.

■ Social Security Benefits: Mental Illness

Jim Shannon:

[25219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of benefit claimants receiving over-payments on their mental health; and what steps his Department is taking to support claimants that need to re-pay over-payments.

Paul Maynard:

Where overpayments occur, we have a duty to recover taxpayers' money as quickly and efficiently as possible, without causing hardship to those making repayments. DWP remains committed to working with anyone who is struggling with repayments terms and encourage anyone who is experiencing such difficulty to contact DWP Debt Management to discuss their circumstances.

Claimants who do contact Debt Management, are routinely referred to the Money Advisor Network, who work in partnership with DWP to offer free independent and impartial money and debt advice. We also remain committed to His Majesty's Treasury's Beathing Space policy, which provides those with problem debt the right to legal protections from creditor action for a period of 60 days to enable them to receive debt advice and enter into an appropriate debt solution.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are specific and compelling grounds to do so, a waiver can be considered. Full details on this can be found at Chapter 8 of the Department's Benefit Overpayment Recovery Guide: [Benefit overpayment recovery guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guides/benefit-overpayment-recovery-guide).

■ Sports Competitors: Neurology

Grahame Morris:

[26117]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council started to investigate neurodegenerative diseases in professional sportspeople.

Mims Davies:

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council began its investigation into neurodegenerative diseases in professional sportspeople on 20 May 2021.

■ Universal Credit: Proof of Identity

Claire Hanna:

[25596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he is taking steps to help tackle issues with using (a) Irish passports and (b) Northern Ireland driving licences for online verification for Universal Credit.

Paul Maynard:

The new National Digital Identity GOV.UK One Login will enable citizens to use Northern Ireland Driving Licenses and Republic of Ireland Passport when proving their identity online, where this is appropriate. DWP are working towards a

convergence plan for GOV.UK One Login. However there are no confirmed dates yet for when this will be implemented for Universal Credit.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Health

Dame Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[21508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of armed forces personnel were (a) Medically Not Deployable and (b) Medically Limited Deployable in each year since 2010, broken down by service branch.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 May 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The following table provides the number (n) and proportion of UK Armed Forces personnel, broken down by Service, with a Medical Deployability Standard of Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) and Medically Non-Deployable (MND), as at 1 April of each year from 2010 to 2023:

SERVICE	ROYAL NAVY				ARMY				RAF			
	MLD		MND		MLD		MND		MLD		MND	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
01-Apr-10	1,843	5.2%	2,938	8.3%	14,786	14.5%	6,736	6.6%	1,472	3.7%	3,941	9.8%
01-Apr-11	1,995	5.6%	2,882	8.1%	15,217	15.0%	6,952	6.9%	1,616	4.0%	3,966	9.9%
01-Apr-12	1,786	5.4%	2,866	8.6%	14,319	14.5%	7,480	7.6%	1,561	4.1%	3,865	10.1%
01-Apr-13	1,825	5.8%	2,697	8.6%	12,237	13.0%	8,021	8.5%	1,402	4.0%	3,634	10.3%
01-Apr-14	1,732	5.7%	2,859	9.4%	10,667	12.2%	7,938	9.1%	1,412	4.3%	3,599	10.8%
01-Apr-15	1,846	6.1%	2,840	9.4%	10,122	12.3%	8,246	10.0%	1,433	4.5%	3,461	10.9%
01-Apr-16	1,932	6.5%	2,892	9.7%	10,001	12.5%	8,308	10.4%	1,618	5.2%	3,622	11.7%

SERVICE	ROYAL NAVY				ARMY				RAF			
01-Apr-10	1,843	5.2%	2,938	8.3%	14,786	14.5%	6,736	6.6%	1,472	3.7%	3,941	9.8%
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01-Apr-16	1,932	6.5%	2,892	9.7%	10,001	12.5%	8,308	10.4%	1,618	5.2%	3,622	11.7%
01-Apr-17	2,044	6.9%	2,722	9.2%	9,971	12.7%	7,890	10.1%	1,845	6.0%	3,304	10.7%
01-Apr-18	2,032	6.9%	2,762	9.4%	10,005	13.0%	6,907	9.0%	1,952	6.4%	3,321	10.9%
01-Apr-19	2,145	7.3%	2,864	9.8%	9,964	13.3%	6,702	8.9%	2,139	7.1%	3,480	11.6%
01-Apr-20	2,279	7.8%	2,930	10.1%	9,434	12.8%	6,667	9.0%	2,310	7.8%	3,675	12.4%
01-Apr-21	2,396	8.1%	2,899	9.8%	8,937	11.6%	6,447	8.4%	2,399	8.0%	3,455	11.5%
01-Apr-22	2,306	7.7%	3,279	11.0%	9,388	12.2%	7,600	9.8%	2,458	8.2%	3,884	13.0%
01-Apr-23	2,197	7.5%	3,286	11.2%	9,263	12.4%	7,669	10.2%	2,488	8.5%	4,081	13.9%

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ Instrument of Accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Minister of State (Greg Hands):

[\[HCWS478\]](#)

Today the UK officially announced the deposit of its instrument of accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). With this significant moment the UK has moved a vital step closer to acceding to one of the largest free trade areas in the world. CPTPP currently accounts for almost 12% of global GDP, and when the UK becomes a full party to the agreement, this will increase to almost 15% of GDP, or over £12 trillion (according to 2023 data).

The UK will be the first country to accede to CPTPP and will be the first European member. Our accession will place us at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, a region that will be crucial both economically and strategically in the coming decades. It will also mean we are well placed to benefit from any future changes to the rules of the agreement, and from any future expansion of the agreement, on which the UK will have a full say.

Through CPTPP, we will have free trade deals with Malaysia and Brunei for the first time – economies with a combined GDP of over £340bn in 2023. We will also see gains over and above a number of the bilateral agreements that we already have with CPTPP Parties, bringing new market access opportunities for UK businesses. Overall, our accession to the agreement could boost UK GDP by around £2 billion each and every year in the long run when compared to projected GDP in 2040, and is expected to benefit every nation and region in the UK.

Our accession will also ensure appropriate protections for UK interests. We have agreed quotas which permanently limit annual additional imports from major producers of the most sensitive agricultural products, and we have ensured that CPTPP preserves the UK's right to regulate to protect human, animal and plant life and health. All food and drink products imported into the UK will still have to meet the respective food safety and biosecurity standards for the UK. Likewise, in acceding to CPTPP we will not be changing any of our high domestic standards of environmental protection or our labour standards. We have also ensured protections for key public services, including the NHS.

The UK has now completed the key processes required to join the CPTPP. As well as the UK's own processes, the other CPTPP Parties need to complete their own respective applicable legal processes for entry into force of the Protocol. CPTPP Parties have different domestic procedures and scrutiny obligations to complete, which vary depending on the country.

The Accession Protocol sets out that the agreement will enter into force for the UK 60 days after all Parties and the UK have each notified the CPTPP Depository. Notification would follow the completion of relevant domestic procedures. After 15 months have

passed since signature (which falls in October 2024), the mechanism changes and the Protocol can enter into force 60 days after a minimum of 6 Parties and the UK have each notified. If at least 6 Parties and the UK have already notified within 15 months of signature, entry into force would take place 60 days after the October date. We therefore expect that the UK's accession should enter into force by the end of 2024.

Japan, Singapore and Chile have already completed their respective applicable legal processes for entry into force of the Protocol, and we welcome the support of every Party so that all our businesses and consumers can reap the rewards of the UK joining the deal as soon as possible

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Thirteenth Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

Minister of State (Europe) (Ms Nusrat Ghani):

[\[HCWS480\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton) has today made the following statement:

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met on 16 May, in Brussels, with delegates attending in person and by video conference. The meeting was co-chaired by myself and European Commission Executive Vice-President, Maroš Šefčovič. A Joint Statement was agreed and published on GOV.UK.

We welcomed the work on the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement to date, in particular on Citizens' Rights and progress on the implementation of the Windsor Framework.

Under Citizens' Rights, we reiterated our commitment to protect the rights of the millions of respective citizens across the UK and the EU. We welcomed the cooperation between the EU and UK and agreed that this work should intensify further with a view to finding solutions to the outstanding issues in this area.

For the Windsor Framework, we took stock of progress on the implementation of the Windsor Framework which has delivered significant benefits for people and businesses in Northern Ireland and we both welcomed the restoration of the political institutions in Northern Ireland in February 2024. We adopted decisions on the implementation of the Windsor Framework and agreed a corrigendum to Joint Committee Decision No1/2023.

Alongside this we also received an update on the work of the Withdrawal Agreement Specialised Committees since the last meeting on 28 September 2023 and adopted the Withdrawal Agreement Annual Report for the year 2023, pursuant to Article 164(6) of the Withdrawal Agreement.

■ Third Meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council

Minister of State (Europe) (Ms Nusrat Ghani):

[\[HCWS479\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton) has today made the following statement:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) Partnership Council met yesterday, 16 May 2024, in Brussels, with delegates attending in person and by video conference.

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

The Partnership Council discussed implementation of the TCA and cooperation in a wide range of important areas, including, energy and climate, trade and level playing field, health security, fisheries and wider security, and reaffirmed our commitment to fully exploiting the potential the TCA has to offer.