

Daily Report

Tuesday, 20 December 2016

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 20 December 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 20 December 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Staff

Helen Whately: [\[57221\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what measures the Law Officers' Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Robert Buckland:

Civil Service Employee Policy provides a central health and well-being service to support departments in their well-being work.

In 2015, the People Board agreed a strategic approach to health and well-being for the Civil Service. This identified mental health as a key priority. This strategic approach was developed into a Strategic Action Plan, which has now been successfully implemented.

The Law Officers' Departments provide all staff with access to an Employee Assistance Programme. The service is confidential and includes a 24hours a day, 365 days a year free helpline. Staff can speak to an advisor who will listen and help to explore ways forward on a range of issues including mental health— this can include information, advice, signposting to other local or national services, referral for telephone or face-to-face counselling, or a combination of these. All departments have developed arrangements and policies that support wellbeing, including flexible working and special leave arrangements.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ ACAS: Staff

Clive Lewis: [\[57267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has for the future staffing of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

Margot James:

Workforce planning for the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) is based on maintaining approximately the same number of staff as at present.

As is the case for other public bodies, Acas has not yet had confirmation of financial allocations for future years. Acas may need to reflect any material changes to those allocations in its subsequent workforce planning.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Buildings

Clive Lewis: [\[57277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the location is of each office from which his Department operates; and which of those offices are planned for closure.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy operates from offices in Nottingham, Cambridge, Gateshead, Billingham, Manchester, Warrington, London, Aberdeen, Guildford, Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham, Sheffield, Watford and Leeds.

Following the Machinery of Government changes, BEIS is currently considering how best to align the reform agendas of its two predecessor Departments. This will include considering what the right footprint for the Department should be, in order to best deliver its objectives.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Cost Effectiveness

Clive Lewis: [\[57274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the planned efficiency savings from his Department's administrative budget are in each year to 2020.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) administrative budgets to 2020 are subject to finalisation of Machinery of Government (MoG) transfers and the departmental transition, which will conclude by the end of the financial year. BEIS is committed to making savings in line with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Energy and Climate Change Spending Review 2015 settlements. As part of MoG agreements, some of the Spending Review savings targets will be transferred to the Department for Education and Department for International Trade, in line with Cabinet Office MoG Guidance.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Labour Mobility

Clive Lewis: [\[57233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many civil servants in each unit of his Department are in the redeployment pool.

Margot James:

As of 13th December 2016, there are 11 individuals in the Redeployment pool of the former Department of Energy and Climate Change and 23 surplus staff in the former Department for Business Innovation and Skills. The former Department for Business Innovation and Skills does not operate a Redeployment pool.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Official Visits

Clive Lewis: [\[57966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what official visits (a) he and (b) other Ministers in his Department have made since his appointment.

Margot James:

All Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the Gov.uk website.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Public Appointments

Clive Lewis: [\[57965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many public appointments by public body he has made since his appointment.

Margot James:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 19 December 2016 to Question UIN [57268](#), and confirm that 14 public appointments have been made since my appointment in July of this year. A further 23 campaigns are currently going through the final stages and will complete in due course.

PARTNER ORGANISATION	TYPE OF APPOINTMENT	ROLE
Industrial Development Advisory Board	2 re-appointments	Member
Medical Research Council	2 re-appointments	Member
Science and Technology Facilities Council	1 new appointment	Member
Competitions Markets Authority	3 new appointments	Member
Companies House	3 new appointments	Member
Civil Nuclear Police Authority	2 new appointments	Chair and Member
Committee on Fuel Poverty	1 new appointment	Chair

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Redundancy

Clive Lewis: [\[57232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what redundancy schemes his Department is currently operating.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are not currently operating any redundancy schemes.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff**

Clive Lewis: [\[57275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many civil servants his Department employs; and how many such staff his Department plans to employ in each of the next three years.

Margot James:

As at 31 October 2016, 3211 staff were employed by the Department.

Workforce planning is continuing which will include staffing forecasts for future years.

■ **Gift Cards**

Jessica Morden: [\[57795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the removal of expiry date on gift cards.

Margot James:

The Law Commission considered the use of expiry dates on gift vouchers in 2015, as part of their consultation on consumer prepayments in the event of retailer insolvency.

In the Law Commission's final report, published in July 2016, they did not make any recommendations or proposals to change the current position on expiry dates. The Government will publish a response to the report early next year.

■ **Gratuities**

Stella Creasy: [\[57781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to announce the outcome of the tips, gratuities, cover and service charges: proposals for further action consultation which ended on 27 June 2016.

Margot James:

The Government's objective is to ensure workers receive all discretionary payments for service, except those deductions required under tax law. Its consultation on tips, gratuities, service and cover charges sought views on a range of actions to address issues associated with tipping practices. The public consultation received 172 responses. These are being considered and a Government response will be published in due course.

■ **Innovate UK**

Clive Lewis: [\[57264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of Innovate UK on (a) investment, (b) job creation and (c) the economy.

Joseph Johnson:

Since 2007, Innovate UK has invested over £1.8 billion in innovation, with match funding from businesses nearly doubling this. The economic return from this investment

is estimated to be up to £7.30 gross value added for every £1 invested. The increase in jobs is estimated at around 55,000 – or 7 jobs for every organisation supported.

In addition to core investment by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, other government departments have policy objectives requiring technology-led innovation – from reducing transport emissions to improving agricultural productivity.

Many of these programmes are run in partnership with Innovate UK.

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships

Clive Lewis: [\[57505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his policy is on the registration and declaration of interests by members of Boards of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP); and what steps is he taking to improve standards of transparency in LEP Boards.

Clive Lewis: [\[57671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to increase the transparency of decision-making by local enterprise partnerships' boards.

Margot James:

This is taxpayers' money and we will be working with every LEP to improve transparency which will enable us to follow every pound of public money spent. Just last month we published a strengthened National Assurance Statement which set out the requirement for LEPs to have a published conflict of interest policy; a published register of interests covering all decision-makers, which is kept updated; and a published complaints policy.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Trade Competitiveness

John Healey: [\[57770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to secure contingency funding for the continuation of compensation for the indirect costs of the Renewables Obligation and small-scale feed-in-tariffs for energy-intensive industries beyond April 2017.

Jesse Norman:

We are engaging with the European Commission about our state aid pre-notification to move from compensation to exemption for the indirect costs of the Renewables Obligation (RO) and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs (FiT). It is not currently necessary to allocate contingency funding for the continuation of compensation beyond April 2017.

■ Medicine: Research

Roger Mullin: [\[907993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the UK's decision to leave the EU on UK-based medical research.

Joseph Johnson:

The UK will maintain its status as a global centre for research and innovation. The Government has already committed to protect science funding with a total investment of £26.3 billion over the period FY 2016/17 – FY 2020/21. In addition, the Autumn Statement announced an extra £2 billion a year in research and development by the end of this Parliament. The Treasury decision to underwrite the grants of competitively bid for EU research funding while we remain a member of the EU will give British participants and their EU partners the assurance and certainty needed to plan ahead for collaborative projects that can run over many years. We are committed to ensure that the UK continues to be a world leader in international science, including medical research.

■ Research: Finance

Helen Goodman: [\[57357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the process for a research project seeking to receive Government funding in the event that when the UK leaves the EU the UK is no longer a participant in Horizon 2020.

Helen Goodman: [\[57358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many research projects that currently receive Horizon 2020 funding have applied to receive Government funding in the event that when the UK leaves the EU the UK is no longer a participant in Horizon 2020.

Helen Goodman: [\[57359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many research project applicants for Horizon 2020 funding have applied to receive Government funding in the event that when the UK leaves the EU the UK is no longer a participant in Horizon 2020.

Helen Goodman: [\[57360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government plans to publish the guidelines for UK research projects applying for Government funding in the event that when the UK leaves the EU the UK is no longer a participant in Horizon 2020 including the criteria for being considered to be (a) good value for money and (b) in line with Government policy.

Helen Goodman: [\[57669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to coordinate the provision of guarantees for university research project applications for Horizon 2020 funding.

Helen Goodman: [\[57684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing

whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Joseph Johnson:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my rt. hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury today to Question UIN 57694:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-14/57694/>.

Chi Onwurah: [57399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to commit to providing the equivalent of current EU research and development funding beyond 2020 in addition to the funding announced in the Autumn Statement 2016.

Joseph Johnson:

The Government is committed to ensuring the UK continues to be a world leader in international research and innovation. We protected the science resource budget at Spending Review 2015, and at Autumn Statement we committed to invest a further £2 billion a year in research and development by the end of this Parliament.

The research and development funding announced at the Autumn Statement is designed to deliver increased research and innovation outcomes for the UK, not to replace any EU funding. It is too early to speculate on the UK's future relationship with Horizon 2020 and successor programmes.

■ Small Businesses: Innovation

Chi Onwurah: [57921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to promote innovation in small businesses.

Joseph Johnson:

We are committed to ensuring that Britain is the best place in Europe to innovate, patent new ideas and start and grow a business. Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency, funds business-led innovation. Its aims include helping high-growth potential small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) become high-growth mid-sized companies. Its core budget is £567 million in 2016/17. Around 60% of Innovate UK's grant funding goes to SMEs. We are supporting more companies to do research and development through the R&D Tax Credits scheme. In 2014/15 over 18,600 claims were made under the SME scheme, a 16% increase from 2013/14.

■ Training: Finance

Chi Onwurah: [57922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the speech delivered by the Prime Minister on 21 November 2016 at the CBI annual conference, how much of the extra £2 billion funding will be spent on skills training.

Joseph Johnson:

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has been clear that the £2 billion will be invested in research and development and will include a New Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to help Britain capitalise on its strengths in cutting-edge research. We will set out more detail on funding breakdown and proposals, including for wider engagement with the research and business community, in due course.

■ **UK Research and Innovation**

Chi Onwurah:

[56686]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the governance arrangements will be for UK Research and Innovation.

Joseph Johnson:

The Higher Education and Research Bill and white paper set out the high level framework for the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) governance arrangements. Subject to the will of parliament, the final arrangements will be refined and agreed in partnership with the UKRI Chief Executive and Board once appointed. These arrangements will follow best practice for non-departmental public bodies and managing public money guidance, and will be published once agreed.

Additional information on the vision, principles and governance of UKRI can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/559210/Higher_Education_and_Research_Bill-UKRI_Vision_Factsheet.pdf

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Staff**

Helen Whately:

[57214]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Ben Gummer:

The Cabinet Office is committed to helping its employees experiencing mental health problems and has a range of support services in place.

The Cabinet Office has signed up to the Time to Change pledge on mental health and our Employee Assistance Programme provides online support, counselling and a 24/7 telephone service.

Our Occupational Health Service helps line managers support employees with their mental health. The Department has also established a Listening Service, a confidential helpline resourced by staff who have been trained in active listening and emotional support.

The Department provides access to training for example in mindfulness and resilience. Cabinet Office staff are also supported by the central well-being service and staff

networks (such as the WorkWell group and disability network), and the Department takes part in awareness campaigns.

The Cabinet Office provides a central well-being service to other departments including:

- supporting the Civil Service Health and Well-being and Disability Champions to meet the ambitions in the Talent Action Plan and the Work, Health and Disability Green Paper;
- providing policy and manager guidance to support the return to work of those with a mental health illness;
- central messaging in support of events such as World Mental Health Day;
- raising capability through Civil Service Learning training materials;
- supporting individuals with mental health-related workplace adjustments;
- equipping caseworkers to deal with complex mental health issues; and
- sharing and developing best practice.

■ Conservative Party

Paula Sherriff:

[\[57967\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many appointees to (a) executive non-departmental and (b) other public bodies declared political activity for the Conservative Party in each of the last five years.

Ben Gummer:

Political activity of all public appointments is collected and published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The statistical methodology has changed since 2014-15, and the figures are not directly comparative over the last five years.

Political affiliation as percentage of total number of public appointments:

DATE	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM	OTHER
2011-12	1.8%	10.2%	0.6%	0.5%
2012-13	3.3%	3%	1%	1.7%
2013-14	1.5%	2.3%	0.4%	0.7%
2014-15	1.2%	1.7%	0.5%	1.1%

Political affiliation as percentage of those who answered the question on political activity:

DATE	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIB DEM	OTHER
2015-16	6.2%	5.0%	2.2%	1.7%

NB. These figures are not comparative with the previous table: the rise is due to the different methodology.

Overall, 94% of appointees in 2015-16 declared no political activity. By contrast, the political activity declaration rates under the last Labour Government were 10.2% in 2008-09, 10.4% in 2007-08 and 15.8% in 2006-07.

Being involved in a political party is a healthy part of civic democracy, and those interested in politics are often the same people who will be interested in public service. Individuals are appointed on the basis of their skills and experience, not their party background.

■ Death: Beachy Head

Sir Henry Bellingham: [57298]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths have been recorded at Beachy Head in each of the last five years by (a) gender and (b) age.

Chris Skidmore:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter for Member - Deaths at Beachy Head [PQ 57298_final.pdf]

■ Housework

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [57836]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the value to the UK economy of unpaid household work.

Chris Skidmore:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter for Member - Unpaid Household Work [PQ 57836 final.pdf]

■ Public Appointments

Paula Sherriff: [57968]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the proportion of chairs who were (a) appointed and (b) re-appointed to public bodies who were (i) female, (ii) from an ethnic minority and (iii) disabled by (A) executive and (B) non-executive body in the last year for which figures are available.

Ben Gummer:

Data on executive body chairs is not held centrally. Data on chairs of non-executive bodies which are public appointments is collected and published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The data can be found on the Commissioner's website at:

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/statistical-reports/>

■ Public Appointments: Ethnic Groups

Paula Sherriff: [57262]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of public appointments were of ethnic minority candidates in (a) 2015 and (b) 2016.

Ben Gummer:

Statistics on public appointments are published annually by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Statistics on Public Appointments are published annually by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the data can be found at:

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/statistical-reports/>.

■ Shipping: Average Earnings

Ian Lavery: [56964]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average weekly wage is for workers in the water transport sector.

Ian Lavery: [56965]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average weekly wage was for men in (a) full and (b) part-time employment in (i) Wansbeck constituency and (ii) the North East region in each year since 2010 according to the Office of National Statistics' standard industry classifications for each such year.

Ian Lavery: [56966]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average weekly wage was for women in (a) full and (b) part-time employment in (i) Wansbeck constituency and (ii) the North East region in each year since 2010 according to the Office of National Statistics' standard industry classifications for each such year.

Ian Lavery: [56967]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average weekly wage is for UK-domiciled seafarers.

Chris Skidmore:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter for Member - Average Weekly Wage [PQs 56964, 56965, 56966 and 56967 final .pdf]

TREASURY■ **Air Passenger Duty: Wales**

Jonathan Edwards: [\[57979\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations his Department has received from the Welsh Government on the devolution of Air Passenger Duty.

Jane Ellison:

The Chancellor discusses matters of interest with his counterparts in the devolved administrations, including APD where relevant.

In line with practice of successive administrations details of ministerial discussions are not routinely disclosed.

■ **Banks: Closures**

Rachel Reeves: [\[57782\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of local bank branch closures on vulnerable older people.

Rachel Reeves: [\[57783\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to review the effect of local bank branch closures on vulnerable older people.

Rachel Reeves: [\[57787\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department plans to take to improve measures to protect older people from online banking fraud.

Rachel Reeves: [\[57811\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of reductions in customer service staff based at local bank branches on financial services support provided to vulnerable older people.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury does not make assessments of the impact of bank branch closures or reductions in customer service staff on vulnerable older people.

Decisions on the opening and closing of individual bank branches as well as on numbers of customer service staff are taken by the management of each bank on a commercial basis without intervention from Government. Banks and building societies need to balance customer interests, market competition, and other commercial factors when considering their strategy.

The Government welcomed the industry-wide Access to Banking protocol announced in March 2015 as well as Professor Russel Griggs' recently published 'one year on' review evaluating the operation of the Protocol to date. We are pleased to see that, following the publication of the review, the industry is committing to further improvements to protect those affected by closures.

Banks' and building societies' treatment of their customers is currently governed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in its Banking Conduct of Business Sourcebook. The Sourcebook includes a general requirement for firms to provide a prompt, efficient and fair service to all of their customers. This includes older people, the disabled, and those who may lack the capacity to manage their account on their own. In addition, like all service providers, banks and building societies are bound under the Equalities Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, in the way they deliver their services.

The FCA has also launched a programme of work on how older consumers engage in financial services and make best use of financial products and services. They intend to release a regulatory strategy and recommendations in 2017.

The Government takes all fraud extremely seriously and is taking steps that will help to protect older people from online banking fraud. In February, the then Home Secretary announced the creation of a new Joint Fraud Taskforce. The Taskforce is a partnership between government, law enforcement and the financial sector, working in new innovative ways to deliver a more effective response to fraud.

The Home Secretary chaired an Oversight Board of the Taskforce in September, where a forward programme was agreed that will focus on: improving the national, regional and local law enforcement response to fraud; introducing a system to make it much easier for the victims of fraud to have their money repatriated; an industry led strategic action plan to address 'card not present' fraud; launching a very visible national fraud prevention campaign to provide targeted advice to protect members of the public; and a new collective approach to better support victims of fraud.

■ Beer

Ian Paisley: [\[56933\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate what the share of the UK beer market was for products between 2.8 and 3.5 per cent alcohol by volume in each of the last three years.

Ian Paisley: [\[56934\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate what the share of the UK beer market was for products below 2.8 per cent alcohol by volume in each of the last three years.

Jane Ellison:

The share of the UK beer market for products between 2.8% and 3.5% alcohol volume is not available.

The share of the UK beer market for products below 2.8% alcohol volume in the last three years could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Child Care Tax Credit

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57405\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children over the age of five have received support from the childcare element of Working Tax Credits since 2010.

Jane Ellison:

The number of families with children aged 5 years and over who received support from the childcare element of Working Tax Credits from 2010 onwards is available from table 4.4 HM Revenue and Customs' Child and Working Tax Credits statistics: provisional statistics publications, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-provisional-statistics-2013-to-2009>

These have been summarized in the table below :

THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 5 YEARS AND OVER WHO RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE CHILD CARE ELEMENT OF WORKING TAX CREDITS (IN THOUSANDS)¹

						Couples					Total
Both working	Other ²	All Couples	2016	205.8	94.6	Year	Singles	4.2	98.7	304.7	
2015	199.4	99.4	3.8	103.3	302.7						
2014	187.6	98.1	3.9	102	289.5						
2013	186.8	101	3.4	104.4	291.2						
2012	189.3	98.2	3	101.2	290.5						
2011	202.6	107.2	3.2	110.6	313.2						
2010	207.1	102.7	3.5	106.2	313.3						

Note: ¹ The figures are based on snapshot data at April of each year and therefore excludes children born after the date. Families with both under five and older children are included.

² Non-working partner is incapacitated, in hospital or in prison

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[57406\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children under the age of five have received support from the childcare element of Working Tax Credits since 2010.

Jane Ellison:

The number of families with children under the age of five who received support from the childcare element of Working Tax Credits from 2010 onwards is available from table 4.4 HM Revenue and Customs' Child and Working Tax Credits statistics: provisional

statistics publications, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-provisional-statistics-2013-to-2009>

These have been summarized in the table below :

NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE BENEFITTING FROM THE CHILD CARE ELEMENT OF WORKING TAX CREDITS (IN THOUSANDS) ¹

	Year		Singles		Couples		Total
	Both working		Other ²		All Couples		
2016	146.3	106.5	3.7	110.1	256.3		
2015	149.5	117.3	3.5	120.8	270.3		
2014	147.9	124.0	3.9	127.8	275.8		
2013	146.6	131.0	3.4	134.4	281.0		
2012	150.6	137.2	2.9	140.1	290.7		
2011	157.3	154.0	3.3	157.2	314.5		
2010	156.3	148.3	3.6	151.9	308.2		

Note: ¹ The figures are based on snapshot data at April of each year and therefore excludes children born after the date. Families with both under five and older children are included.

² Non-working partner is incapacitated, in hospital or in prison

■ Concentrix

Diana Johnson:

[\[57162\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Written Statement of 14 November 2016, HCWS251, update on HM Revenue and Customs' contract with Concentrix, of those Mandatory Considerations against Concentrix tax credit decisions that are still outstanding, what the dates were on which the cases relating to those decisions were first lodged; and what the date was when the case longest awaiting consideration was lodged.

Jane Ellison:

As at 18 December 2016 there are 1,302 Concentrix related Mandatory Reconsiderations outstanding.

The oldest case still outstanding was received on 28 November 2016, all other outstanding Mandatory Reconsiderations were received after 28 November.

■ Economic Policy: Channel Islands

Andrew Rosindell:

[57886]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December 2016 to Question 56258, if he will publish an assessment of the net benefit to the UK economy of Jersey and Guernsey setting independent economic and taxation policies.

Simon Kirby:

HM Treasury has not made a formal assessment of the costs and benefits to the UK economy of Jersey and Guernsey setting independent economic and taxation policies.

■ Email: Unsolicited Goods and Services

Dr Tania Mathias:

[57814]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to prevent scam and unsolicited emails from pension and insurance companies.

Simon Kirby:

On 5 December the Government launched a consultation on a package of measures aimed at tackling different areas of pensions scams. One of the measures is a ban on cold calling in relation to pensions.

A cold calling ban would cut off a key source of pension scams whilst also sending a clear message to consumers that they should hang up if they are cold called about their pension. The consultation will gather views on the exact scope of the ban and whether it should be extended to include electronic communications as well. The consultation closes on 13 February 2017 and next steps will be announced at Budget 2017.

The Government takes scams very seriously, and is continuing to monitor the risk of scams in other areas of financial services.

The Government is determined that financial services firms treat customers fairly. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which regulates the insurance industry in the UK, sets the standards required of insurance firms to help ensure customers are treated fairly. Their rules require that communications with consumers should be clear, fair and not misleading. FCA also rules require that financial advertising and promotions should clearly explain what the product or service is, how it works and it could benefit consumers. Misleading adverts can be reported to the FCA online at: <http://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/protect-yourself/misleading-adverts/reporting-form>.

The FCA will take action against insurers that are found to be in breach of the FCA rules.

■ Flood Control

Rachael Maskell:

[57994]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many companies and unincorporated businesses have received tax relief on contributions to partnership funding for flood protection.

Jane Ellison:

It is not currently possible to provide an estimate of the number of companies and unincorporated businesses receiving tax relief on these contributions as this could only be provided at disproportionate cost. As the measure came into effect from 1 January 2015, HM Revenue and Customs does not currently hold the necessary information collated in a way that would be able to generate the requested estimates.

■ **Government Contracts**

Diana Johnson: [\[57164\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Written Statement of 14 November 2016, HCWS252, on off-payroll review 2014-15, how much was paid from the public purse to the 504 contractors who did not provide sufficient reassurance of their tax affairs; and how much has since been recovered by the Government.

Diana Johnson: [\[57165\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Written Statement of 14 November 2016, HCWS252, on off-payroll review 2014-15, which departments sought assurances on the tax affairs of 3,034 of their contractors; how many such contractors had assurances sought about them for each such Department; to which departments the 504 cases belonged; and what proportion of contracts by Department the 3,034 represents.

Diana Johnson: [\[57166\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Written Statement of 14 November 2016, HCWS252, on off-payroll review 2014-15, how many Government contracts which did not allow departments to seek assurance regarding contractors' tax affairs there were by Department; and what proportion of contracts issued in 2014-15 that number represents by Department.

Mr David Gauke:

The annex attached to the Written Statement of 14 November 2016 detailing the results of the off-payroll review provides a breakdown of which departments sought assurances on the tax affairs of their contractors earning more than £220 per day for more than six months, including how many such contractors had assurances sought about them and how many did not provide adequate assurance. The total number of off-payroll engagements across departments and their total value is outside the remit of the off-payroll review, and it not held by HM Treasury.

A failure to provide assurance does not conclusively denote anything about the tax arrangements of the individuals concerned. For example, in some of the 504 instances the engagements came to a natural conclusion before assurance was received.

Nevertheless, referrals to HMRC for further investigation occurred in all relevant cases across government. HMRC will investigate rule bending and breaking, including fraud investigation by both specialist civil and criminal teams where appropriate. HMRC are unable to provide details of individual cases due to taxpayer confidentiality so it is not possible to calculate the amount of tax recovered as a result of the referrals.

The review found that not all relevant contracts contained the clause required to allow departments to seek assurance. However, assurance was requested and received from the majority of contractors regardless. As I set out in my Statement of 14 November 2016, I expect departments to have these clauses in place and departments can expect to be fined if breaches of this nature are found in the next review. The table below details contracts that, as part of this review, cannot be confirmed as containing the required clause:

DEPARTMENT	NUMBER OF NEW ENGAGEMENTS, OR THOSE THAT REACHED SIX MONTHS IN DURATION, BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2013 AND 31 MARCH 2014	NUMBER THAT CANNOT BE CONFIRMED AS INCLUDING CONTRACTUAL CLAUSES GIVING THE DEPARTMENT THE RIGHT TO REQUEST ASSURANCE IN RELATION TO INCOME TAX AND NICs
BIS ALBs	110	12
DCLG ALBs	99	7
DEFRA	74	4
DFE ALBs	109	44
DFT ALBs	272	17
DH ALBs	1217	313
DWP	161	1
DWP ALBs	27	15
MOD	352	116
OFQUAL	6	6
OFWAT	20	2
UKEF	30	22

■ Local Government: Scotland

Jim McMahon:

[\[57144\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of local authorities in Scotland to ensure that devolution deals in Scottish towns and cities are done in consultation with the Scottish Parliament.

Jim McMahon:

[\[57145\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of local authorities in Wales to ensure that devolution deals in Welsh towns and cities are done in consultation with the Welsh Assembly.

Mr David Gauke:

The government is currently in discussions towards city deals for Edinburgh, Stirling and Swansea and is looking forward to seeing proposals from local partners from the Tay Cities and North Wales. Officials are in regular contact with their counterparts from the Scottish and Welsh Governments and local partners to take these discussions forward. It is for Scottish and Welsh Government Ministers to consult their respective legislatures on these deals as far as they relate to devolved matters for which they are accountable.

■ National Insurance Contributions**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[57341]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of national insurance contributions have been allocated to (a) pensions and (b) the NHS in each of the last 20 years.

Jane Ellison:

The proportion of National Insurance contributions (NICs) allocated to the National Health Service (NHS) is set down in legislation in the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (sections 161-162) and the Social Security Administration (Northern Ireland) Act 1992.

Total National Insurance contributions have been reported annually on an accruals accounting basis since 2004-05, before that on a cash basis, in the Inland Revenue and then the HM Revenue and Customs Annual Report and Accounts which are laid before Parliament. Accounts for the last twenty years are available from the House of Commons Library and are also available online from 2012-13 at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrcs-annual-report-and-accounts>.

The amounts of NICs paid out in state pensions and paid over to the NHS are reported annually on a cash basis in the National Insurance Fund Accounts which are laid before Parliament. Accounts for the last twenty years are available from the House of Commons Library and are also available online from 2007-8 at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-insurance-fund-accounts>

■ Public Sector: Equality**Cat Smith:****[57879]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Government plans to publish the equality impact analysis on compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Mr David Gauke:

In line with the Government's legal responsibilities and policy commitment to promote fairness, the Treasury and other Government departments fully comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), including with respect to all publication requirements.

The PSED requires public bodies to consider the potential impact of decisions on groups with protected characteristics. The Treasury's equality and diversity pages on gov.uk include an explanation of how the Treasury complies with the PSED. The page is found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-treasury/about/equality-and-diversity>

■ Royal Bank of Scotland

Nigel Adams: [\[57835\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he expects the Financial Conduct Authority report on the Global Restructuring Group of RBS to be published.

Simon Kirby:

On 8 November the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published a summary of the main findings from the skilled persons' report it commissioned to review RBS' treatment of SME customers transferred into its Global Restructuring Group. The FCA has said it is carefully considering the report and will publish a full account of their findings when practicable. It would not be appropriate for the government to comment further whilst this process is ongoing.

■ Sanitary Products: Taxation

Cat Smith: [\[57880\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will confirm whether the £3 million announced in paragraph 5.15 of the Autumn Statement 2016 with regard to the proceeds from the Tampon Tax is new funding or the remaining allocation of 2015 funds.

Mr David Gauke:

The £3 million awarded via the Tampon Tax Fund as part of Autumn Statement 2016 is in addition to funds awarded at previous fiscal events.

■ Self-employed: Taxation

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[58072\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to issue a response to the Intermediaries Legislation (IR35): discussion document, published in July 2015.

Jane Ellison:

The Government's response to the summer 2015 discussion document was published on 26 July 2016 as part of the consultation 'off-payroll working in the public sector: reform of the intermediaries legislation'. A document summarising responses to the July 2016 consultation was published in December 2016. Both documents can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/off-payroll-working-in-the-public-sector-reform-of-the-intermediaries-legislation>

■ Stamp Duties

Chi Onwurah: [\[57920\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much additional tax revenue his Department has collected since 1 April 2016 as a result of stamp duty reform.

Jane Ellison:

Historical monthly Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) receipts are published in HMRC's 'Tax & NIC Receipts' publication, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmrc-tax-and-nics-receipts-for-the-uk>.

Further analysis, including estimated receipts from the higher rate of SDLT on 'additional properties' from 1 April 2016, is published in 'Quarterly Stamp Duty Statistics', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-stamp-duty-statistics>

■ **Taxation: ICT**

Mike Freer: [57196]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the results of the consultation on making tax digital.

Mike Freer: [57237]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to small businesses and sole traders of quarterly returns as part of the making tax digital reforms announced by the Government on 15 August 2016.

Jane Ellison:

The Government has been clear that quarterly updates will not amount to four tax returns a year.

The Making Tax Digital consultations closed on 7 November. The Government is currently considering the responses received and, as announced at the Autumn Statement, will publish its response in January. As part of its response, the Government will also publish an updated impact assessment.

■ **Treasury: Horizon 2020**

Helen Goodman: [57694]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Mr David Gauke:

In response to Q311, at the Treasury Committee on Monday 12 December, the Chancellor referenced the process for EU Structural Funds rather than for Horizon 2020.

The Treasury will underwrite all successful 2020 bids for Horizon 2020 that are for Horizon 2020 approved by the Commission, even when specific projects continue beyond the departure from the EU. Government departments will not assess Horizon 2020 grant applications – Horizon 2020 is an EU programme, independent of the UK government, and grant funding is awarded by the Commission based on peer review.

UK businesses and universities should continue to bid for competitive EU funds while we remain a member of the EU, and we will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded.

Treasury: Staff

Jake Berry: [57020]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Simon Kirby:

I refer the Hon. Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

The green paper can be found as follows:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-review-of-corporate-governance>

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**Communities and Local Government: Pay**

Jake Berry: [56982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Government departments do not publish details of the salary of their highest to lowest paid employees.

The Office for National Statistics do, however, publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organisation. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

Jake Berry: [57026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Office for National Statistics publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organisation. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

■ Communities and Local Government: Staff

Jake Berry: [\[57004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I refer my hon Friend to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

Helen Whately: [\[57215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Civil Service Employee Policy provides a central health and well-being service to support departments in their well-being work.

In 2015, the People Board agreed a strategic approach to health and well-being for the Civil Service. This identified mental health as a key priority. This strategic approach was developed into a Strategic Action Plan, which has now been successfully implemented.

Wellbeing is a key part of the DCLG People Plan. The Plan sets out the Department's strategic commitment to establish and maintain good health amongst staff in the business. The commitments and actions linked to wellbeing are delivered jointly by the Department's Human Resources directorate and the Health and Wellbeing Network.

Specific support for staff within DCLG with mental health problems includes:

- Mental Health First Aid training. So far over 100 members of staff including have received the MHFA training.
- A listening and support service through a Mental Health Ambassador Network which is made up of over 30 MHFA trained staff from across the business.
- A Mental Health Support Group that encourages staff experiencing poor mental health or who are caring for someone with a mental health illness to meet to share experiences and resources and to offer each other support and advice.
- Mandatory Mental Health Awareness training for all staff using the Civil Service Learning portal.
- Internally designed and delivered Mental Health Awareness workshops - over 200 staff have received the training so far.
- Internally designed and delivered Building your Resilience workshops - over 150 staff have received the training so far.
- Delivery of 'whole department' events such as Time to Talk, Break the Stigma and World Mental Health Day designed to raise staff awareness of the support they can access and to breakdown the stigma associated with mental ill health.
- A contracted Employee Assistance Programme (Help) which gives staff free and immediate access to support on all matters relating to health and wellbeing, including

crisis support to individuals and their line managers. The EAP also provides a gateway to more specialist and professional medical services.

- Occupational Health Service referrals which are aimed at obtaining medical advice on how to support a colleague's health and well-being either whilst off sick, in returning to the workplace and/or at work
- Access to a range of support tools through the Wellbeing Zone.

■ Social Services: National Insurance Contributions

Jim McMahon:

[57209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the increases to employers' national insurance contributions from 1 April 2016 on the future financial viability of social care providers.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The 2015 Spending Review took account of increases to employers' national insurance contributions, and set out a sustainable basis for local authorities to discharge their functions such as the commissioning of care from social care providers. The changes we announced alongside the local government settlement on 15 December brings the total dedicated funding for adult social care to £7.6 billion over the four years of the settlement 2016-20, enabling councils to tackle the pressures of adult social care and support their older and most vulnerable residents.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadband: Rural Areas

Jo Churchill:

[57650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many rural communities have launched their own initiatives to install fibre networks as a result of commercial and government programmes being unable to reach their premises.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Broadband Delivery UK has recently published information and guidance for communities on implementing their own community projects, with examples of schemes that it is aware of (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-led-broadband-schemes>). There are also other examples of community broadband support such as Community Broadband Scotland, which gives specific support to community projects in Scotland. The government does not, however, hold information on all community schemes in the UK.

Jim Shannon:

[57788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the level of investment required to bring broadband access in rural communities in (a) the UK and (b) Northern Ireland up to the average level in all communities.

Mr Rob Wilson:

95% of UK premises are expected to be covered by superfast broadband by December 2017. The 95% figure is a UK average and individual areas, including rural parts of Northern Ireland and other areas of the UK, will have different coverage levels. All premises which do not have a speed of at least 10Mbps will be able to request an upgrade to at least this speed under the Universal Service Obligation. Furthermore providers and local bodies will also be able to access funding for full fibre connectivity as announced at the Autumn Statement 2016, once those proposals have been finalised in early 2017.

■ Channel Four Television**Jim Shannon:**[\[57790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what account she has taken of the findings of the House of Lords Communications Committee on the potential risks and benefits of privatisation of Channel 4; and what other factors she plans to take into account when forming her policy on that privatisation.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The government is grateful to the Lords Communications Committee for its report on the future of Channel 4. We will carefully consider it as we look closely at the options.

We are looking at a broad range of options, including those proposed by Channel 4's leadership.

In a fast-changing and challenging broadcasting environment, we want to ensure Channel 4 has a strong and secure future and can continue to make a positive contribution to the overall public service broadcasting (PSB) system and wider creative industries.

Dawn Butler:[\[57804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will issue a Written Statement outlining how each of the four accepted candidates recently appointed for the Channel 4 board met the appointment criteria as set out by Ofcom for those board positions.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Non-executive members of the Channel 4 Corporation board are appointed by Ofcom with the approval of the Secretary of State. Ofcom advertised for four vacancies for candidates with specific sector skills and experience. The Secretary of State approved the four candidates on the basis that they met the skills and experience set out the advertised job descriptions.

The government is committed to ensuring diversity within public appointments. The Cabinet Office aspiration is for 50% of new appointments made by each Government Department to go to female candidates, and 10% to candidates from a BAME background. This target is also contained within the DCMS Departmental Plan, and, in the first two quarters of 2016/17, 50% of new DCMS appointments went to women and 18% to BAME candidates.

■ Charities: Minimum Wage

Mr Steve Reed: [\[57785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with HM Revenue and Customs on ensuring that national minimum wage regulations are being properly enforced in the charities sector.

Mr Rob Wilson:

I have regular discussions with colleagues across government on a range of issues, including the effective regulation of charities.

Charity workers have the same wage entitlements as employees in the private and public sectors. Compliance with National Minimum Wage regulations is enforced for Charities in the same way as it is for all other employers.

■ Cultural Heritage: Theft

Jim Shannon: [\[57463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to monitor trends in the theft of cultural and historical artefacts in the UK.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The Department is a participant in the National Police Chiefs' Council's National Policing Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group. One of the key priorities of this group is to inform and update a refresh of the 2013 National Strategic Assessment of Heritage and Cultural Property Crime. The new assessment is due for publication in 2017.

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in her Department.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Government departments do not publish details of the salary of their highest to lowest paid employees.

The Office for National Statistics do, however, publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organization. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

Jake Berry: [\[57027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in her Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The Office for National Statistics publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organization. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Staff

Jake Berry: [57005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Mr Rob Wilson:

I refer the Hon. Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

Helen Whately: [57216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what measures her Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Civil Service Employee Policy provides a central health and well-being service to support departments in their well-being work.

The Department provides information and support to help all employees to stay well and manage their health conditions at work. This support includes a variety of programmes like occupational health support, counselling support through the Employee Assistance Programme and the Civil Service workplace adjustments service which helps with adjustments for employees suffering from a mental health condition.

The Department is a signatory to the Time to Change Pledge and raises awareness through national campaigns such as the "Time to Talk" day and the Mental Health Awareness Week.

The Department supports the Employee Mental Health Network with a Senior Civil Servant Champion and has introduced Mental Health Champions who are trained to provide support and guide people towards appropriate professional help. The Network has had the visible support of the Department's Permanent Secretary and at DCMS Ministerial level.

The Civil Service Unconscious Bias training is mandatory for all employees and the Department is working with line managers to support individuals with mental health conditions, part of which is encouraging line managers to undertake Mental Health Awareness eLearning.

■ Digital Technology

Dan Jarvis:

[\[57046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, on what date the Government plans to publish its Digital Strategy.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The UK is already among the most digitally connected countries in the world with a globally successful digital economy. We will continue to work with industry to develop our strategy to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of the digital revolution and that everyone across the country benefits from this.

■ Gambling

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[57697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has plans to produce a strategy to tackle problem gambling and reduce gambling-related harm.

Tracey Crouch:

The Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB), which advises the Gambling Commission and others on reducing gambling related harm, published its responsible gambling strategy for 2016-2019 in April this year. We will be considering this alongside other evidence as part of the review of gaming machines and social responsibility measures which was announced on 24 October, with the aim of publishing our findings and any resulting proposals in spring 2017.

■ Mobile Broadband: Wales

Glyn Davies:

[\[57590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Welsh Government on the forthcoming auction of 2.3GHz and 3.4GHz radio spectrum; and whether those discussions have covered the possibility of introducing a 30 per cent cap on spectrum holdings.

Glyn Davies:

[\[57591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential improvements to mobile coverage resulting from imposing a 30 per cent cap on radio spectrum holdings in (a) Wales and (b) Montgomeryshire.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Ofcom is responsible for spectrum allocation, in line with its statutory duties. Ofcom is currently consulting on competition measures for the 2.3/3.4GHz auction. This will ensure that the UK continues to benefit from a competitive mobile market.

■ Sports: Offences against Children

Jim Shannon: [\[57789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has with the Ministry of Justice to offer help and support to people coming forward to make allegations of historical child abuse in sport.

Tracey Crouch:

I have written to all sports national governing bodies funded through Sport England asking them to ensure they have appropriate processes in place to respond to allegations of non-recent abuse.

For 2016/17, the Government has provided £7 million of funding for non-statutory organisations supporting victims and survivors of sexual abuse including child sexual abuse. The Government is protecting the funding for 2017/18.

The Government has funded bids across a broad spectrum of activity, including services such as counselling, advocacy, outreach, raising awareness and training.

DEFENCE**■ Defence Fire and Rescue Service: Pay**

Kirsten Oswald: [\[57305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will estimate the cost to the public purse of removing the net pay deduction from the salaries of defence fire service workers in each financial year from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is currently considering options for the future delivery of its Fire and Rescue capability. We are consulting the Trades Unions on the recommendation made by the Defence Fire and Rescue Project that future delivery of the MOD's Fire and Rescue capability by an external industry provider is likely to deliver the best value for money to Defence. Acceptance of the recommendation is subject to approval by Defence Ministers, HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office followed by a final round of commercial competition prior to any possible contract award. The impact on the size of the future workforce (and the cost of removing the net pay deduction) could therefore only be identified in the event a contract is awarded.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[57307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place the calculations used to determine the net pay deduction of defence fire service workers in the Library .

Mark Lancaster:

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) calculated the abatement level for Defence Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) Fire-fighters on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The calculation for the abatement level is detailed in GAD's report dated 27 November 2014 - "DFRS Fire-fighters - Review of Net Pay Deduction for 2014-15". A copy of the report will be placed in the Library of the House.

I am unable to provide the calculations for the Net Pay Deduction (NPD) for DFRS Fire Officer grades (implemented in 1994) as the rate was negotiated by the Treasury before Pay delegation and no relevant historical documents are held. The MOD has recently reviewed the NPD for Fire Officers and the outcome is currently the subject of negotiation with the Fire Officer's Trade Union. I will place a copy of the findings of the review in the Library of the House when negotiations are complete.

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[57349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons his Department allows for differences in member pension contribution rates but not member pension benefits in calculating the net pay deduction from the salaries of Ministry of Defence fire fighters and fire officers.

Mark Lancaster:

Ministry of Defence (MOD) Fire-fighters and Fire Officers are not eligible to join the Local Authority (LA) Fire Pension Schemes (FPS) and instead are members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). LA Fire-fighters had a contributory pension scheme whereas until 2012 the PCSPS was non-contributory - except for a 1.5% contribution for the widows and orphans scheme. An abatement was therefore applied to the salaries of MOD Fire-fighters and Fire Officers as a fair and consistent method of bringing 'take home' pay into line with their outside comparators in the LA Fire Rescue Service.

The abatement has no relationship with pension entitlement and was negotiated with the appropriate Trade Unions at the time. This arrangement remains in place today although the abatement level has changed over the intervening years to take account of changes to pension contributions introduced in the LA FPS. Changes have also been made for Fire-fighters to take account of Public Sector Pension reform changes introduced from 2012 which have seen increases to the rate of contributions made by public servants (including PCSPS members) to their pension. In 2015 the MOD commissioned the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to review the level of the Fire Officer NPD and is currently negotiating with the Trades Union on the findings of the 2016 GAD report as part of the review.

■ Ministry of Defence: Horizon 2020

Helen Goodman:

[\[57687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Harriett Baldwin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (David Gauke) to Question 57694 on 20 December 2016.

Attachments:

1. WQnA extract on Treasury: Horizon 2020
[20161220_57694_Treasury_Horizon_2020.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: iNHouse Communications

Melanie Onn: [\[57665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has awarded any commercial contracts to iNHouse Communications Ltd in the last five years.

Melanie Onn: [\[57667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has had any communications with iNHouse Communications Ltd in connection with any current commercial tender process.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence has not awarded any contracts, or made any direct payments, to iNHouse Communications Ltd in the last five years.

Information concerning communications on current tenders is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Royal Military Academy

Tim Farron: [\[57866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst has received from the training of foreign nationals since 2005, broken down by country.

Mike Penning:

The income received in tuition fees by the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from the training of foreign nationals is shown in the attached table. Information on income is not held for the period before 2007-08. Income has been rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

Attachments:

1. 57866 - Income from tuition fees from RMA Sandhursts [57866 - Income from tuition fees recieved by RMA Sandhurst for overseas personnel by country, 2007-08 to 2016-17.docx]

■ Syria: British Nationals Abroad

Philip Davies: [\[57725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what information his Department has on the number of British (a) nationals and (b) service personnel in Aleppo.

Mike Penning:

The Ministry of Defence does not hold any information on the number of British nationals in Aleppo. No Service personnel are deployed there, reflecting the position set out by the then Prime Minister in the debate in the House on 2 December 2015.

■ Woolwich Barracks

Matthew Pennycook: [\[57792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost to the public was of providing the purpose-built equestrian training facility and accommodation centre at Woolwich Garrison for the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery.

Matthew Pennycook: [\[57793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total amount of investment in Woolwich barracks has been since 2007.

Matthew Pennycook: [\[57812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Defence Estate Development Plan 2009, what the total cost was of the Woolwich Development Project.

Mark Lancaster:

The Department holds no records of expenditure on Woolwich Barracks prior to 2009. Since 2009 a total of £83.8 million has been invested in Woolwich Barracks. Of this total providing the purpose-built equestrian training facility and accommodation centre has cost £19.5 million, the cost of the Woolwich Development project was £49 million.

EDUCATION

■ Academies

Angela Rayner: [\[57747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many academy conversions her Department expects to have been completed between 1 January 2016 and 1 January 2017.

Edward Timpson:

Since 01 January 2016, 870 schools have converted to academies, of which 666 were academy converters and 204 were sponsor-led academies.

For schools due to become academies between now (15 December 2016) and 01 January 2017, we cannot confirm the conversion numbers until January 2017.

Source: Edubase 15/12/2016

■ Academies: Headteachers

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[57539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many academy headteachers earn more than the Prime Minister.

Nick Gibb:

In November 2015, there were 59 head teachers in academies and Free Schools recorded receiving an actual salary of more than the Prime Minister, £142,500. This figure includes executive head teachers who are in charge of more than one school.

This information is collected in the School Workforce Census which covers state funded schools in England and is the latest available.

■ **Autism: Pupil Exclusions**

Catherine West: [57873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department provides guidance to schools and governing bodies on pupil exclusions and appeals concerning pupils with autism.

Edward Timpson:

The Department publishes statutory guidance on exclusion: 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England'. The guidance covers the process from start to finish, and includes specific requirements in relation to pupils with Special educational needs (SEN). In particular, head teachers should make additional efforts to consider what extra support may be required to avoid exclusion of pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND), and as far as possible, should avoid permanently excluding pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan/Statement.

■ **Baverstock Academy**

Steve McCabe: [57837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2016 to Question 55966, what the pupil forecast is for the next seven years in the local area that will be affected by the decision on whether to close Baverstock Academy.

Steve McCabe: [57839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2016 to Question 55966, what the secondary school capacity is in the local area that will be affected by the decision on whether to close Baverstock Academy.

Edward Timpson:

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring sufficient school places for pupils, including accurately forecasting demand. The department collects forecasts of future demand for pupil places and school capacity figures from each local authority, covering the next five years, through the annual school capacity survey (SCAP). The latest published SCAP data, relating to the position as reported at May 2015, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-capacity-academic-year-2014-to-2015>. This data covers the periods 2015 to 2019 for primary and 2015 to 2021 for secondary.

Steve McCabe: [57838]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2016 to Question 55966 and with reference to her decision on whether to close Baverstock Academy, whether Birmingham City Council has provided her Department with the relevant data on school capacity and pupil forecasts.

Edward Timpson:

No decisions to close Baverstock Academy have been made. My Department has been working closely with Birmingham City Council on pupil numbers and forecasts in order to assess the viability of Baverstock Academy.

Steve McCabe:

[57842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2016 to Question 56149, on Baverstock Academy, what estimate she has made of the cost of (a) keeping that school open, (b) introducing a new sponsor and (c) complete closure of that school.

Edward Timpson:

The priority for the Secretary of State in making a decision about the future of Baverstock Academy will be to deliver the best educational outcomes for local children, in a way that also provides value for money to the taxpayer. The Secretary of State will therefore consider a range of factors, including cost estimates, for any reasonable option. The costs of viable options over a specified timescale are not yet finalised and form only one element of the value for money decision. As such the Secretary of State's ultimate decision will take into consideration both the risks involved and dependencies required to deliver each of the options, and the best and most sustainable strategy for delivering good or outstanding school places for every child in the local area.

■ Children: Day Care

Tulip Siddiq:

[57819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timetable is for her Department's response to its consultation on Government changes to disqualification arrangements for childcare workers.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ministers are still considering responses to the options set out in the consultation on Government changes to disqualification arrangements for childcare workers. They will announce their decision regarding any changes they intend to make in the near future.

■ Class Sizes

Mike Kane:

[57369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) primary and (b) secondary school pupils were taught in classes of 31 or more pupils in 2016.

Nick Gibb:

This information is published in table 6b of the publication available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

■ Department for Education: Pay

Jake Berry: [56985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in her Department.

Jake Berry: [57029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in her Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Caroline Dinenage:

The table below shows the percentage gap in earnings between a) employees in the highest grade and average pay in the department and b) the highest and lowest paid employees in the Department.

Table showing percentage pay gaps

	PERCENTAGE GAP*
Percentage gap between the highest grade and average (median) pay	-78%
Percentage gap between the highest and lowest paid employees	-89%

*Percentage gap has been calculated as (Highest Earner – Value)/Highest Earner. This figure includes the department and its agencies as at March 2016 (and does not include staff moved into the Department following Machinery of Government changes announced in July 2016)

■ Department for Education: Staff

Jake Berry: [57007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans her Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Caroline Dinenage:

I refer the Hon Member to the oral statement on Corporate Governance of 29

November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408 and to the Corporate Governance

Reform Green Paper which is available online at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573438/beis-16-56-corporate-governance-reform-green-paper-final.pdf.

Helen Whately: [57218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what measures her Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department for Education has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, which is

updated annually. The plan includes a section on support for people with mental health problems, and to help people to manage staff with mental health problems.

Support provided includes mental health awareness training and an employee assistance service which staff can call at any time to obtain confidential support and advice.

In September 2014, the Permanent Secretary signed the Time to Change pledge to affirm the Department's commitment to ending stigma about mental health. The Department also has an active Wellbeing network, with over 100 members, which has promoted events to raise awareness of mental health issues.

In early 2017, mental health first aiders will be available in each of the Department's buildings and will receive training to help them recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and offer appropriate support. They will also act as a source of advice and help for staff.

■ Faith Schools: Admissions

Mr Graham Allen:

[\[57157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the implications of the Education Policy Institute report, entitled Faith Schools, pupil performance and social selection, published on 2 December 2016, for the proposal to remove the 50 per cent cap on religious selection in faith schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Education Policy Institute report does not recognise the fact that the government's proposals are focused on creating more good school places, and therefore creating more choice for parents when selecting a school. Our proposals to expand the number of these good school places available to parents will benefit more young people and give them the chance to go as far as their talents will take them.

Faith schools make up a third of all schools in England, and are among the highest performing schools in the country. More primary and secondary faith schools are judged good or outstanding than their non-faith counterparts^[1] and consistently achieve higher performance in exam results. Faith schools are popular with parents and so the removal of the 50% faith cap will enable the establishment of even more good schools and places.

[1] Ofsted official statistics: Maintained schools and academies inspections and outcomes as at 31 March 2016 shows faith schools are more likely to be *good* or *outstanding* as compared to non-faith schools (89% as compared to 86% at primary; 81% as compared to 75% at secondary).

■ Grammar Schools: Food

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[57869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the School Food Standards will be made mandatory for new grammar schools.

Edward Timpson:

The School Food Standards apply to all local authority maintained schools and to academies that opened prior to 2010 and from June 2014 onwards. We do not have any plans to omit any new schools from this requirement.

■ Housing: Disability

Caroline Lucas:

[57146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to bring into force the parts of section 36 and Schedule 4 of the Equality Act 2010 that would enable residents to secure disability related alterations to the physical features of the common parts of let residential premises or premises owned on a commonhold basis; what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on that issue; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is currently reviewing Section 36 of the Equality Act with a view to assessing its implementation given its costs and regulatory impact.

Although requests for reasonable adjustments to common parts are in the first instance matters between disabled tenants and their landlords, these have implications for the provision and funding of care for disabled people, since funding to support such changes is a charge on the Department of Health-administered Better Care Fund which supports local authority health and social care services.

The review is therefore taking account of the impact on public and private landlords, any consequences for landlords' willingness to let premises to disabled tenants, and the implications of additional calls on the Better Care Fund for the existing types of support which that Fund currently provides. My officials are working closely with those in both the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health on these issues.

The Government will announce the outcome of the review in due course.

■ Nurseries: Public Consultation

Tulip Siddiq:

[57408]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she proposes to open consultation on the future of maintained nursery schools.

Caroline Dinenage:

Maintained nursery schools are an important part of the early years system. We are working with maintained nursery schools, through the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes and directly with nursery schools and local authorities. This will inform the content of our consultation on the future of maintained nursery schools, which will be launched in due course.

■ Penn School

Steve Baker:

[57553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with (a) the Education Funding Agency and (b) other statutory bodies about the future use of the former Penn School site; and if she will make a statement.

Edward Timpson:

The department has received and responded to correspondence about the site of the former Penn School. There is a meeting scheduled to take place with Mr Baker and Martin Post, Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for North West London and South Central England, on 13 January 2017 in order to discuss the future of the school site and provide some assurances. A representative from the Free Schools Regional Delivery team is also available to be contacted prior to this meeting.

■ Pre-school Education

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the annual report of Ofcom for 2015-6, how many of the 2,000 providers who received a welfare requirements notice between 2014 and 2016 (a) did and (b) did not take the actions outlined in their welfare requirement notice.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the annual report of Ofcom for 2015-6, how many of the 2,000 providers who received a welfare requirements notice between 2014 and 2016 have received a subsequent inspection; and what the ratings were for those providers.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ofsted is the non-Ministerial Government Department responsible for the regulation of childcare providers in England. Ofsted is responsible for notifying providers of action needed to address failings identified in inspections and for taking the necessary follow-up action with those providers to ensure compliance with its notices. This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw. I have asked him to write to the Hon. Member and a copy of his reply will be placed in the libraries of the House.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what mechanism her Department has in place to ascertain whether a childcare or early years provider has taken the actions outlined for it in a welfare requirements notice.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ofsted is the non-Ministerial Government Department responsible for the regulation of childcare providers in England and reports to Parliament on its performance. Ofsted is responsible for taking any necessary follow-up action when it has served a welfare notice to an early years provider following an inspection.

■ Pre-school Education: Exercise

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[57088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what meetings she and her ministerial colleagues have had with (a) the Chief Medical Officer, (b) officials and Ministers from other Departments and (c) external stakeholders on updating the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to make specific reference to physical activity.

Caroline Dinenage:

On 20 Jan 2016, the British Heart Foundation (BHF) National Centre for Physical Activity and Health published [The best start in life – a manifesto for physical activity in the early years](#), which included a recommendation for greater emphasis on the importance of physical activity across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and more awareness of the [Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines for the early years \(2011\)](#).

This report was discussed between officials at Department for Education and Department of Health. Following a meeting between the BHF and my Rt. Hon. Friend, the former Secretary of State for Education, a meeting took place between officials and the BHF.

In April 2016, the Department agreed to include a link to the Chief Medical Officer's guidance on physical activity in the revised EYFS, which we plan to publish around spring/summer 2017.

Since this recommendation was addressed, before the recent machinery of government changes and the appointment of my Rt. Hon. Friend, the current Secretary of State for Education on 14 July, her and her ministerial colleagues have not had any meetings about this matter.

■ Pre-school Education: School Meals**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:****[57188]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of her Department have had with the Children's Food Trust on revising menus for early years settings.

Caroline Dinenage:

Public Health England (PHE) have commissioned the Children's Food Trust (CFT) to develop revised menus for early years settings by December 2016. These will be incorporated into voluntary guidelines for early years settings to help them meet current Government dietary recommendations. This will include practical ideas and suggestions, alongside the sample menus.

In early 2017, the Department will launch a campaign to raise awareness of these guidelines amongst both early years practitioners and parents, as outlined in page 10 of the childhood obesity strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action>.

Ministers at the Department for Education have not held any meetings with the Children's Food Trust on revising menus for early years settings. A Department official took part in a meeting between PHE and CFT where the menus were discussed.

■ Pre-school Education: Southwark**Ms Harriet Harman:****[57195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to make more (a) early years teachers and (b) other qualified staff available in nurseries in the London Borough of Southwark.

Caroline Dineneage:

A well-qualified workforce in the early years is absolutely crucial. We recognise the importance of teachers in delivering good quality early years provision and the impact that high quality childcare has on children's outcomes.

The Government is committed to growing a high quality early years workforce across the country and we are currently developing a workforce strategy to help remove the barriers to attracting, retaining and developing excellent staff in our early years settings. We plan to publish the strategy in the new year.

■ Pre-school Education: Staff

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timetable is for her Department's response to its consultation on the numeracy and literacy requirements of Level 3 early years workers.

Caroline Dineneage:

A well-qualified workforce in the early years is absolutely crucial and that is why the Government has committed to developing a workforce strategy which will help employers attract, retain and develop staff to deliver high quality provision.

This will include a response to a recent consultation the Department published on the literacy & numeracy qualification requirements for level 3 Early Years Educator staff. This consultation closed on 28 November 2016 and received over 4,000 responses.

The Department is currently analysing the responses and a government response will be published in the new year.

■ Pupil Exclusions

Catherine West: [\[57874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools were reported to her Department for the improper recording of pupil exclusions in the last 12 months.

Edward Timpson:

The Department for Education does not currently hold data on the improper reporting of pupil exclusions.

■ Pupil Premium

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will ensure that the findings of Ofsted inspections on whether providers spend funds allocated for their Early Years Pupil Premium effectively are made publicly available.

Caroline Dineneage:

Where at least one child in an early years setting is eligible for additional funding, such as the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Ofsted will track and assess how effectively that funding has been spent when gathering all of the inspection evidence necessary to

judge the overall effectiveness of the provider. All Ofsted reports are published and made available on their website. The specific findings on how the EYPP is spent, may be part of the published report but Ofsted has the discretion not to publish such findings in the public inspection report in every case, for example to preserve confidentiality where only small numbers of children attract the funding.

We are currently conducting a Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) into the effectiveness of the EYPP and also a survey to explore how providers use their early entitlement funding, including the EYPP, to address disadvantage and deprivation within their settings. Both reports are due for completion in the new year.

■ Schools: Closures

Steve McCabe: [\[57746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2016 to Question 55853, who records the cost of school closures.

Nick Gibb:

The Local Authority is responsible for the cost of the closure of local authority maintained schools. The Academy Trust and the Department for Education is responsible for the cost of closing an academy. However, these costs are not collected centrally.

■ Schools: Costs

Mike Kane: [\[57562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data her Department holds on projected increases in costs for schools over the next five years.

Nick Gibb:

We want schools to have the resources they need so that every child has access to an education that develops their potential. We have protected the core schools budget in real terms overall. In 2016-17 it will be the largest ever on record, totalling over £40 billion.

We are introducing a national fair funding formula so schools are funded according to their pupils' needs. This will give head teachers certainty over their future budgets, helping them make long term plans and secure further efficiencies.

Like other public services, we recognise the increasing cost pressures schools are facing, for example from pay increases and employers' contributions to National Insurance and pensions. On a per pupil basis, these pressures are estimated at around 8% between 2016-17 and 2019-20. They sit alongside significant scope for efficiency in the system – on procurement and back office spend, where we have set an ambition of at least £1 billion of savings by 2019-20, and through better deployment and use of the workforce.

We have already published a wide range of tools and support to help schools be more efficient and financially healthy, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>.

We will continue to provide advice and support to help schools use their funding in cost effective ways, and improve the way they buy goods and services, so they get the best possible value for their pupils.

■ Schools: Sponsorship

Lucy Powell:

[51314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many grammar schools (a) sponsor academy schools, (b) sponsor free schools or (c) run multi-academy trusts; and what the Ofsted grades are for each school sponsored by a (i) university or (ii) multi-academy trust run by a university.

Nick Gibb:

1. As at 1 October 2016 there were 14 sponsoring academy trusts established by grammar schools sponsoring a total of 30 academies. All 14 trusts are multi academy trusts (MATs).
2. There is one free school sponsored by a grammar school.
3. There are 32 grammar schools that are part of a multi academy trust.
4. The Ofsted categories for each school sponsored by a university are as follows:

OFSTED CATEGORY	NO. OF ACADEMIES	NO. OF FREE SCHOOLS	TOTAL
Outstanding	0	2	2
Good	9	2	11
Requires Improvement	13	0	13
Inadequate	4	0	4
Not visited	12	12	24

Source: Ofsted MI – 30 September 2016

Lucy Powell:

[51315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many universities sponsor (a) academy schools, (b) free schools or (c) run multi-academy trusts; and what the Ofsted grades are for each school sponsored by a (i) university or (ii) multi-academy trust run by a university.

Nick Gibb:

1. As at 1 October 2016 there were 17 sponsoring academy trusts established by universities sponsoring a total of 38 academies.
2. There are 16 free schools sponsored or co-sponsored by universities.
3. Of the 38 academies being sponsored by universities, 33 are part of a multi academy trust.
4. The Ofsted categories for each school sponsored by a university are as follows:

OFSTED CATEGORY	NO. OF ACADEMIES	NO. OF FREE SCHOOLS	TOTAL
Outstanding	0	2	2
Good	9	2	11
Requires Improvement	13	0	13
Inadequate	4	0	4
Not visited	12	12	24

Source: Ofsted MI – 30 September 2016

Angela Rayner: [\[57500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many independent schools sponsor state schools.

Edward Timpson:

As at 01 November 2016 eight independent schools sponsor academies and three independent schools have established free schools.

■ Sixth Form Education: Admissions

Sir Gerald Howarth: [\[57355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average GCSE score is of students currently enrolled at (a) sixth form colleges and (b) school and academy sixth forms in England.

Nick Gibb:

The requested information for pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 in the academic year 2014/15 is given in the following table:

AVERAGE GCSE ATTAINMENT^[1] ^[2] OF PUPILS AT THE END OF KEY STAGE 5 IN 2015 BY SCHOOL TYPE

School type	Number of eligible pupils ^[3]	Average capped ^[4] GCSE and equivalents point score per pupil	Percentage of students achieving 5A*-C in English and mathematics GCSEs including equivalents
Sixth form colleges	64,579	381.2	81.7
All state-funded schools ^[5]	181,223	390.8	84.1

Source 16-18 attainment data

[1]In 2013/14, two major reforms were implemented which affect the calculation of key stage 4 performance measures data: 1) Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational

Education recommendations which: restrict the qualifications counted; prevent any qualification from counting as larger than one GCSE; and cap the number of non-GCSEs included in performance measures at two per pupil, and 2) an early entry policy to only count a pupil's first attempt at a qualification, in subjects counted in the English Baccalaureate. Consequently, the numbers supplied prior to 2013/14 are not comparable with those from 2013/14 onwards.

[2] In 2014/15, early entry policy, under which only a pupil's first attempt at a qualification is counted in performance measures, was extended to all subjects.

[3] Covers students at the end of advanced level study who were entered for at least one substantial advanced level academic or vocational qualification in the 2014/15 academic year: substantial advanced level academic or vocational qualifications are defined as qualifications that are at least the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year), such as a BTEC subsidiary diploma level 3. If a vocational or academic qualification is similar in size to 2 A levels it will be counted as 2 substantial level 3 qualifications. In order to be included in this table, pupils also needed a valid end of key stage 4 record, therefore the number of eligible pupils is lower than that published in the key stage 5 SFR.

[4] Average capped point scores are calculated using the best 8 GCSE or equivalent results.

[5] Includes school and academy sixth-forms

■ Social Services: Vacancies

Louise Haigh:

[57737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many social worker vacancies there are in (a) each discipline, (b) each region and (c) Sheffield.

Edward Timpson:

Information on the number of local authority children's social work vacancies in local authorities in England is collected on an annual basis as at 30 September. The most recent data as at 30 September 2015 was published by the Department for Education on 25 February 2016 and is available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-work-workforce-2015>

Information on the number of local authority adult social worker vacancies as at 30 September 2015 was similarly published by NHS digital in February 2016 and is available online at:

<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/article/2021/Website-Search?productid=20238&q=personal+social+services&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1&area=both#top>

■ Special Educational Needs: Ashfield

Gloria De Piero:

[57930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many primary school pupils in Ashfield constituency qualify for SEN funding.

Edward Timpson:

In January 2016, 939 of 9,413 pupils (10.0%) in primary schools in Ashfield constituency were identified with special educational needs (SEN). These pupils will have either a learning difficulty or a disability which requires educational provision which is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age. It includes both those pupils benefiting from a statutory plan (either a Statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care plan) and those in receipt of SEN Support. All of those identified with SEN are provided with additional help in school (special educational provision), but data is not available on the numbers in receipt of additional funding that is provided by the local authority and the numbers who receive their support through the school budget.

■ **Students: Finance****Fiona Mactaggart:**[\[57407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applicants for student finance for the 2016-17 academic year are still awaiting a decision; and how many of those applicants are awaiting an immigration status check before their eligibility can be decided.

Joseph Johnson:

As of 13 December 2016, 1,342 customers are awaiting an immigration status check with the Home Office before their eligibility can be decided.

The Home Office works to an agreement to confirm decisions on eligibility for student funding within 10 working days. Regulatory changes that created a new long residency category of customers made earlier in 2016 have resulted in an increase in numbers of customers being referred for checks with the Home Office. This has led to an increase in processing times for such checks. Extra resource has now been provided to increase the volume completed by 25% per day.

It is the responsibility of individual students to provide the necessary evidence in support of their application. My officials are working with the Home Office to explore what additional support or alternative solutions can be provided to increase the speed of immigration status checks.

■ **Teach First****Angela Rayner:**[\[57944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of Teach First graduates from each of the last three years are teaching in state schools in England broken down by (a) region and (b) subject.

Nick Gibb:

Teach First have advised that the following numbers of former participants are currently teaching in state schools in England:

- Of the 2014 cohort, 1183 completed all elements of the 2 year programme. 709 were in teaching in September 2016 in state schools in England, which is 60%.
- Of the 2013 cohort, 981 completed all elements of the 2 year programme. 557 were in teaching in September 2016 in state schools in England, which is 57%.

- Of the 2012 cohort, 758 completed all elements of the 2 year programme. 410 were in teaching in September 2016 in state schools in England, which is 54%.

The tables below show the teaching locations of those who completed all elements of the Teach First programme in the last three years and the breakdown by subject at the time of achieving Qualified Teacher Status, both as of December 2016.

	COHORT YEAR	COHORT YEAR	COHORT YEAR
Region	2012	2013	2014
East Midlands	26	30	42
East of England	18	10	23
London	193	266	321
North East	10	22	24
North West	44	45	55
South East	15	29	39
South West	10	35	42
West Midlands	47	58	85
Yorkshire and The Humber	47	62	78
QTS SUBJECT	2012	2013	2014
Business Studies	6	7	8
Citizenship	1	3	0
Design and Technology	1	2	6
Early Years	0	9	17
English	94	132	162
Geography	11	22	26
History	18	22	32
ICT	7	5	7
Maths	67	105	105
MFL	29	42	47
Music	10	10	6

QTS SUBJECT	2012	2013	2014
Primary	79	105	177
Religious Studies	7	13	10
Science	80	80	106

Angela Rayner: [\[57945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Teach First graduates were placed in schools in 2016 to date broken down by region.

Nick Gibb:

Teach First have advised that 4,132 participants were placed in schools from 1 January 2016.

REGION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
London	1,705
North West	318
West Midlands	559
East Midlands	260
Yorkshire and the Humber	436
North East	190
South East	237
South West	146
South Coast	132
East of England	149
Total	4,132

■ Teachers: Graduates

Stephen Timms: [\[57606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to encourage graduates with a first class degree into the teaching profession; and if she will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to recruiting the most talented graduates to enter Initial Teacher Training (ITT). We offer a range of financial incentives to attract the best graduates into teaching. In September 2016, we announced tax-free bursaries for those

training in 2017/18. In several subjects and primary, trainees with a first class degree are eligible for the highest bursary. We also offer prestigious scholarships in chemistry, computing, geography, languages, maths and physics, delivered in partnership with the professional bodies for these subjects. These are aimed at top graduates, particularly those with first class degrees, who have the potential to be outstanding teachers. In addition, the Government continues to support the growth of Teach First, a two-year teacher training programme recruiting high quality graduates, 21% with first class degrees and 71% from Russell Group universities in 2016/17, to train in schools in some of the most deprived areas of the country.

The most recent ITT Census figures show that the quality of entrants continues to be high, with 18% of this year's postgraduate cohort holding a first class degree. This proportion is unchanged since last year, is the highest on record and is up from 10% in 2010/11.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover

Mike Kane: [57366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the retention rate is for newly qualified teachers who were recorded in service between November 2014 and November 2015; and how many such teachers entered service in that time period.

Nick Gibb:

There were 24,200 newly qualified teachers (that qualified during the 2014 calendar year) who were in service in a state funded school in England by November 2014. Of these, 87% were still in post one year later in November 2015.

This information is published in Table 8 of the 'School Workforce in England: November 2015' statistical release which is available at the following web link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-workforce>

■ Teachers: Qualifications

Angela Rayner: [57946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many unqualified teachers taught in classrooms in the last year for which data is available.

Nick Gibb:

In November 2015, there were 22,500 full-time equivalent teachers without Qualified Teacher Status employed by state funded schools in England. This is the latest information available.

This information is published in Table 3a of the 'School Workforce in England: November 2015' statistical release available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015>

Those without Qualified Teacher Status includes employment-based trainees on, for example, School Direct (Salaried) and Teach First. The total number of teachers without Qualified Teacher Status represents 4.9% of all full-time equivalent teachers employed by state funded schools in England.

■ Teachers: Training

Angela Rayner: [57947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applicants there were to School Direct in 2016; how many of those applications were successful; how many schools participated; and what the total cost was of the scheme to her Department.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not publish data on the number of applicants to Initial Teacher Training. UCAS, who own this data, does release figures for applications to School Direct but not applicants, and an applicant can have up to three applications. The data is available at:

<https://www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/ucas-teacher-training-releases>.

There were a total of 10,629 trainees on a School Direct course in 2016/17, and further details of how this breaks down can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2016-to-2017>

These trainees were recruited through 818 School Direct partnerships, each of which is formed of a minimum of five schools. We are unable to say how many schools are involved because some trainees do multiple placements during the year.

The total cost of the scheme to the department for 2016 will not be available until after the end of the academic year when data submissions will be finalised and subsequently validated.

■ Teachers: Vacancies

Mike Kane: [57367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teacher vacancies there are in each (a) phase and (b) region.

Nick Gibb:

In November 2015, there were 350 full-time teacher vacancies in primary schools, 310 full-time teacher vacancies in secondary schools and 70 full-time teacher vacancies in special schools and pupil referral units – this is the latest information available and covers state funded schools in England.

Table 14 of the 'School Workforce in England: November 2015' statistical release contains the detailed breakdown and time series of the vacancy data collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census. The statistical release is available at the following web link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015>

The number of full-time teacher vacancies in each region is in the following table. The data is published within the additional tables at the above link.

■ Written Questions: Government Responses

Lucy Powell: [\[53090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to answer Questions 51314 and 51315, tabled by the hon. Member for Manchester Central on 1 November 2016 for Answer on 4 November 2016.

Nick Gibb:

Parliamentary questions 51314 and 51315 were answered on 20 December 2016.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Rachael Maskell: [\[57962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people who made a claim to the Basic Payment Scheme in (a) 2015 and (b) 2016 are yet to receive a payment for either claim.

George Eustice:

As at the 20 December, in addition to claims which the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) cannot pay due to legal reasons such as probate, all but 6 claimants had received a payment for BPS 2015. In addition the RPA is investigating new queries it has received.

For BPS 2016, the RPA announced that over 68,200 farmers in England have now received a 2016 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payment. The payments to some 79% of eligible claimants, worth £1.14 billion, include a range of 2016 BPS claim types and sizes, including claimants under the young farmer scheme, those inspected and farmers with common land.

Rachael Maskell: [\[57964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (a) how many and (b) what proportion of Basic Payment Scheme claims made in 2016 to date have been paid.

George Eustice:

On 20 December, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) announced that over 68,200 farmers in England have now received a 2016 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payment.

The payments to some 79% of eligible claimants, worth £1.14 billion, include a range of 2016 BPS claim types and sizes, including claimants under the young farmer scheme, those inspected and farmers with common land.

■ Animal Welfare

Rachael Maskell: [\[57474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of animal welfare standards in animal sanctuaries; what plans she has to provide for regulatory oversight of animal sanctuaries; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The welfare of animals in sanctuaries is provided for under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal or to fail to provide for an animal's welfare needs. The Government supports moves by the sector to apply minimum standards in addition to the code of practice for the operation of animal sanctuaries and rehoming centres which the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes has developed. The Government does not currently have plans to make animal sanctuaries subject to specific regulations.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis**Caroline Lucas:**[\[57987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she has taken to comply with the recommendation in the Chief Veterinary Officer's advice on the outcome of the 2015 badger culls, published in December 2015, paragraph 12, that consideration should be given to monitoring the disease status of badgers; what (a) proportion and (b) number of badgers from each cull from the current 10 culls have been examined post-mortem to assess prevalence of bovine tuberculosis; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

This year a pilot study was started to explore ways in which badger carcasses obtained from the cull could be used to gather long term information on levels of disease in badgers. A number of carcasses from nine of the areas are being sampled and testing methodologies are being piloted. Findings, including the number of carcasses tested, will be published in due course.

■ Cadmium: Pollution**Dr Andrew Murrison:**[\[57715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had with (a) her EU counterparts, (b) the EU Commission and (c) sedimentary phosphate exporters on mitigating the effect of cadmium reduction in phosphate fertilisers set in the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council COM(2016)157/F1.

George Eustice:

The Secretary of State has not directly discussed the proposal with her EU counterparts, the Commission, or sedimentary phosphate exporters. Defra officials continue to represent UK interests at Council working group with the Commission on the negotiations for the draft regulation first proposed in March 2016. Defra has involved a range of stakeholders including representatives of sedimentary phosphate exporters. A Council First Reading position is expected to be voted upon by Ministers at a Competitiveness Council in early 2017.

Dr Andrew Murrison:[\[57717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to UK agriculture of the reduction in cadmium within

phosphate fertiliser set out in the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council COM(2016)157/F1.

George Eustice:

Defra officials have involved UK farmers, fertiliser manufacturers, and sedimentary phosphate rock exporters on the proposal to set limits on the cadmium content of EC fertilisers. The process of removing cadmium from phosphate rock on an industrial scale is still in development and therefore the precise impact on phosphate costs is not yet known.

■ **Cats: Sales**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[57410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will develop a clear definition of commercial pet sales to protect the welfare of cats and kittens.

George Eustice:

The Government is currently reviewing the laws on the selling of pet animals. Issues relating to the definition of a business constitute part of those considerations.

■ **Deer**

Angela Smith:

[\[56614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what legal requirements govern the importation, movement and keeping of reindeer in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice

Reindeer are protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. It is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering and for keepers to fail to ensure their needs are met to the extent required by good practice. Defra has a welfare Code for farmed deer which offers guidance on their health and welfare, some of which would also be applicable to reindeer.

Certain diseases affecting reindeer are notifiable. These diseases include foot and mouth disease, bluetongue and chronic wasting disease. We are aware of suspected cases of chronic wasting disease which have been disclosed in wild reindeer, and potentially also moose, in Norway. Exports of deer species, including reindeer and moose, have subsequently been banned from Norway and Sweden by the EU Commission as a special measure to protect deer species elsewhere in the EU.

Imports of reindeer from the rest of the EU to the UK are subject to the import controls outlined below:

They must be identified in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of Council Directive 92/65/EEC and be registered by the competent authority in such a way that the holding of origin can be traced.

They must not be intended for slaughter under a programme for the eradication of an infectious disease.

They must not have been vaccinated against foot and mouth disease and must satisfy the control measures to be applied in the event of a foot and mouth outbreak.

They must not come into contact with ungulates other than those of a similar health status.

They must come from a holding that is not subject to any restrictions for animal health reasons.

They must have been kept on the holding of origin since birth or for at least 30 days, before despatch.

They must come from an officially tuberculosis-free/officially brucellosis-free herd/holding or from a holding where it/they was/were subjected with negative results to the tests laid down in Article 6(2)(b) [tuberculosis and brucellosis] of Council Directive 92/65/EEC.

If both the destination and origin of the animals are establishments approved in accordance with Annex C of the Balai Directive, the consignment should be accompanied by the certificate laid down in Annex E III of Council Directive 92/65/EEC. Otherwise, the consignment must be accompanied by the certificate corresponding to the specimen given in Annex E I to Council Directive 92/65/EEC, signed by an official veterinary surgeon of the country of origin.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff

Jake Berry: [\[57008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

George Eustice:

I refer the hon. Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

Helen Whately: [\[57140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what measures her Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

George Eustice:

Mental wellbeing forms a key theme in Defra's employee Wellbeing Framework. The framework provides a structure for the Department to actively promote staff wellbeing, with a particular focus on reducing the incidence of stress and mental ill-health, while increasing awareness and empowering individuals to raise issues at an early stage. Our proactive approach to supporting staff with mental ill-health includes:

- reducing stigma around mental health and stress
- offering a wide range of e-learning packages and classroom training for managers and employees on mental health related topics
- promoting our Employee Assistance Provider

- empowering and providing budget for our employee-led staff network called Break the Stigma to support colleagues with stress or mental-ill health
- ensuring Line Managers have the resources, capability and skills to support individuals with mental ill-health. This includes robust attendance management guidance which advises early referral to Occupational Health.

■ Sugar: Labelling

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[58007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on the labelling of sugar in food products of the UK exiting the EU.

George Eustice:

The UK will continue to have all of the rights, obligations and benefits that membership brings, up until the point we leave the EU. The Food Information Regulations 2014 regulate food labelling. These Regulations implement the EU Food Information to Consumers Regulation 1169/2011. The Government is currently considering future arrangements for existing EU legislation in preparation for the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Chris Leslie:

[\[57211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, in what format and by what date he plans to publish his Department's plan for the UK's negotiations on exiting the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

We will set out our broad plans before triggering Article 50 by the end of next March, repeating the proviso as agreed by the House on 12 October 2016, without division, confirmed on the 7th December, that nothing we do or say should undermine the UK's negotiating position.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Pay

Jake Berry:

[\[56987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

Jake Berry:

[\[57031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Mr Robin Walker:

Government departments do not publish details of the salary of their highest to lowest paid employees.

The Office for National Statistics do, however, publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organisation. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics. Due to the timing of the exercise the Department for Exiting the European Union was not included in this year's figures but this information can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Staff

Jake Berry: [57009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Mr Robin Walker:

I refer the hon. Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

Helen Whately: [57141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department for Exiting the European Union is committed to ensuring staff with mental health problems do not face any barriers to success. The Department has two dedicated disability champions and an equalities network to provide support. We are also in the process of introducing training for a number of our staff to enable them to become mental health first aiders. The Department is putting plans in place to ensure the steps established in the 2016 Talent Action Plan are in place in order to help the Civil Service become the most inclusive employer in the UK.

■ Devolution

Jonathan Edwards: [57306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether it is the Government's policy that all powers not explicitly reserved to Westminster under the devolution settlements will be directly transferred to the devolved administrations after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government is absolutely committed to working with the Devolved Administrations as we prepare for our negotiations with the EU. This is exactly why we have set up a new Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations, which brings together constituent parts of the United Kingdom to develop a UK-wide approach to our negotiations and to discuss issues stemming from the negotiation process which may impact upon or have consequences for the UK Government, the Scottish

Government, the Welsh Government or the Northern Ireland Executive. Where powers should best sit will be a matter for further consultation and discussion across the United Kingdom.

■ Energy: Northern Ireland

Stephen Gethins:

[\[57984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK's agreement with the EU does not impede Northern Ireland's connections with the energy markets of other European countries.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government recognises the critical arrangements for energy in Northern Ireland. EU exit will not change the importance of either the trade which takes place in the Single Electricity Market on the island of Ireland, or the arrangements for the importation of gas. We remain supportive of the development of a new North/South interconnector and recognise that there is strong support in Northern Ireland and Ireland to see this happen.

■ European Economic Area: Membership

Chris Leslie:

[\[57213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the UK remaining a member of the European Economic Area.

Mr Robin Walker:

We want to see UK companies having the maximum freedom to trade with and operate in the Single Market, and for EU companies to be able to do the same here.

We are currently looking at all the options. To support this work, officials across Government are carrying out a programme of sectoral and regulatory analysis, which will identify the key factors for UK businesses and the labour force that will affect our negotiations with the EU. They are looking in detail at over 50 sectors as well as cross-cutting regulatory issues.

As the UK is party to the EEA agreement only in its capacity as an EU member state, once we leave the European Union the EEA agreement will automatically cease to apply to the UK. The model we are seeking is one unique to the United Kingdom and not an off the shelf solution.

■ Natural Gas

Stephen Gethins:

[\[57985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his Department plans to keep the UK in EU-wide arrangements for sharing natural gas in the event of crises after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

New proposals on EU-wide arrangements for sharing natural gas have been proposed by the Commission and are now being negotiated by EU Member States, including the UK.

The UK is currently considering its future relationship with the EU following the result of the EU Referendum and this includes the arrangements for sharing natural gas in the event of a crisis.

■ Republic of Ireland

Martin Docherty-Hughes: [\[57344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, when he or Ministers of his Department last met the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to discuss the Ireland Act 1949 and the rights of Irish citizens after the UK leaves the European Union.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State and I visited Dublin on 8 September 2016. While in Dublin, we had constructive talks with Charles Flanagan TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as with business leaders. Various issues were discussed, including the future of the border.

As set out in the letter the Secretary of State sent to the Honourable Gentleman on 29 November 2016 on this issue, it is the Government's intention to protect the existing rights enjoyed by UK and Irish nationals when in the other State, and to maintain existing border arrangements provided for by the Common Travel Area once the UK has left the EU. Leaders in the UK and Ireland have been unequivocal in their commitment to this shared intent.

■ UK Trade with EU

Chris Leslie: [\[57205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether it is his policy to negotiate a transitional agreement with the EU so that existing trading arrangements for UK companies will be able to continue beyond 1 April 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Prime Minister has said we want a smooth and orderly exit from the EU, and to provide certainty where we can. How the government achieves that will depend on the nature of the negotiations and the agreement reached with the EU, but it would not be in the interests of either side— Britain or the EU – to see disruption. The government is considering all possible options, focusing on the mutual interests of the UK and the EU.

Philip Davies: [\[57507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what estimate he has made of the amount of tariffs that would have to be paid by (a) UK businesses to access the EU market and (b) EU businesses to access the UK market according to WTO rules.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government wants to give UK companies the maximum freedom to trade with and operate in the Single Market – and let European businesses do the same here.

The Department for Exiting the European Union, working with officials across government, continues to undertake wide-ranging data analysis looking at over 50 sectors as well as cross-cutting regulatory issues. The Department is also engaging

widely with representatives from sectors. This work will inform the UK's position for the upcoming negotiations with the EU.

■ **Working Hours: EU Law**

Chris Elmore:

[\[57877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if it is Government policy to retain the Working Time Directive after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government intends to bring all existing EU law in this area, including case law, under UK law at the point of exit through the Great Repeal Bill.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Ali Salman**

Andy Slaughter:

[\[57417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the government of Bahrain on the detention of Sheikh Ali Salman.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and our Embassy in Bahrain continue to monitor Sheikh Ali Salman's case closely. Embassy officials have attended every trial hearing so far. Where we have concerns we continue to raise them with the Government of Bahrain, and we continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments.

■ **Cameroon: Schools**

Rob Marris:

[\[57354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the government of Cameroon on French-speaking teachers teaching in schools in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The British High Commission in Yaoundé is following the situation closely and has called for restraint and encouraged dialogue. The High Commissioner chaired a meeting with the US, French, Canadians and the EU on 1 December to discuss this matter. The UK supports the independent investigation by the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms into the violence and deaths in Bamenda. The UK believes that all parties have a responsibility to uphold and protect the peace and stability of Cameroon and that legal and peaceful means should be used to voice any grievances. The violence has abated and we hope for a swift and peaceful resolution of this matter.

■ Extradition: Homicide and Sexual Offences

Stella Creasy: [\[57769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for how many British citizens his Department has made representations in foreign courts regarding extradition of foreign nationals to the UK for (a) sexual assault, (b) murder and (c) cases involving both sexual assault and murder in the last 10 years.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) hold statistics on the volume of British nationals who received Consular assistance from 2010 onwards. We have provided assistance to British nationals in the following number of cases since 2010:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (UNTIL 30/11/16)
Rape & sexual assaults	276	276	305	270	253	281	261
Murder	68	78	53	78	84	88	56

Extradition requests are taken forward through a formal legal process between states, which is led by the Home Office. We do not hold records of those cases in which the FCO has supported formal extradition requests.

Stella Creasy: [\[57780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for how many British citizens his Department has made representations in foreign courts related to the extradition of foreign nationals to the UK for (a) sexual assault, (b) murder and (c) cases involving both sexual assault and murder in the last 10 years.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The FCO hold statistics on the volume of British nationals who received Consular assistance from 2010 onwards. We have provided assistance to British nationals in the following number of cases since 2010:

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Extradition requests are taken forward through a formal legal process between states, which is led by the Home Office. We do not hold records of those cases in which the FCO has supported formal extradition requests.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Staff**

Jake Berry: [\[57010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The FCO's Departmental Board (the Supervisory Board) does not have worker representation.

The FCO's monthly Management Board has a long-standing tradition of inviting staff from the UK and overseas to observe each meeting. The FCO also has a representative from seniority band attending its recently established Staff Engagement Committee. Views from the Committee will be represented at the Management Board.

Helen Whately: [\[57125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We have in place a number of support offers including the provision of ongoing medical and welfare support for staff in the UK and those posted overseas; a dedicated disability support team, occupational health advice and a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Visits Abroad**

Emily Thornberry: [\[57636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) China, (b) Japan, (c) India, (d) South Korea and (e) Brazil in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016; and what the (A) total, (B) transport, (C) accommodation and (D) expenses costs were for Ministers and staff for each such visit.

Emily Thornberry: [\[57637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) France, (b) Germany, (c) Italy, (d) Spain and (e) the Netherlands in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016; and what the (A) total, (B) transport, (C) accommodation and (D) expenses costs were for Ministers and staff for each such visit.

Emily Thornberry: [\[57643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) Trinidad and Tobago, (b) Antigua and Barbuda, (c) Jamaica, (d) Barbados and (e) the Bahamas in each year since 2014; and what the cost to the public purse was of (i) transport, (ii) accommodation and (iii) expenses of each of those such visits for (A) Ministers and (B) accompanying staff.

Emily Thornberry: [57644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) Argentina, (b) Chile, (c) Uruguay, (d) Venezuela and (e) Colombia in each year since 2014; and what the cost to the public purse was of (i) transport, (ii) accommodation and (iii) expenses of each of those such visits for (A) Ministers and (B) accompanying staff.

Emily Thornberry: [57645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) Nigeria, (b) South Africa, (c) Kenya, (d) Tanzania and (e) Ghana in each year since 2014; and what the cost to the public purse was of (i) transport, (ii) accommodation and (iii) expenses of each of those such visits for (A) Ministers and (B) accompanying staff.

Emily Thornberry: [57681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) Iraq, (b) Afghanistan, (c) Libya, (d) Egypt and (e) Somalia in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016; and what the cost to the public purse was of (A) transport, (B) accommodation and (C) expenses of each of those such visits for (1) Ministers and (2) accompanying staff for each such visit.

Emily Thornberry: [57682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) Saudi Arabia, (b) Bahrain, (c) Oman, (d) Qatar and (e) the United Arab Emirates in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016; and what the cost to the public purse was of (A) transport, (B) accommodation and (C) expenses of each of those such visits for (1) Ministers and (2) accompanying staff for each such visit.

Emily Thornberry: [57683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits were made by Ministers to (a) Russia, (b) Iran, (c) Turkey, (d) Israel and (e) Pakistan in each year in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016; and what the cost to the public purse was of (A) transport, (B) accommodation and (C) expenses of each of those such visits for (1) Ministers and (2) accompanying staff for each such visit.

Boris Johnson:

All information regarding Ministerial travel and expenses incurred can be seen in the Quarterly Transparency review found [here](#).

■ Giulio Regeni

Daniel Zeichner: [57476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent progress the Government has made on its response to the murder of Giulio Regeni.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Government continues to monitor the investigation into Giulio Regeni's death, and we note that an Egyptian delegation visited Rome 6-7 December to discuss the

investigation with the Italian authorities. The Minister for the Middle East and Africa, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Egypt, and senior officials in London have raised Mr Regeni's case with the Egyptian and Italian authorities, and the Prime Minister discussed the case with former Prime Minister Renzi. We stand ready to assist the Italian authorities in any further way we can.

■ Israel: Demolition

Mrs Anne Main: [\[57280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 13 November 2015 to Question 15102, what recent representations the British Embassy in Tel Aviv has made to Israeli authorities since the Israeli government demolition order in November 2016 of the Bedouin village in Umm al-Hiran in the Negev.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I raised concerns about plans to demolish the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran when I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador on 23 November. Although the demolition did not happen before 30 November, the threat remains. The UK continues to call on the Israeli authorities and Bedouin community to work together to find a solution that meets the needs and respects the rights of the people affected.

■ Israel: Legislation

Matthew Pennycook: [\[57121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the Regulations Bill in that country since 7 December 2016.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I raised the issue with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister when we met in London on 12 December. I have also raised the issue with the Israeli ambassador to London and have issued two press statements on the issue. The UK is extremely concerned that the Knesset has passed the first reading of a bill which would expropriate privately owned Palestinian land and pave the way for a significant further expansion of settlements in the West Bank. This would be illegal under international law, and once again calls into question the Israeli government's commitment to a two-state solution. The UK urges the Israeli government to reconsider the land regulation bill at the earliest opportunity.

■ Pakistan: Minority Groups

Paul Scully: [\[56971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations his Department has made to the government of Pakistan on the raid on the Tahrik Jadid Headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Rabwah, Pakistan.

Alok Sharma:

We are aware of reports of the raid on the Ahmadiyya office in Pakistan. The Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting

of people based on their beliefs. Our concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual human rights report.

We regularly raise our concerns about the protection of minority communities, including religious minorities, with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. During his visit to Pakistan in November, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), raised religious tolerance and the importance of safeguarding the rights of all Pakistan's citizens. We continue to urge Pakistan to honour in practice its human rights obligations, including those related to religious minorities, and to uphold the rule of law.

Tom Brake: [\[57053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Pakistani High Commissioner on the security of Ahmadis in Pakistan since the attack on the Ahmadi mosque in Chakwal.

Alok Sharma:

We condemn the attack on the Ahmadi Mosque in Chakwal on 12 December. Our concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual human rights report.

We regularly raise our concerns about the protection of minority communities, including religious minorities, with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. During his visit to Pakistan in November, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), raised religious tolerance and the importance of safeguarding the rights of all Pakistan's citizens. We continue to urge Pakistan to honour in practice its human rights obligations, including those related to religious minorities, and to uphold the rule of law.

Tom Brake: [\[57256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Pakistani High Commissioner on the reported raid of the Ahmadiyya Headquarters in Pakistan.

Alok Sharma:

We are aware of reports of attacks on the Ahmadiyya community and the raids which took place on 5 December in Pakistan. The Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their beliefs. Our concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual human rights report.

We regularly raise our concerns about the protection of minority communities, including religious minorities, with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. During his visit to Pakistan in November, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), raised religious tolerance and the importance of safeguarding the rights of all Pakistan's citizens. We continue to urge Pakistan to honour in practice its human rights obligations, including those related to religious minorities, and to uphold the rule of law.

■ Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[57938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations the UK Government has made to the government of Pakistan on (a) the treatment of Ahmadiyya Muslims in that country and (b) the reported raid on the offices of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Rabwah on 5 December 2016 by that country's Counter Terrorism Department.

Alok Sharma:

I am aware of the raid on the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Rabwah on 5 December. The Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their beliefs. Our concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual human rights report.

The Government regularly raises our concerns about the protection of minority communities, including religious minorities, with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. During his visit to Pakistan in November, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), raised religious tolerance and the importance of safeguarding the rights of all Pakistan's citizens. The Government continues to urge Pakistan to honour in practice its human rights obligations, including those related to religious minorities, and to uphold the rule of law.

■ Palestinians: Fire and Rescue Services

Andy Slaughter:

[R] [57093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities on donation of equipment and supplies made by the Fire Brigades Union to assist Palestinian firefighters.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have been in touch with the Israeli authorities to ascertain the correct procedures which need to be followed to meet Israel's customs requirements. They have been in regular contact with the Fire Brigades Union, and provided advice on the correct steps which need to be followed to proceed with the shipment.

■ Prisoners: British Nationals Abroad

Patrick Grady:

[57794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens detained in prison in other countries, by country, in each year since 2010.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) collects global statistics twice a year on the number British nationals detained overseas.

Detainees may choose not to notify the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate on arrest.

The table below provides a snapshot of detainee numbers when the FCO collected the data in Spring of each year.

	GLOBAL TOTAL OF DETAINEES
2010- Spring	2649
2011 - Spring	2346
2012 - Spring	2562
2013 - Spring	2758
2014 - Spring	2216
2015 - Spring	2205
2016 - Spring	2046

■ Russia: Sanctions

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[57816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to encourage the EU to put in place further sanctions against Russia.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The EU's economic sanctions against Russia have been renewed until July 2017 in order to maintain pressure on Russia to fully implement the Minsk Agreements. The UK Government remains clear that we must also maintain pressure on Russia over its actions in Syria, including the possibility of sanctions. The UK will continue work with our allies to maintain EU resolve on sanctions.

■ Seas and Oceans: British Overseas Territories

Stephen Gethins: [\[57115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to protect ocean habitats around Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Ascension Island Government has agreed a scientific plan to determine the exact location of an evidence-based Marine Protected Area, covering at least 50% of its waters, by 2019. The Government of Tristan da Cunha is currently considering options to develop a regime to deliver marine protection across its entire Maritime Zone, which will be underpinned by science and will meet both local economic and community needs. Through implementation of its commitment to establish a Blue Belt around the UK's Overseas Territories, the UK Government has committed £19.3m, over four years,

to support the management, surveillance and enforcement across those Territories with very large-scale Marine Protected Areas or other large-scale marine protection regimes (including both Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha), and the enhancement of existing marine protection measures in all the Territories.

■ **Spain: British Nationals Abroad**

Stella Creasy: [\[57768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what protocols are followed between British Consular services and Spanish police when British citizens report crimes involving sexual violence or harassment in that country.

Sir Alan Duncan:

In the event that a British citizen reports a crime involving sexual violence in Spain, the Spanish Guardia and police inform the British Embassy or the appropriate consulate if requested to do so by the affected individual. We take any report of rape or sexual assault seriously and will support the victim as soon as possible in a sensitive way. Our support includes information on local legal processes, a list of local lawyers and interpreters, and information on charities who may be able to offer additional support.

Stella Creasy: [\[57779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what protocols there are between British Consular services and the Spanish Guardia in the event that British citizens report crimes in Spain involving sexual violence or harassment.

Sir Alan Duncan:

In the event that a British citizen reports a crime involving sexual violence in Spain, the Spanish Guardia and police inform the British Embassy or the appropriate consulate if requested to do so by the affected individual. We take any report of rape or sexual assault seriously and will support the victim as soon as possible in a sensitive way. Our support includes information on local legal processes, a list of local lawyers and interpreters, and information on charities who may be able to offer additional support.

■ **Syria: Armed Conflict**

Dan Jarvis: [\[57777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Russian government on the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Foreign Secretary summoned the Russian Ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 15 December to discuss the situation in Syria. The Foreign Secretary made clear the British Government's concern over the actions of Russia in Syria, and in particular the situation in Aleppo where Russia has failed to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law.

Dan Jarvis: [\[57778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Syrian government on the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have had no contact with the Asad regime on the recent humanitarian crisis in Aleppo. We believe that the Asad regime has lost all legitimacy due to the atrocities it has committed against the Syrian people, including its besiegement of civilians, including in eastern Aleppo.

■ UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Catherine West: [\[57954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department took to support the seventh session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing which took place in New York from 12 to 15 December 2016.

Alok Sharma:

The UK has supported and participated in the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing since it was established in 2010. At the seventh session, the UK was represented by delegates based both in London and at the UK Mission to the United Nations in New York, and delivered a statement which set out UK policy. In advance of the meeting, officials worked closely with likeminded partners and representatives from civil society, and ensured that the UK position was reflected in EU statements. We will continue to engage constructively with the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and support the work of the Independent Expert to ensure greater enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

HEALTH

■ Barrett's Oesophagus: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon: [\[57470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been diagnosed with Barrett's oesophagus in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Bladder Cancer

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[58024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of the symptoms of bladder cancer.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[58025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of the symptoms of lung cancer.

David Mowat:

Public Health England (PHE) ran an awareness campaign for bladder cancer highlighting the most common symptom, 'blood in pee', in 2016. The national campaign ran from 16 February to 31 March.

In addition, PHE ran a respiratory symptoms 'Be Clear on Cancer' campaign, focusing on the symptoms of a persistent cough and inappropriate breathlessness, to encourage people with these symptoms to go to their general practitioner. The national campaign targeted heart disease, lung disease, including lung cancer and ran from 14 July to 16 October.

PHE is currently developing a generic approach which will enable us to cover a range of symptoms in one campaign. A regional pilot campaign to raise awareness of a range of abdominal symptoms that can indicate a wider number of cancers, including bladder, and the need to visit the doctor promptly with these symptoms will run from 9 February until 31 March 2017 in the East and West Midlands. This work has been developed with the help of a number of experts, including clinicians and charities.

As usual, the regional pilot will be evaluated and results will help inform decisions about whether to expand this campaign nationally in the future.

■ Blood: Contamination**Drew Hendry:****[57550]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the proportion of his Department's documents relating to the issue of contaminated blood products for haemophiliacs between 1970 and 1985 which have been destroyed.

Nicola Blackwood:

All papers that are available for the period 1970-85, amounting to over 5,500 documents, have been published on the Department's website. Papers from more than 30 years ago are already a matter of public record. In addition over 200 files of documents covering the period from 1986 to 1995 are available to the public through the National Archive.

In 2006 the Department commissioned a review of all the documents held between 1970-85 relating to blood safety. The review, titled: 'Review of documentation relating to the safety of blood products 1970-1985' was published in May 2007 and can be found at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_074950

Lord Archer's report following his independent Inquiry covered the inadvertent destruction of documents and made clear he "discovered no evidence of malicious destruction of relevant records".

Drew Hendry:**[57556]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on what date the Government first identified the risk of HIV to haemophiliacs posed by contaminated blood products.

Drew Hendry:

[57561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the elapse of time was between the identification of the risk of HIV in blood products for haemophiliacs and the introduction of safety measures to minimise that risk.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department was made aware of a paper prepared by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens in August 1983, which stated that there was “strong circumstantial evidence”, that AIDS may be transmitted by blood and blood products.

It was in December 1984 that commercial heat-treated factor VIII, which inactivated viruses, became available in any reasonable quantity and was implemented from January 1985. Testing of all blood donations for HIV was also introduced in 1985 when suitably validated, effective tests became available and was a key factor in protecting our supply.

New tests must be properly evaluated in terms of efficacy and the wider safety of the process, to ensure that the active element in a blood product (for example Factor VIII) is not compromised.

Before introducing heat treatment, it was critical that a full assessment and validation of the new process was carried out.

Ian Austin:

[57809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will establish an independent inquiry into deaths resulting from people receiving contaminated blood.

Nicola Blackwood:

There has been a comprehensive release of Government papers that has already taken place and the numerous statements made by Ministers in both Houses of Parliament on this issue.

Lord Archer of Sandwell and Lord Penrose have already separately undertaken thorough, independent inquiries within the last decade. Both inquiries did not find the governments of the day to have been at fault and did not apportion blame.

We do not believe that another inquiry would be in the best interests of sufferers and their families as it would be costly, it would further delay action to address their concerns, and would curtail plans to reform the existing support schemes. The Department has published all relevant information that it holds on blood safety, in line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ian Austin:

[57810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what reports he has received on allegations of impropriety in relation to doctors being encouraged, explicitly or implicitly, by pharmaceutical companies to use plasma concentrates instead of cryoprecipitate in blood transfusions which contributed to patients receiving contaminated blood.

Nicola Blackwood:

Officials are not aware of any reports relating to allegations of impropriety in relation to doctors being encouraged by any pharmaceutical company to use plasma concentrates

instead of cryoprecipitate in National Health Service-supplied blood transfusions, which contributed to patients being infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C.

■ Blood: Medical Treatments

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans NHS England has to review immunoglobulin therapies through its specialised commissioning prioritisation process.

David Mowat:

NHS England is planning to review the current immunoglobulin national guidelines which have not been updated since 2011. This will be carried out in conjunction with clinical leads and patient groups. Timelines for this piece of work are yet to be finalised.

■ Brain Cancer: Children

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[57986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the report of the Independent Cancer Taskforce, *Achieving world-class cancer outcomes: a strategy for England 2015-20*, published in July 2015, of the recommendation that Public Health England and NHS England should evaluate data from the HeadSmart programme to determine what factors influence late diagnosis of brain tumours in children; and whether tailored initiatives would be more appropriate for improved diagnosis rates.

David Mowat:

The Children's and Young People's Cancer Clinical Reference Group has begun to take forward the delivery of the recommendations relating to Children, Teenager and Young Adult cancers that were contained within the independent Cancer Taskforce report *Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: a Strategy for England 2015-2020* through a National Service Review. The Service Review aims to drive improvements in cancer outcomes and patient experience and will consider factors such as:

- the role and organisation of Principal Treatment Centres, Teenage and Young Adult Designated Hospitals and Share Care hospitals;
- how participation in clinical trials can be improved; and
- how holistic support can be improved.

The Service Review is now underway and further details of the work will be shared through the Cancer Programme of Care webpage.

We are aware that diagnosis of paediatric brain tumours present challenges in general practice and welcome the work of HeadSmart to increase awareness of symptoms that might be brain cancer.

■ Breast Cancer: Back Pain

Jim Shannon: [\[57468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with clinical bodies on back pain in women as a symptom of possible breast cancer.

David Mowat:

The Department has had no discussions with clinical bodies regarding back pain in women as a symptom of possible breast cancer.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published an updated suspected cancer referral guideline in June 2015, to support general practitioners (GPs) to identify patients and urgently refer them as appropriate, where cancer including breast cancer is suspected. NICE noted that more lives could be saved each year in England if GPs followed the new guideline, which encourages GPs to think of cancer sooner and lower the referral threshold. The scopes of NICE guidelines are developed through consultation with stakeholders, including patient groups.

More generally, Wave 2 of the Accelerate, Coordinate, Evaluate programme led by NHS England is under way, testing a new, multi-disciplinary diagnostic centre approach to diagnosing patients. The model is focused on patients with vague or unclear but concerning symptoms, to ensure they receive a diagnosis as quickly as possible. If successful, NHS England will work with Cancer Alliances to support wider roll out across the country in future years.

■ Breast Cancer: Drugs

Royston Smith: [\[57475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with clinicians on barriers to prescribing bisphosphonates to prevent secondary breast cancer.

David Mowat:

No such discussions have taken place.

Prescribing decisions are for clinicians taking into account their patients' individual clinical circumstances.

Bisphosphonates are not licensed for the treatment or prevention of secondary breast cancer. However clinicians can prescribe bisphosphonates 'off-license', subject to any local funding policies, if they consider them to be clinically appropriate for an individual. Current prescribing arrangements allow off-license drugs that are found to have new uses to be prescribed to patients.

There is no legal or regulatory barrier to prescribing drugs off license. Prescribing in this way is part of normal every day clinical practice and offers benefits to a great number of patients.

■ Cadmium

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[57716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council COM(2016)157/F1, what advice he plans to issue to consumers on the consumption of cadmium-rich food.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Food Standards Agency does not consider that general consumer advice on cadmium in food is necessary at this time. However the Food Standards Agency supports proportionate measures to reduce inputs of cadmium into the environment and to mitigate cadmium levels in food in order to reduce consumer exposure to this environmental contaminant to as low as is reasonably practicable.

■ Cancer

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[58012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the £200 million announced for early diagnosis in cancer by NHS England on 6 December 2016 will include funding for awareness initiatives.

David Mowat:

The £200 million will be available over the next two years to support earlier diagnosis and people living with and beyond cancer. Cancer alliances will bid for funding for specific local initiatives, which could include awareness campaigns, although funding has not been specifically set aside for this purpose.

Public Health England's (PHE) Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are designed to raise the public's awareness of specific cancer symptoms, encourage people with those symptoms to go to the doctor and diagnose cancer at an earlier stage. An early general practitioner visit can make a cancer more treatable, and thereby improve cancer survival rates. These campaigns are funded by PHE and delivered in partnership with the Department and NHS England.

The independent Cancer Taskforce strategy report Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A Strategy for England 2015 to 2020 (July 2015) recommended that PHE should continue to invest in Be Clear on Cancer campaigns. PHE will continue to work with the Department, NHS England and other stakeholders to keep campaigns under review, and to see what might be done to increase awareness of other cancers ensuring that health care professionals are also targeted with campaign information to encourage earlier diagnoses and referrals.

The decision on which cancers should be the focus of Be Clear on Cancer campaigns is informed by a steering group, whose members include primary and secondary care clinicians, and key voluntary sector organisations.

■ Capita

Daniel Zeichner: [\[57861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect of tendering the management of the medical performers list to Capita on the administrative efficiency of that list.

David Mowat:

No formal assessment has been made of the effects of tendering. However, the service that has been provided over recent months does not meet the specification set by NHS England when we contracted with Capita, and urgent recovery actions are in place. NHS England recognises the vital importance of making the process of joining the performers list as simple and quick as possible for applicants, while remaining robust to ensure the safety of patients. Once Capita has addressed the current issues with the service, there are plans to introduce a new system which will significantly improve the administrative efficiency and consistency of the process and provide better information back to applicants about the progress of their application.

■ Care Homes: Food

Mr Steve Reed: [\[57776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent guidance the Food Standards Agency has published on food served to older people in residential care.

Nicola Blackwood:

During 2016, the Food Standards Agency issued the following documents, all of which include advice on the provision of safe food to elderly persons in residential care:

- in February, an updated supplement to its "Safer food, better business" packs covering residential care homes;
- in June, listeria guidance for healthcare and social care organisations; and
- in August (with relevant partners), a draft document for consultation on minimum nutritional standards for catering in health and social care.

Mr Steve Reed: [\[57900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2016 to Question 56718, how many prosecutions have been made by the Care Quality Commission for failing to meet Regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) 2014.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.

The CQC records breaches of the regulations on the basis of whether it has taken enforcement action in respect of a breach. In the case of Regulation 14 the CQC has advised that its records show that it has not made any prosecutions for the period 1 April 2015 to date for a breach of Regulation 14 for care homes. The 1 April 2015 is

when Regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) 2014, came into force.

It might be the case that the CQC has taken enforcement action based on wider safety concerns, part of which Regulation 14 might have been considered.

■ Care Homes: Nottinghamshire

Gloria De Piero: [57933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many care home places for the elderly there were in Nottinghamshire in (a) 2015-16, (b) 2014-15 and (c) 2010-11.

David Mowat:

The information requested is held by the Care Quality Commission. It can be accessed here:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/how-get-and-re-use-cqc-information-and-data>

■ Carers

Natalie McGarry: [57855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the potential level of provision of unpaid care in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland in (i) 2020, (ii) 2030 and (iii) 2040.

Natalie McGarry: [57859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the hours spent by (a) adult carers and (b) young carers in providing unpaid care in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland.

Natalie McGarry: [57959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of people providing unpaid care who are experiencing (a) disability, (b) mental ill health and (c) learning disabilities in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland.

Natalie McGarry: [57960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment the Government has made of the economic value of the contribution made by unpaid adult carers and young carers in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland.

Natalie McGarry: [57961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment she has made of the proportion of adult carers and young carers performing unpaid care in the form of (a) domestic work, (b) general care, (c) emotional support and supervision, (d) intimate care, (e) childcare to siblings and (f) other household responsibilities in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland.

Natalie McGarry:

[58013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the effect that providing unpaid care has on the personal finances of adult and young carers.

David Mowat:

The Department uses a range of publicly available data to inform its understanding of informal care, including:

- The United Kingdom 2011 Census asked about provision of unpaid care by age and number of hours provided. Separate data is available for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The UK Family Resources Survey provides a breakdown by age, gender and hours of care provided. Separate data is available for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The Health Survey for England 2014 provides details of hours of care provided, with a breakdown by age and gender. Data is also included on the types of caring task undertaken.
- The Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England 2014-15 surveys those carers known to local authorities in England, and includes data on the support needs of the person being cared for. Data is also included on the types of caring task undertaken.
- The Survey of Carers in Households 2009-10 includes some details of the support needs of the person being cared for, with some additional information on hours of care provided.
- The Office for National Statistics Household Satellite Accounts includes a specific module on the economic value of informal adult care. Separate data is available for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In addition, the Department is currently leading the development of a new cross-Government Carers Strategy, due for publication in 2017. To inform this, the Department has recently undertaken a wide ranging *Call for Evidence* to gather the views and experiences of carers and other stakeholders, and to supplement the significant amount of publicly available data. This included asking carers directly about their caring roles and experiences, including the impact on their finances, and any health need or disability they may have that affects their caring role.

The *Call for Evidence* also included new research commissioned by the Department from the Economics of Social Care and Health Research Unit to estimate the future demand for informal care, and the likely availability of informal care in England. This research will supplement existing data from previous work by the Personal Social Services Research Unit.

Alongside the *Call for Evidence*, the Department for Education has commissioned new research to improve understanding of the numbers and needs of young carers and their families, carried out by TNS BMRB Research in partnership with Loughborough University. This research includes a qualitative strand, entitled ' *The Lives of Young Carers in England* ' published in February 2016; and quantitative work to be published

before the end of this year that will provide information on the nature of the care and support that young carers are providing; the perceived impact of caring responsibilities on physical and mental health, education and development; and the types of support that young carers receive.

The Department of Health is currently working with stakeholders to develop the new Carers Strategy. This will set out the findings from the *Call for Evidence*, and the priorities and actions contained in the Strategy will therefore be based on an assessment of this wide evidence base as well as the range of published qualitative evidence of the issues of most concern to carers.

■ Dementia

Jim Shannon: [\[57453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to (a) monitor levels of dementia risk and (b) improve guidance on how to prevent dementia.

David Mowat:

Raising awareness of dementia risk reduction is one of the key priorities outlined in the Challenge on Dementia 2020 implementation plan. Public Health England's (PHE) Dementia Intelligence Network, includes an online dementia profile which brings together all available indicators for dementia, including risk reduction. This profile enables the risk factors for dementia to be monitored on a regular basis.

PHE has recently published improved guidance on reducing dementia risk, including 'Health Matters: A resource for health professionals and local authorities' that makes the case for action in midlife to promote healthy lifestyles that can reduce the risk of dementia. PHE also increases awareness of dementia risk reduction through programmes for the public, such as strengthening the NHS Health Check.

■ Department of Health: Horizon 2020

Helen Goodman: [\[57690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

David Mowat:

In response to Q311, at the Treasury Committee on Monday 12 December, the Chancellor referenced the process for European Union Structural Funds rather than for Horizon 2020.

The Treasury will underwrite all successful bids for Horizon 2020 that are approved by the Commission, even when specific projects continue beyond the departure from the EU.

The Department of Health and other Government departments will not assess Horizon 2020 grant applications – Horizon 2020 is an EU programme, independent of the United Kingdom government, and grant funding is awarded by the Commission based on peer review.

■ **Department of Health: Job Creation**

Greg Mulholland: [57099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many new roles are to be created at his Department through the DH2020 programme.

David Mowat:

The launch of the new Departmental structure, as part of the DH 2020 Programme, is focused on how the Department is going to operate in the future to deliver on its priorities. As a result, all roles in the structure are classified as new to ensure that the structure is aligned to Departmental priorities. The new structure will mean that the Department has the right skills across the organisation to deliver its agenda and can operate in a more agile way.

■ **Department of Health: Pay**

Jake Berry: [56989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

David Mowat:

Government departments do not publish details of the salary of their highest to lowest paid employees.

The Office for National Statistics do, however, publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organisation. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

Jake Berry: [57033]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

David Mowat:

The Office for National Statistics publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organization. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

■ Department of Health: Staff

Jake Berry:

[57011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

David Mowat:

I refer the hon. Member to the oral statement on Corporate Governance of 29 November 2016, Official Report, column 1408, and to the associated Green Paper itself which can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573438/beis-16-56-corporate-governance-reform-green-paper-final.pdf

Helen Whately:

[57126]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

David Mowat:

Civil Service Employee Policy provides a central health and well-being service to support departments in their well-being work.

In 2015, the People Board agreed a strategic approach to health and well-being for the Civil Service. This identified mental health as a key priority. This strategic approach was developed into a Strategic Action Plan, which has now been successfully implemented.

Support for individuals with mental health problems is provided by line managers and through the occupational health programme. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are made, to support the effective participation in work of people with longer term mental health problems.

In addition, the Department has a comprehensive staff Health and Well-being Programme designed by staff, for staff. It has three themes:

- preventing aims to reduce work-related ill-health at source - musculoskeletal issues and stress are key target areas;
- developing encourages development of competences and participation in physical activity to aid individual well-being and growth; and
- supporting signposts staff to sources of help and support.

Specifically on mental health, the Department:

- delivers two day Mental Health First Aid training courses in London and Leeds; and half-day Mental Health First Aid Lite courses;
- supports and promotes a network of Mental Health First Aiders;
- delivers Tackling Stress at Work courses using the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards framework;
- signposts staff to courses on mental health that are available through Civil Service Learning; and

- delivers an programme of events around World Mental Health Day in October, which this year included pledge boards across the Departmental estate and tea and talk sessions.

The Department also provides access to an Employment Assistance Programme, which is advertised to staff via the intranet. It promotes The Charity for Civil Servants, whose services include a mental health helpline and signposts to MIND, the Samaritans and internal staff networks where staff can get help and assistance.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Mr David Nuttall: [57813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the correlation between the increased use of vaping and the decline in the number of people accessing NHS stop smoking services.

Nicola Blackwood:

No assessment has been made by the Department.

Adam Afriyie: [907990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has taken to increase access to electronic vaping devices for people giving up smoking.

Nicola Blackwood:

More smokers use e-cigarettes to help them quit than any other stop smoking aid.

E-cigarettes are already very widely available for people who want to use them as part of their attempt to quit - indeed one in three smokers making a quit attempt are using an e-cigarette.

■ Endometriosis

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [57832]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information is made available in schools on endometriosis.

David Mowat:

The Department does not provide information to schools on this condition.

Information for the public on the causes and diagnosis of endometriosis is available on the NHS Choices website at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Endometriosis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) has also developed a patient information leaflet, which is available on the RCOG website at:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/gynaecology/endometriosis.pdf>

■ Financial Services: Older People

Rachel Reeves: [\[57791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities are fulfilling their responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 to protect older people with care and support needs from financial abuse.

Rachel Reeves: [\[57823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the performance of local authorities in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 to protect older people who need care and support from financial abuse.

Rachel Reeves: [\[57824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities are fulfilling their responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 to protect older people with care and support needs from financial abuse.

David Mowat:

Local Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) must have arrangements in place to deliver the duties and functions under Schedule 2 of the Care Act. The objective of an SAB is to help and protect adults in its area by preventing the abuse and neglect of adults with care and support needs. Although the local authority has the lead role in making enquiries, most financial abuse amounts to theft or fraud and would be a matter for the police to investigate. Being alert to the possibility of abuse, including financial abuse, is everybody's business, including banks, care and support services, family, friends and neighbours.

■ Health

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[907988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the significance of the average age at death in assessing the health needs of a community; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

We want everyone to have the same opportunity to have a long and healthy life, whoever they are, wherever they live and whatever their social circumstances.

Local areas are rightly placed to determine the health needs of their local populations and that is why the Government will give £16 billion to local government over the course of this Parliament for public health.

■ Health Services and Social Services

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[907984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his policy is on devolving health and social care powers to directly elected mayors.

David Mowat:

Devolution is a locally led process, and it is for local areas to come forward with their proposals, and to negotiate bespoke deals with Government.

Many health and social care services are already devolved to local level. However, the Department, NHS England and other arm's length bodies are working to support local areas seeking to assume further devolved responsibilities and decision making for their population - where this clearly supports objectives for integrated, personalised care, improved health outcomes, service experience and value for money.

■ Heart Diseases

Catherine West: [57875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to incentivise the delivery of high quality heart failure services.

Catherine West: [57876]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase both early and ongoing access to specialist multidisciplinary heart failure teams for heart failure patients.

Jess Phillips: [57893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans are being put in place to support clinical commissioning groups deliver improved outcomes for heart failure at a local level.

David Mowat:

NHS England hosts a collaborative group which brings together the relevant National Clinical Directors, the main relevant national charities, the National Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Intelligence Network, Public Health England and the Department. This collaborative group continues to work together to reduce premature mortality in both primary and secondary care settings in relation to people with, or at risk of having, CVD.

NHS England is also working with key partners to ensure better co-ordination and integration of all services with the aim of delivering person centred and coordinated care which is tailored to the needs and preferences of the individual, their carer and family. In particular, to encourage better practice in the caring for heart failure patients, NHS England has established a best practice tariff for acute heart failure. It is also working with Health Education England to explore ways of improving the provision of, and increase access to, echocardiography, which is used in the diagnosis of heart failure.

To help the National Health Service understand what a good quality service looks like, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence publish quality standards which define best practice within a topic area and it has published quality standards for acute and chronic heart failure. These can be found at:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/QS9>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs103>

NHS England expects commissioners and providers to take account of quality standards in the services that are delivered to patients.

■ Heart Diseases: Females

Jess Phillips: [58029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps are being taken to improve access to heart failure specialists for women.

David Mowat:

NHS England is working with key partners to ensure better co-ordination and integration of all services with the aim of delivering person centred and coordinated care for both men and women which is tailored to their individual needs and preferences and those of their carer and family. In particular, to increase the proportion of patients that receive care from a specialist, NHS England has established a best practice tariff for acute heart failure.

To help the National Health Service understand what a good quality service looks like, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence publishes quality standards which define best practice within a topic area and it has published quality standards for acute and chronic heart failure. These can be found at:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/QS9>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs103>

Both of these quality standards recognise the need for specialist input in the diagnosis and management of all patients with heart failure. NHS England expects commissioners and providers to take account of quality standards in the services that are delivered to patients.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

William Wragg: [57772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the announcement by NHS England of 4 December 2016 for a large scale clinical trial of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention, what steps he plans to take to ensure that high risk groups not in regular contact with sexual health and genito-urinary medicine clinics access that trial.

William Wragg: [57773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the announcement by NHS England of 4 December 2016 for a large scale clinical trial of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention, if he will make it his policy to monitor the prescriptions rates of post-exposure prophylaxis after sexual exposure (PEPSE) during the three year PrEP trial in order to assess the effect of increased PrEP use on (a) the demand for PEPSE and other post-exposure prophylaxis and (b) the effect on costs to the NHS of potential changes in PEPSE and other post-exposure prophylaxis prescriptions.

William Wragg: [57774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the announcement by NHS England of 4 December 2016 for a large scale clinical trial of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention, what the eligibility criteria will be for people to enrol on that trial.

Nicola Blackwood:

The arrangements for the clinical trial on pre-exposure prophylaxis are being developed between NHS England and Public Health England. Issues around reaching high risk groups and eligibility criteria will be addressed as part of that planning.

NHS England will take steps to monitor the impact of the trial on costs of antiretroviral drugs for post exposure prophylaxis.

William Wragg:[\[57784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the announcement by NHS England of 4 December 2016 for a large scale clinical trial of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention, what (a) his estimate is of the total number of people judged to be at high risk of HIV transmission and (b) steps he plans to take in the event that more people seek access to the trial than the 10,000 planned participants announced.

Nicola Blackwood:

Based on data covering HIV testing and sexually transmitted infections in men who have sex with men using genito-urinary medicine services, Public Health England has estimated the number at risk of HIV transmission to be around 13,000. The role of the clinical trial is to improve estimates of clinical need.

The clinical trial protocol is being finalised which will confirm the number of people who can be enrolled.

Hospitals: Standards**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[57843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2016 to Question 56391, how many and which hospitals inspected by the Care Quality Commission in 2015-16 had enforcement action taken where regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulation Activities) Regulations 2014 was considered.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Care Quality Commission has advised that this information cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

Junior Doctors: Females**John Cryer:**[\[57544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many female junior doctors are likely to be affected by the changes in the junior doctor contract that propose six years' training before being transferred to a new pay scale.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The transitional pay protection arrangements agreed with the junior doctor leadership within the British Medical Association mean that junior doctors in the higher stages of training remain on existing pay terms, including annual incremental pay increases, until 2022, which gives part-time workers more active protection of their pay than straightforward cash floor pay protection. Allowing them to continue on the existing pay system provides protection in respect of anticipated earnings for those whose career

choices were made some time ago. This applies to all those in the higher stages of training, male and female.

■ Locums

Diana Johnson: [\[57148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish the results of NHS Improvement's June 2016 enquiries to sustainability and transformation plan leaders on services dependent on locums; and how many NHS services were identified as being dependent on locums as a result of those inquiries.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Improvement has no plans to report on the limited and incomplete data collected following its July enquiries to Sustainability and Transformation Plan leaders. However, in autumn 2016, NHS Improvement signalled to trusts that it will complete a comprehensive data collection on locums by specialty, to be published through the quarterly reporting process.

■ Macular Degeneration

Jim Shannon: [\[57455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration in each of the last five years; and what the age profile of such people was in each such year.

David Mowat:

We do not have information on the numbers of people diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration in each of the last five years.

What we do have is the number of finished admission episodes, for England, for the last five years, where the primary diagnosis was 'degeneration of the macular and posterior pole'. This is set out in the table below.

AGE GROUP	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
0-4	2	3	2	3	3
5-9	2	7	3	6	7
10-14	9	8	8	3	9
15-19	18	10	11	9	12
20-24	32	21	36	20	28
25-29	29	33	47	45	44
30-34	42	57	56	58	60
35-39	73	101	100	73	66

AGE GROUP	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
40-44	156	162	229	148	149
45-49	254	319	377	386	336
50-54	439	477	636	603	647
55-59	812	973	1,216	1,283	1,122
60-64	2,589	2,647	2,833	2,767	2,595
65-69	5,153	5,982	6,427	6,729	6,297
70-74	8,937	9,770	9,847	10,671	10,488
75-79	14,051	15,347	14,506	16,069	15,630
80-84	17,083	18,765	17,747	18,847	18,042
85-89	13,960	15,550	14,262	15,497	15,438
90+	6,179	7,320	7,318	8,580	8,721
Unknown	6	7	11	18	20
Total	69,826	77,559	75,672	81,815	79,714

Source: Hospital Episodes Statistics, NHS Digital

■ Medical Records: Data Protection

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[57798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department made an assessment of the potential effect on public trust in medical confidentiality of the continued dissemination of the hospital data of those patients who had opted out of such dissemination.

Nicola Blackwood:

Building public trust in how the health and care system uses personal confidential information is key to unlocking the potential benefits that this information can bring, and this trust is dependent on the public knowing how and why their information is used and what choices they have.

That is why my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State commissioned the National Data Guardian for Health and Care, Dame Fiona Caldicott, to undertake an independent review of data security, consent and opt-outs, which was published on 6 July 2016. A public consultation closed on 7 September 2016 and the Government response to the consultation will be published shortly.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[57799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when and by whom the decision was made to continue to disseminate the data of those people who opted out of the commercial dissemination of hospital episode statistics.

Nicola Blackwood:

No such decision has been made, with regards to personal confidential information.

NHS Digital, in accordance with section 122 of the Care Act 2014, only disseminates anonymised data where it will be for the purposes of the provision of health care or adult social care, or the promotion of health.

■ Medical Treatments

Daniel Zeichner:

[57382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that patient groups and patients are consulted on decisions undertaken on new treatments as part of NHS England's prioritisation process for investing in specialised services.

David Mowat:

NHS England involves patients, patient groups and the public at numerous stages of the process for developing clinical commissioning policies and service specifications that may be subject to a process of relative prioritisation.

Clinical policies and service specifications are developed by Clinical Reference Groups (CRGs), which are advisory groups and which include patients and patient representatives in their membership. Draft clinical policies and service specifications undergo a process of testing with registered stakeholders before they are submitted for a full public consultation. The CRG will consider the outcome of stakeholder testing and public consultation before submitting the final proposed document to NHS England for the purpose of relative prioritisation.

Recommendations on the relative prioritisation of new investments in specialised services are made by the Clinical Priorities Advisory Group, which is independently chaired and which includes patient and public voice representatives in its membership.

NHS England held a public consultation on 'Developing a Method to Assist Investment Decisions in Specialised Commissioning' between April and May 2016. The response to consultation can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2016/06/prioritisation-method-cons-response.pdf>

Daniel Zeichner:

[57384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of how many patients the proposed £100,000 quality adjusted life year threshold for evaluating Highly Specialised Technologies will affect.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[57385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the £100,000 quality adjusted life year threshold for evaluating Highly Specialised Technologies on equity of access and the objectives of the UK Rare Disease Strategy.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[57386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the £100,000 quality adjusted life year threshold for evaluating Highly Specialised Technologies on the access and update of new medicines for patients with very rare and complex diseases.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[57387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that patients with rare diseases are not negatively affected by the introduction of the £100,000 quality adjusted life year threshold for evaluating Highly Specialised Technologies.

Nicola Blackwood:

We are committed to ensuring that patients with rare and ultra-rare diseases in England are able to access effective treatments.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that the proposed arrangements are intended to provide clarity about the level of cost effectiveness below which funding will be made available, automatically and without delay, for highly specialised technologies that receive positive recommendations from NICE.

Subject to the outcome of the current consultation exercise, those products that have a value proposition of above £100,000 per quality-adjusted life year will be provided with a further opportunity to be considered for use in the National Health Service, through NHS England's annual process for deciding which new treatments and services will be routinely commissioned.

Furthermore, the proposed changes are intended to clarify NICE's existing responsibility to determine the period within which funding for recommended products needs to be made available by commissioners of services. This clarity should allow companies and commissioners to work on commercial arrangements in advance of and in parallel with the development of NICE technology appraisal and highly specialised technology guidance. In circumstances where this may not be possible, specific requests from commissioners to vary the timescale for the funding requirement will be considered by NICE.

■ Mental Health Services: Children

Kerry McCarthy: [\[907989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposed changes in the level of spending on mental health services for children and young people on waiting times for an appointment on first referral.

Mr Jeremy Hunt:

We are investing more than £250 million each year to improve children and young people's mental health, including implementing waiting times standards for early intervention in psychosis and eating disorder and completing the roll out of the children and young people's talking therapies programme by 2018.

■ **Mental Health Services: Negligence**

Luciana Berger: [\[57949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2016 to Question 57287, how much was paid out in clinical negligence claims under the specialties of psychiatry/mental health and psychology in each year since 2010 broken down by community care group.

Luciana Berger: [\[57950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2016 to Question 57287, how much was paid out in clinical negligence claims under the specialties of psychiatry/mental health and psychology in each year since 2010 broken down by ethnicity.

Luciana Berger: [\[57951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2016 to Question 57287, how much was paid out in clinical negligence claims under the specialties of psychiatry/mental health and psychology in each year since 2010 broken down by gender.

Luciana Berger: [\[57972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2016 to Question 57287, how much was paid out in clinical negligence claims under the specialties of psychiatry/ mental health and psychology in each year since 2010 broken down by primary diagnosis.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department does not hold the data to answer the questions. The National Health Service Litigation Authority (NHS LA) has supplied the data and it is only able to answer Question 57951.

The table below shows the amount paid out in clinical negligence claims under the specialties of psychiatry/mental health and psychology in each year broken down by gender.

The NHS LA database is not set up to provide data in relation to ethnicity, community care group or primary diagnosis.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-15/57972>

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Bradford

Stuart Andrew: [57114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will hold discussions with Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on patients with muscle-wasting conditions in the area and their access to neuromuscular care advice.

David Mowat:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialised neurological services, including services for patients with neuromuscular disorders. NHS England has published a service specification for neurological care that sets out what providers must have in place to offer evidence-based, safe and effective services.

The specification can be found at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/d04-neurosci-spec-neuro.pdf

National Health Service providers, working with local area teams, may establish patient access to neuromuscular care advisers if they consider it would benefit service provision; such decisions are a local matter.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: South East

Caroline Lucas: [58050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2016 to Question 54104, on Neuromuscular Disorders; South East, what the status of funding approval is for the care adviser post; what the remit is of that post and how it will link to specialist neuromuscular centres in London; and when recruitment for that post is expected to begin.

David Mowat:

As stated in the answer to Question [54104](#), NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialised neurological services. NHS England (South) advises that it is supporting ongoing work to identify the job description, remit and geographical area that will be covered by the care adviser post. NHS England (South) is arranging a meeting for the new year with the neuromuscular outreach officer at Muscular Dystrophy UK and Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group to take this work forward.

■ NHS: Fees and Charges

Daniel Kawczynski: [907996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress the Government is making on recovering money from overseas visitors and other chargeable NHS patients.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The National Health Service is a national, not an international, service. This Government was the first to introduce tough measures to clamp down on migrants accessing free NHS care, including introducing the immigration health surcharge.

The initiatives we have implemented have meant the income identified from visitors and migrants has trebled from £97 million in 2013/14 to £289 million in 2015/16.

■ NHS: Sustainable Development

Peter Heaton-Jones:

[\[57975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether it is his Department's policy to require NHS England to take account of geographic isolation and travelling times when developing sustainability and transformation plans.

David Mowat:

There are 44 Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) covering the whole of England. STPs are being developed within their local area, with support from NHS England. The Department expects individual STPs to take account of challenges specific to their area including a rural population.

Proposals are at a draft stage but we expect all local leaders to be talking to the public and stakeholders regularly – it is vital that people are able to shape the future of their local services.

■ Obesity

Ian Austin:

[\[57845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department will publish a strategy for tackling obesity in adults.

Nicola Blackwood:

We launched 'Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action' in August. Key and bold measures in our plan will have an impact on tackling obesity across all age groups. These include the soft drinks industry levy and sugar reduction programme, which will reduce the amount of sugar we all consume.

Other measures already in place include the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme, which identifies those at high risk of developing diabetes and provides tailored, personalised help to reduce that risk including education on healthy eating and lifestyle and bespoke physical exercise programmes to tackle excess weight, and Public Health England's 'One You' marketing campaign, which engages adults in healthier behaviours including better eating habits and increasing physical activity.

■ Occupational Therapy

Norman Lamb:

[\[57910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make additional funds available for occupational therapy to help prevent avoidable hospital admissions in winter 2016-17.

Norman Lamb:

[\[57911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has assessed the implications for his policies of the findings and recommendations of the report published by the College of Occupational Therapists on 16 November 2016 entitled Reducing the pressure on hospitals: A report on the value of occupation therapy in England; and if he will make a statement.

Norman Lamb: [\[57912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department and NHS England are taking to ensure that NHS Trusts increase their occupational therapy capacity in winter 2016-17.

Norman Lamb: [\[57913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take steps to ensure that all rapid response and acute and emergency care services in NHS Trusts have occupational therapists embedded within multidisciplinary teams.

David Mowat:

The Government welcomes the College of Occupational Therapist's report 'Reducing the pressure on hospitals', which was published in November. We recognise that occupational therapists are key to supporting safe and timely hospital discharge. Occupational therapists work seamless across health and social care, are natural integrators and understand what factors enable individuals to lead independent and fulfilled lives.

Winter preparedness funding was included in allocations to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) at the start of the 2016-17 financial year. It is for CCGs to decide how to use this funding to prepare for winter. The Department is working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement to ensure there is robust governance and operational arrangements in place to help prevent avoidable hospital admissions and to improve access and flow through hospital when patients are admitted.

All NHS trusts must ensure that they have the professions with the right skills working within rapid response and acute and emergency care service. It is for local trusts and commissioners, working with NHS England, to ensure that they fully utilise the vital skills and knowledge of their occupational therapists as part of the multi-disciplinary team, and working across health and social care.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Greater London

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[57831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average wait time is for a follow-up appointment at eye clinics in London.

David Mowat:

The information requested is not available.

NHS England publishes information on general practitioner (GP) referral to first definitive treatment for the ophthalmology treatment function and NHS Digital publishes information on GP referral to first outpatient appointments for ophthalmology, neither publishes data on follow-up appointments. Data is published at trust level.

■ Orphan Drugs

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[57383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if NHS England will consider the potential merits of developing a new assessment process to evaluate orphan medicines for use in the NHS.

David Mowat:

NHS England is waiting for the outcome of the current joint National Institute for Health and Care Excellence/NHS England consultation on proposed changes to arrangements for evaluating and funding drugs and other health technologies which are appraised through NICE's technology appraisal and highly specialised technologies programmes.

The consultation is due to close on 13 January. Once the responses to the consultation have been reviewed, NHS England and NICE will consider whether any changes to the way orphan drugs are evaluated should be made.

■ Palliative Care: Children and Young People

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[57868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure there are sufficient professionals with the skills needed to implement the new NICE clinical guideline, End of Life Care for Infants, Children and Young People with Life-Limiting Conditions: Planning and Management across England.

David Mowat:

Through the Government's 2016/17 Mandate to Health Education England (HEE) we have asked them to work with key partners to ensure that all staff delivering end of life care are appropriately trained.

HEE are currently developing a refreshed core competency framework to standardise end of life care training, and working with partners to strengthen the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula to support patient choice and improve quality of care. They are also working closely with NHS England and the Royal College of Midwives to agree a new competency framework for ensuring all midwifery staff have basic bereavement training and skilled midwifery bereavement staff are available to support parents following a loss.

All staff involved with dying people must be capable of having difficult conversations about death and dying, and take the time to listen carefully to what dying people and those important to them say. NHS England is working with two New Care Model sites of Airedale and Southend to test an innovative approach to 'serious illness conversations' in which clinicians are trained to support people with serious illnesses to discuss what is important to them, treating these discussions as a clinical intervention which delivers patient-centred care.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[57870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what support will be available to commissioners and providers to implement the NICE clinical guideline, End of Life Care for Infants, Children and Young People with Life-Limiting Conditions: Planning and Management.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[57871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to make sure that children's palliative care services are based on managed clinical networks as recommended by the NICE clinical guideline, End of Life Care for Infants, Children and Young People with Life-Limiting Conditions: Planning and Management.

David Mowat:

The Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care (Ambitions) Framework encourages commissioners to work with partners to improve palliative and end of life care across the local system. A new 'knowledge hub' has been developed (commissioned by NHS England and developed by the National Council for Palliative Care), hosted on the Ambitions website containing resources and tools for both commissioners and professionals, including relevant guidelines.

Clinical commissioning groups have the responsibility for the creation of managed clinical networks and we would expect them to take account of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines when commissioning all services, including palliative care.

■ Skin Cancer: Medical Treatments

Pauline Latham:

[\[57206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps are being taken to ensure melanoma patients have access to the most clinically effective treatment options if they have (a) brain metastases and (b) previously taken part in a clinical trial.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended a number of drugs for use in the treatment of melanoma. National Health Service patients have a right in the NHS Constitution to drugs and treatments that have been recommended by NICE, where clinically appropriate.

NHS England has advised that it has carefully translated the evidence base on which NICE has based its recommendations of clinical and cost effectiveness for drugs and treatments for melanoma into practical clarifications which directly relate to how the recommended drug indication is incorporated into known treatment pathways in use in England.

Each set of clarifications is in keeping with the NICE recommendations within the marketing authorisation of the relevant drug.

The treatment criteria for both Cancer Drugs Fund and baseline-funded drug indications are set out in the National Cancer Drugs Fund List which is available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/national-cdf-list-v1-15.pdf>

Discussions are taking place with NHS regional and National Cancer Research Institute experts on melanoma on formulating chemotherapy algorithms for the treatment of advanced or metastatic melanoma. These discussions relate in part to the drug treatment of brain metastases and the need to preserve recruitment to clinical trials and

whether the qualifications that NHS England has applied in terms of treatment criteria for melanoma drugs within their respective marketing authorisations should be changed.

Pauline Latham:

[\[57212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what restrictions have been placed on patients accessing treatments for advanced (stage 4) melanoma by (a) NHS England, (b) his Department and (c) NICE.

Pauline Latham:

[\[57299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to prevent NHS England from imposing restrictions on patients' access to NICE-approved treatments for melanoma and other conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department has placed no restrictions on patients accessing treatments for advanced (stage 4) melanoma.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published guidance on the following treatments for melanoma. National Health Service commissioners are legally required to fund drugs and treatments recommended by NICE for eligible patients within three months of final guidance.

APPRAISAL NUMBER	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TECHNOLOGY/CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION
TA268	2012	Ipilimumab for previously treated advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.
TA269	2012	Vemurafenib for locally advanced or metastatic BRAF V600 mutation-positive malignant melanoma	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.
TA319	2014	Ipilimumab for previously untreated advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.
TA321	2014	Dabrafenib for unresectable or metastatic BRAF V600 mutation	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.

APPRAISAL NUMBER	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TECHNOLOGY/CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION
TA357 ¹	2015	Pembrolizumab for advanced melanoma after disease progression with ipilimumab	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.
TA366 ¹	2015	Pembrolizumab for advanced melanoma not previously treated with ipilimumab	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.
TA384	2016	Nivolumab for advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation.
TA396	2016	Trametinib in combination with dabrafenib for unresectable or metastatic melanoma	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation.
TA400	2016	Nivolumab in combination with ipilimumab for advanced melanoma	Recommended in line with marketing authorisation and following agreement of patient access scheme.
TA410	2016	Talimogene laherparepvec for unresectable metastatic melanoma	Optimised recommendation for talimogene laherparepvec as an option for treating unresectable, regionally or distantly metastatic (Stage IIIB, IIIC or IVM1a) melanoma that has not spread to bone, brain, lung or other internal organs, only if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - treatment with systemically administered immunotherapies is not suitable; and - the company provides

APPRAISAL NUMBER	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TECHNOLOGY/CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION
			talimogene laherparepvec with the discount agreed in the patient access scheme.
TA414	2016	Cobimetinib in combination with vemurafenib for unresectable or metastatic BRAF V600 mutation-positive melanoma	At the time of appraisal, the technology was not considered to be an appropriate use of NHS resources based on the data available.

¹ pembrolizumab within its licensed indication was appraised across two separate appraisals.

NHS England has advised that it has carefully translated the evidence base on which NICE has based its recommendations of clinical and cost effectiveness into practical clarifications which directly relate to how the recommended drug indication is incorporated into known treatment pathways in use in England.

Each set of clarifications is in keeping with the NICE recommendations within the marketing authorisation of the relevant drug.

The treatment criteria for both Cancer Drugs Fund and baseline-funded drug indications are set out in the National Cancer Drugs Fund List which is available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/national-cdf-list-v1-15.pdf>

■ Social Services

Imran Hussain: [57890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many meetings he has had in the last year with local authority leaders to discuss adult social care.

David Mowat:

Social care continues to be a priority for this Government. My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets local social care partners on a regular basis to discuss a range of issues.

■ Spinal Injuries

Ian C. Lucas: [907991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with spinal cord injuries are treated in specialist units.

David Mowat:

NHS England commissions specialised spinal care services nationally. All patients needing specialist spinal care following either injury or disease progression should be referred to a specialist centre after initial treatment or assessment at a local hospital.

These services encompass acute care following the injury, rehabilitation and life-long follow-up of people living with spinal cord injury.

■ **Strokes: Health Services**

Jim Shannon:

[\[57457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate risks to stroke patients resulting from variations in the level of care for such patients.

David Mowat:

Stroke care has improved significantly over recent years and NHS England and the Department are continuing to work to further improve care. NHS England's National Clinical Director for Stroke continues to work with clinical networks, urgent and emergency care networks, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and Sustainability and Transformation Plan areas on how stroke care is best delivered to their local communities.

NHS England is working to reduce the variation in stroke care. In particular, it is helping to improve the commissioning of stroke services by ensuring each CCG has the evidence, advice and guidance on the organisation and commissioning of stroke services which deliver good quality care and improved outcomes. The Royal College of Physicians published its National Clinical Guidelines for Stroke in October 2016 and this contains a chapter specifically on the commissioning of stroke services aimed at CCGs. NHS England will shortly be sending a copy of these guidelines to all CCGs in England. In addition, the National Clinical Director for Stroke and the clinical networks also work with CCGs to provide advice on how to improve stroke services locally.

Variations in performance are highlighted in the regular reports from the Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme, which provides information on the quality of stroke care and outcomes including mortality. The results are returned to providers and there is good evidence that providing detailed information in a timely way is a motivation for service improvement and has enabled the quality of care to steadily improve.

However, some providers need additional help. The Royal College of Physicians, in association with the British Association of Stroke Physicians and the Stroke Association, undertakes detailed peer reviews of services. Also, the National Clinical Director for Stroke is currently planning visits to provide advice and support to a number of trusts where performance has not improved over the last three years.

HOME OFFICE■ **Assisted Voluntary Return Schemes: Vietnam**

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[47283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were returned to Vietnam under the assisted voluntary return scheme in each year from 2013 to 2016 to date; and how many such people had been subject to positive grounds National Referral Mechanism decisions in each such year.

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[47284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people her Department removed to Vietnam in each year from 2013 to 2016 to date; and how many such people had been subject to positive grounds National Referral Mechanism decisions in each such year.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The number of people returned from the UK to Vietnam in each year by Enforced Removals and Voluntary Returns is published on a quarterly basis in Immigration Statistics on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

The information you requested can be found in tables rt_05 and rt_05_q of the returns tables:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572383/returns5-q3-2016-tables.ods

This link will help you to find the most updated returns data by country of destination. The data within this table can be filtered, enabling you to obtain information specifically relating to removals to Vietnam. Instruction on how to use the filters can be found on the 'contents' tab.

We do not hold the requested data of how many such people had been subject to positive grounds decisions on the National Referral Mechanism in the requested format.

■ **Asylum**

Mr David Crausby: [\[49225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time was for a final decision on an asylum application in each of the last five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Information regarding Asylum data is published as part of the Government's Transparency agenda the latest release of which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-november-2016>

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[57045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have suffered torture abroad and are awaiting her Department's decision on their claim for asylum; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The current Home Office system does not centrally record the basis of an asylum claim. The data requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records. We aim to decide all straightforward asylum claims within 6 months, however there will be some claims which are more complex, including those who have suffered abhorrent acts such as torture. We aim to decide these cases within 12 months.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[57054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been granted asylum in the UK after being victims of torture abroad in each of the last six years; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The current Home Office system does not centrally record the basis of an asylum claim. The data requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

■ Cats: Theft

Mr Nigel Evans: [\[52301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cats were reported stolen in 2015.

Mr Nigel Evans: [\[52302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many dogs were reported stolen in 2015.

Mr Nigel Evans: [\[52303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many pets were reported stolen in 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office holds statistics on notifiable offences recorded by the police. The police record offences of thefts in a number of categories and supply this information to the Home Office. Thefts of pets in general as well as dogs and cats more specifically are most likely to be recorded within 'other theft' and cannot be separately identified within this category.

■ Community Relations

Tim Loughton: [\[50969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the review by Dame Louise Casey on opportunity and integration in isolated communities in its original form.

Sarah Newton:

Dame Louise Casey's independent review was published on 5 December 2016. The Government will consider its findings carefully over the coming months.

■ Crime: Rural Areas

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[[56771](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the use of drones in connection with rural crime.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office has not made an assessment of the use of drones in connection with crime committed in rural areas. Overall, people in rural areas are less likely to be the victims of crime compared to those in urban areas, and the election of Police and Crime Commissioners has given all communities a much stronger voice in determining how police resources are allocated to tackle the crimes that matter most to them.

■ Domestic Violence

Karl McCartney:

[[907616](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that all forms of domestic abuse are recognised and investigated.

Sarah Newton:

The Government has introduced a new offence of coercive or controlling behaviour. Victims who experience behaviour that stops short of serious physical violence, but amounts to extreme psychological and emotional abuse, can now bring their perpetrators to justice.

Every police force has published domestic abuse action plans and new guidance and training has been introduced by the College of Policing.

■ Emergency Services: Scotland

Ronnie Cowan:

[[57095](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Emergency Services Network mobile masts are planned to be built in Scotland; and if those masts will be designed and built for potential multi-occupancy by all mobile network operators.

Ronnie Cowan:

[[57096](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Emergency Service masts will be built in Inverclyde constituency; and what steps she is taking to ensure that mobile telephone services are provided by all mobile network operators on all Emergency Services Network sites.

Brandon Lewis:

In delivering the Emergency Services Network (ESN), the mobile network operator EE will deliver up to 291 new mast sites. Government will deliver approximately 230 further sites (known as the "Extended Area Services" (EAS) sites) in the most remote and rural areas of Great Britain.

For EAS sites, the principal objective is to provide coverage to meet the needs of the emergency services, but the Home Office is working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and DCMS to identify any proposed mast locations which could

improve mobile coverage in future, with a view to ensuring these are built to a specification which could accommodate multiple operators.

EE has indicated that it is delivering around 200 new sites in Scotland as part of ESN. In addition there are 104 sites in Scotland that are being considered as part of the Extended Area Services (EAS). Delivery of these sites is subject to planning permission and the acquisition of land. There are currently no new sites proposed in the constituency of Inverclyde, either by EE or the EAS as part of ESN.

■ EU Nationals

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[57072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to protect the status of EU nationals living in the UK when the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to protect the status of EU nationals already living in the UK, and the only circumstances in which that wouldn't be possible is if British citizens' rights in other EU Member States were not protected in return.

■ EU Nationals: Deportation

Stephen Timms: [\[55899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been removed from the UK under Operation Adoze since its introduction; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

127 EEA nationals were removed from the UK under Operation Adoze.

Notes:

1 Operation Adoze figures represent encounters of EEA nationals between 1 November 2015 and 31 December 2015.

2 Returns figures include those returned after the initial encounter and up to 30 September 2016, in line with published statistics.

3 These statistics have been taken from a live operational database. As such, numbers may change as information on that system is updated.

■ Forensic Science

Philip Davies: [\[47918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45487, what the average time taken was for the return of forensically analysed evidence in cases involving (a) burglary, (b) murder, (c) violence against the person, excluding murder, (d) drugs offences and (e) sexual offences in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not hold this information.

■ Home Office: Disability

Tulip Siddiq: [\[48866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policies of the recommendations of the Extra Costs Commission, initiated by the disability charity Scope in July 2014.

Sarah Newton:

The Home Office has noted the findings of the Extra Costs Commission and officials will consider them in the course of policy development in the months and years ahead.

■ Home Office: Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in her Department.

Sarah Newton:

The information requested is available in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts (ARA). The ARA is published on the gov.uk website and can be found via this link - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>

■ Home Office: Public Expenditure

Stephen Timms: [\[56820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people her Department has had on record as having no recourse to public funds in each year since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I am sorry but the specific information is not available in the format requested, and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The latest published migration statistics can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics>.

■ Human Trafficking: Criminal Proceedings

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[56516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of trafficking were witnesses or accused in criminal proceedings in each year from 2010 to 2015.

Sarah Newton:

Records on the number of trafficking victims appearing as witnesses or defendants in criminal proceedings are not collated. We have introduced a range of measures to protect victims of modern slavery who may find themselves part of criminal proceedings, including a statutory defence for those compelled to commit certain offences as a direct consequence of their exploitation and the provision of special support services for witnesses in courts.

■ Immigrants: EU Nationals

Ms Diane Abbott: [\[58066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps have been taken to reassure EU nationals currently living in the UK that they will enjoy the same rights of residency and work status that they currently enjoy after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to protect the status of EU nationals already living in the UK, and the only circumstances in which that wouldn't be possible is if British citizens' rights in other EU Member States were not protected in return.

■ Immigration Controls

John Mann: [\[52502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which port of entry to the UK had the longest average waiting times for UK citizens in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I am sorry but this information is not held centrally and can only be collated at disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration Controls: EU Nationals

Martin Docherty-Hughes: [\[56925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her European counterparts on strengthening EU-wide border controls, coast guard provision and asylum systems in order to treat people arriving in Europe swiftly and with due diligence on account of EU legislation.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Secretary regularly discusses migration issues with European counterparts, both during bilateral discussions and other forums such as Justice and Home Affairs Council, even though the UK has retained its border controls and decides UK participation in individual European measures on a case by case basis.

We regularly discuss the importance of work by other European countries to strengthen EU-wide border controls through increased checks and effective swift processing of asylum applications, improved cooperation between national and EU agencies, and improvements to European asylum systems. We are clear on the importance of this work as part of a comprehensive approach to tackling illegal migration into Europe.

■ Immigration Controls: Scotland

Brendan O'Hara: [\[907634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of applying different immigration rules to Scotland and other constituent parts of the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Immigration remains a reserved matter and we will consider the needs of the UK as a whole.

Applying different immigration rules to different parts of the UK would complicate the immigration system, harming its integrity, and cause difficulties for employers who need the flexibility to deploy their staff to other parts of the UK.

■ **Immigration: EU Nationals**

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[56918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Oral Answer of 5 December 2016, Official Report, column 4, on documentation relating to EU nationals resident in the UK, what options she is considering for that documentation; and what the estimated costs are of those options.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

There are a number of options as to how EU migration might work once we have left the European Union. We are considering various options and it would be wrong to set out further positions at this stage.

■ **Internet: Bullying**

Tim Farron:

[\[57899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to reduce online abuse.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We expect social media companies, and internet platforms, to have robust processes in place and to act promptly when abuse is reported. The Government continues to work closely with social media companies and other relevant actors and experts to make sure they are committed to protecting those who use their platforms. The law is clear that what is illegal offline is illegal online. Robust legislation is in place to deal with internet trolls, cyber-stalking and harassment, and perpetrators of grossly offensive, obscene or menacing behaviour. The Criminal Justice Act 2015 strengthened two existing communications offences: section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988, and section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 which can now be used to prosecute misuse of social media. The police now have longer to investigate either offence, and the maximum penalty for the former has been increased to two years imprisonment. The Crown Prosecution Service published guidance to prosecutors in October on crimes involving social media. The Home Office has allocated £4.6 million of the Police Transformation Fund specifically to begin the critical work of setting up a comprehensive and joined up programme of digital transformation across policing.

■ Knives: Greater London**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[57070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to reduce knife crime in London.

Brandon Lewis:

Tackling knife crime is a priority for the Government and we are taking firm action including warning young people about the dangers of carrying knives, and working with retailers to ensure there are effective controls on knife sales in the high street and online, and legislating to ban the sale and importation of zombie knives.

21 police forces, including the Metropolitan Police Service, also recently took part in a week of action against knife crime, which involved targeting habitual knife carriers, weapon sweeps, the use of surrender bins, and test purchases from identified retailers.

■ Members: Correspondence**Alan Brown:** [\[57926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Minister for Immigration plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun of 1 November 2016 on Dungavel Immigration Return Centre.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

A response to the hon. Member's letter was sent on 20 December 2016.

■ Nuclear Power: Electronic Warfare**Dr Andrew Murrison:** [\[56541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential implication for her Department's policies on the cyber security of nuclear facilities of the Stuxnet cyber attacks.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The cyber security of existing and proposed nuclear facilities is a priority for the Government, for which BEIS is the lead department. The Home Office works closely with BEIS to ensure effective security of the UK civil nuclear sector.

■ Overseas Students**Dan Jarvis:** [\[51675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to review its policy on the inclusion of students within the immigration cap.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

There is no cap on the number of international students who can come to study in the UK.

■ Overseas Students: Employment

Royston Smith: [\[48745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on the rules that will apply to foreign students seeking employment after graduating (a) during negotiations on the UK leaving the EU and (b) once the UK has exited the EU.

Royston Smith: [\[48770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to allow universities to attract foreign students (a) during negotiations on the UK leaving the EU and (b) after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The precise way in which the Government will control the movement of EU nationals to the UK after the UK has left the EU is yet to be determined and will be subject to the wider negotiations on the UK's exit from the EU. We are not going to provide a running commentary on every twist and turn of these negotiations.

■ Paedophilia: Internet

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[57081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the prevalence of online grooming; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[57082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the prevalence of online grooming in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Sarah Newton:

Online Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is an appalling crime that this Government is committed to stamping out. The NCA's 2016 National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime, has designated the threat from child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) one of the highest priority crime threats facing the UK. There is significant under-reporting of online grooming and it is therefore difficult fully to quantify the scale of the threat. The NCA's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command leads the fight to tackle grooming. An additional £10 million in funding was provided to CEOP and this has led to a near doubling of its investigative capability. The NCA and police are investing more resources than ever before to tackle online grooming, including dedicated undercover resources to target those who pose the greatest risk. Oversight and scrutiny of the law enforcement response to online child sexual exploitation (CSE), including grooming, is provided by the Online CSE Pursue Board, chaired by Chief Constable Simon Bailey. Collaborative working between Police forces and the NCA, overseen by this Board, is resulting in around 375 arrests each month for online CSE offences, and the safeguarding of around 450 children each month. CEOP Command CEOP Command has developed a comprehensive education programme, called Thinkuknow, which provides targeted advice to children, parents and carers, including on how to use social media safely. In 2015/16, around 3.5 million children saw

the NCA's Thinkuknow educational material. Further detail on the Thinkuknow campaign can be found online at: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

■ **Passports: Republic of Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [57624]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her counterpart in the Republic of Ireland on reported increases in the number of UK residents applying for Irish passports since June 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Secretary has not raised this issue with her Irish counterpart. Applications for Irish passports are a matter for the Irish Government.

■ **Refugees**

Stuart C. McDonald: [52759]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who have applied under the statelessness determination procedure since it was established in 2013 have received a decision (a) in total, (b) between six months and a year after their application, (c) between one and two years after their application, (d) between two and three years after their application and (e) more than three years after their application.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office regularly shares information with UNHCR, relating to stateless applications and decisions made. The information provided is published by UNHCR in regular trend reports. The latest published report by UNHCR on mid year trends June 2015 can be found at link below:

<http://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/unhcrstats/56701b969/mid-year-trends-june-2015.html>

■ **Refugees: Children**

Thangam Debbonaire: [56332]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) refugee children and (b) families or carers of such children have been resettled under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programme since that programme began.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The figures for the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) will be published in the usual way, and will feature in future releases of the Home Office's immigration quarterly statistics.

■ Refugees: Syria

Mr Geoffrey Cox:

[[48245](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many local authorities have offered to receive and house Syrian child refugees.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme we are working with more than 170 local authorities to resettle Syrian refugee families in the UK.

Stephen Timms:

[[57173](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what preparations her Department is making for the coordination of efforts with EU member states to support Syrian refugees after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The UK's position on granting protection to those who need it will not change as a result of the referendum – we will continue to apply the Refugee Convention and provide protection for all those in need. The Government remains firmly committed to leading the way in working with the international community to tackle the global migration challenges. International engagement on migration – including cooperation with EU partners – will remain in our interest once we leave the EU.

We will provide sanctuary to those who need it but will continue to intervene at every point in the migrant journey to address the root causes of the global migration challenge. The Government has committed to resettling 20,000 Syrian refugees through our Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme over the course of this Parliament — that will not change as a result of the referendum and we are on track to deliver. A total of 4,414 people have been granted humanitarian protection under the scheme since it began. In addition to the scheme, the UK has pledged £2.3 billion in humanitarian aid to Syria and neighbouring countries.

■ Research: EU Nationals

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[[50051](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what safeguards her Department has put in place to ensure that academic staff from other EU countries working on multi-year research projects and based in the UK and funded from EU sources will retain the ability to remain in the UK after the UK leaves the EU while those projects remain ongoing; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to protect the status of EU nationals already living and working in the UK, and the only circumstances in which that wouldn't be possible is if British citizens' rights in other EU Member States were not protected in return.

■ Slavery

Diana Johnson: [\[57147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement during her visit to the Gulf of December 2016 on cooperation to end modern slavery, how many UK personnel will be allocated to help tackle such slavery in each of the six Gulf states.

Sarah Newton:

Modern slavery is a complex, transnational crime and a wide range of UK diplomatic, policy and operational staff are involved in supporting HMG's response to this issue, based both in the UK and overseas. The cooperation agreed at the Gulf Summit will primarily be taken forward by Immigration Regional Liaison Officers and diplomatic staff based in the region, supported by teams in London, as part of a wider range of tasks.

■ UK Border Force: Training

Oliver Colvile: [\[56092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training is given to Border Force staff on dealing with people with dementia.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

People who present at the border with possible signs of dementia are treated as vulnerable adults. Consideration for how to adjust business processes to accommodate and safeguard the vulnerable is incorporated in a range of training and guidance products delivered to Border Force officers, including the core skills training that all Border Force officers receive. There are also special teams across Border Force who provide support to frontline colleagues by providing expert help in identifying those who may be at risk or are vulnerable.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Private Rented Housing

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total cost has been of processing civil penalty appeals under the right to rent provisions.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

There has been no cost of processing civil penalty appeals under the Right to Rent scheme as there have not been any appeals lodged since the start of the scheme on 1 December 2014.

■ Vetting

Derek Twigg: [\[57438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police forces have failed to meet their target for processing Disclosure and Barring Service checks in the last 12 months.

Sarah Newton:

The Disclosure and Barring Service regularly publishes data on police force performance, which can be located through the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572407/police_performance_Sept_16_xls.xls The Disclosure and Barring Service work closely with any force that fails to meet its targets to reduce turnaround times as quickly as possible, offering support where necessary.

■ **Written Questions: Government Responses****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[57077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to Answer Question 50051, on research: EU nationals, tabled on 25 October 2016 by the hon. Member for Coventry South.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The hon. Member's question, UIN 50051, was answered on 20 December 2016.

I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in responding.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION■ **Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance****Simon Hart:**[\[57888\]](#)

To ask the Rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many staff have been (a) recruited and (b) redeployed to work on the Palace of Westminster restoration and renewal programme; and in what salary bands (i) those recruited and (ii) those redeployed are employed.

Tom Brake:

The Restoration and Renewal Programme currently employs 29 staff. Of these, 17 have been competitively recruited to the Programme from within the House of Commons or House of Lords Service, seven have been recruited externally, three are agency staff and two are on loan, from the Corporate Services Team and the Parliamentary Digital Service. Most Programme staff are on temporary contracts; permanent staff of the two Houses would return to their previous Teams if their contracts were not renewed or extended.

PAY BAND	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	TOTAL
SCS1A	1		1
SCS1	3		3
A1	2	3 ¹	5
A2	3	7 ²	10

PAY BAND	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	TOTAL
A3	1		1
B1	4	1	5
B2	1	1	2
C	1		1
D1	1		1
TOTAL	17	12	29

¹ Includes two agency staff

² Includes one agency staff and two staff on loan

■ Palace of Westminster: Security

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[57451\]](#)

To ask the Rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, if the Commission will make it its policy to replace the temporary galvanised hand-operated barriers positioned outside Carriage Gates with barriers in keeping with a Grade 1 listed building; and if he will make a statement.

Tom Brake:

The temporary galvanised barriers outside Carriage Gates will be replaced via the New Palace Yard security enhancement project. The detailed design for the permanent replacement will be developed once an outline business case has been approved in early February 2017. It is envisaged that a solution sympathetic to the existing local architecture will be adopted. This will be subject to obtaining the necessary consents and permissions from Westminster City Council. We plan to start these works by the end of 2017.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Horizon 2020

Helen Goodman:

[\[57692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in her Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

James Wharton:

In response to Q311, at the Treasury Committee on Monday 12 December, the Chancellor referenced the process for EU Structural Funds rather than for Horizon 2020.

The Treasury will underwrite all successful bids for Horizon 2020 that are approved by the Commission, even when specific projects continue beyond our departure from the EU. Government departments will not assess Horizon 2020 grant applications as it is an EU programme, independent of the UK government, and grant funding is awarded by the Commission based on peer review.

UK businesses and universities should continue to bid for competitive EU funds while we remain a member of the EU, and we will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded.

■ **Department for International Development: Staff**

Jake Berry: [\[57013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans her Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

James Wharton:

I refer the Hon. Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

Helen Whately: [\[57128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what measures her Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

James Wharton:

Mental health is a key priority for DFID and we are committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff in line with commitments set out in both the Civil Service Talent Action Plan and the Health & Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan. We support staff through a range of measures.

DFID is based across two sites in the UK – in England and Scotland. We support both the “Time to Change” campaign (in England) and SeeMe in Scotland to end the stigma associated with mental health and raise awareness through supporting Mental Health Awareness Week. We have also recently launched a series of products on personal and team resilience and we promote the Civil Service e-learning to expand staff and managers knowledge of mental health issues.

DFID’s Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers Telephone and Face to Face Counselling for all staff experiencing mental ill health across our global workforce. The service also provides a wide range of online information and advice on work/life issues.

DFID’s HR teams and Occupational Health Services provide support and advice for staff and managers to ensure a successful return to work after a period of mental ill health.

DFID also has a Listening Network, an informal peer staff network, to complement the help already available.

■ Developing Countries: Electricity

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[57294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on the priority of ensuring the provision of reliable base-load electricity as part of the international development agenda.

James Wharton:

DFID is committed to delivering the Global Goals, including Goal 7 on sustainable energy for all. Access to reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity is critical to economic growth, poverty reduction, investment and job creation. This will require base-load electricity to complement intermittent energy generation such as solar.

Our policy is to support a range of generation technologies and distribution approaches (grid, off-grid, mini-grid), including base-load electricity where we can clearly add value. This includes investing in electricity systems (including through CDC) and providing technical assistance for sector planning and power procurement.

■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[57528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she plans to renew her Department's HIV strategy which expired in 2015.

James Wharton:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 2 November to Question number 50946.

■ Developing Countries: Nutrition

Brendan O'Hara: [\[57092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress has been made on plans to improve nutrition-specific programmes in low and middle-income countries.

James Wharton:

DFID is on track with our commitment to improve the nutrition of 50 million people by 2020. We are continuing to strengthen nutrition-specific programmes in the countries where we work. These services will contribute to reducing stunting and make sure acute malnutrition is treated effectively. We support Governments that are part of the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement to do the same.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[57094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support the Scaling Up Nutrition movement in its work on global malnutrition.

James Wharton:

The Secretary of State for International Development is a member of the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Lead Group. DFID funds the SUN Movement Secretariat, the SUN Civil Society Network and is providing assistance to Governments in the SUN Movement.

■ International Assistance

Henry Smith: [\[57797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans her Department has to introduce greater financial accountability to the international aid system.

James Wharton:

The 2016 Multilateral Development Review sets out ambitious plans to enhance our multilateral partners' financial accountability. We will demand that our partners meet international aid transparency standards and pass the same expectation to their partners. We are challenging multilaterals to work towards full transparency by publishing all spending over £500, as DFID does, and we are expanding our use of payment by results approaches and performance contracts, to introduce greater accountability. These measures will further improve the effectiveness of the international aid system, deliver better value for money for UK taxpayers and better outcomes for the world's poorest people.

■ International Climate Fund

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[57702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans her Department has for UK branding for projects funded by the Government through the International Climate Fund.

James Wharton:

Projects funded by the Government through the International Climate Fund carry UK government branding in line with DFID's branding policy.

■ Iraq: Religious Freedom

Jim Shannon: [\[57700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the letter of 17 November 2016 from the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief on providing further support to Iraqi minorities, such as Yazidis, if she will meet the hon. Members who signed that letter.

James Wharton:

My colleague the Minister of State, Rory Stewart, will meet the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief on 17 January 2017 to discuss this and other issues.

■ Refugees: Children

Catherine West: [\[57953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether any funds from her Department will be used to support the 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees coming to the UK.

James Wharton:

Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding allocated to the Home Office is being used to meet the costs of supporting vulnerable refugees resettled or relocated to the UK for the first year, in accordance with internationally agreed guidelines. This includes unaccompanied children resettled from the Middle East and North Africa under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme, as well as unaccompanied children relocated from Europe.

■ **South Sudan: Females**

Imran Hussain:

[57834]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to women in South Sudan on hygiene and ante-natal and post-natal care.

James Wharton:

DFID is contributing £112 million to the Health Pooled Fund in South Sudan which has a specific focus on ante-natal and post-natal care for women. Last year the fund provided over 100,000 ante-natal consultations and ensured that 35,000 women gave birth in a facility accompanied by a skilled birth attendant. The UK's humanitarian programme also provides access to clean drinking water for women and separate latrines for men and women to increase women's access.

■ **South Sudan: Sexual Offences**

Imran Hussain:

[57833]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department is contributing to projects focused on response to sexual violence in South Sudan.

James Wharton:

This year DFID is contributing £115 million to humanitarian programmes in South Sudan, which include elements designed to prevent sexual violence. We are also providing £29 million to the Health Pooled Fund which supports victims through counselling and medical treatment. Through our Girls' Education in South Sudan Programme we are providing £14.1 million this year to help increase the number of girls attending and completing school.

■ **Syria: Armed Conflict**

Kerry McCarthy:

[57971]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support is being provided to aid agencies to help Syrians being evacuated from Aleppo.

James Wharton:

We are providing life-saving support to thousands of people who have left East Aleppo or been caught up in the fighting. Through UN humanitarian agencies and NGO partners we are delivering the full range of relief, including hot meals, clean water, shelter, and healthcare. This is funded through the £2.3 billion that we have pledged in response to the Syria crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

The Prime Minister announced on 16 December that Britain will commit an additional £20 million of lifesaving support which will go to some of the hardest to reach places in Syria - including Aleppo, and to Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agricultural Products: Wales

Chris Elmore:

[57878]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to promote exports of Welsh agriculture produce.

Greg Hands:

The UK Food and Drink International Action Plan was launched in October this year following extensive consultation with key stakeholders including the Welsh Government. The plan sets out how Government and industry will work together to boost exports and outlines nine campaigns, led by the Department for International Trade, covering the major global growth markets for international sales. We recognise the importance of Welsh agricultural produce to our economy and our campaigns are open for participation from producers in Wales and will support producers equally across the whole of the UK.

■ Department for International Trade: Pay

Jake Berry:

[56992]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

Jake Berry:

[57036]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Greg Hands:

Government departments do not publish details of the salary of their highest to lowest paid employees. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) do, however, publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organisation. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

As the Department for International Trade (DIT) is newly formed, we have not had the opportunity to contribute to the ONS publication. DIT's statistics will be included in the next release, due for publication in March 2017.

■ Department for International Trade: Staff

Jake Berry: [\[57014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Greg Hands:

I refer the Hon. Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh: [\[57133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many additional staff his Department plans to recruit in the next (a) year and (b) three years.

Greg Hands:

As the Department for International Trade (DIT) is newly formed, we are currently scoping our medium to long-term resourcing plans. In the interim we are currently running an external recruitment campaign to meet our immediate resourcing needs.

■ European Free Trade Association

Chris Leslie: [\[57208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential costs and benefits for the UK of membership of the European Free Trade Association; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon Member for Nottingham East to the answer I gave to my hon Friend for Bristol North West on 31 October, UIN:50013.

■ Exports

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh: [\[57270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate his Department has made of the level of exports from the UK in each of the next three years.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade does not produce forecasts of exports.

The forecasts published by the Office for Budget Responsibility as part of the November 2016 Autumn Statement are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Forecasts of UK Exports, £billion, current prices

YEAR	EXPORTS, £ BILLION, CURRENT PRICES
2015 (actual)	508.8
2016 (forecast)	537.5
2017 (forecast)	585.2

YEAR	EXPORTS, £ BILLION, CURRENT PRICES
2018 (forecast)	614.8
2019 (forecast)	633.1

Source: Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), November 2016 forecasts

Note: Since publication of these forecasts, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has detected an error in the trade data which affects the actual export figure for 2015, and therefore the OBR forecasts for subsequent years. As a result of the ONS error, the 2015 figure for exports has been revised up to £513.1 billion.

■ Exports: Government Assistance

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:

[\[57309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what economic evaluation the Government has conducted on the potential effect of the proposed changes to export finance announced in the Autumn Statement 2016.

Greg Hands:

The increase in export finance capacity announced in the Autumn Statement is a long-term measure designed to enable UK Export Finance (UKEF) to support significantly more UK trade in coming years. It supports the Department of International Trade's objective of boosting the UK's trade performance through promoting and supporting exports.

There is strong interest in UKEF's support. UKEF has evaluated that doubling its risk appetite will enable it to better exploit its £50bn portfolio capacity.

Increasing individual country limits by up to 100% and up to a maximum of £5bn will help to meet identified demand for UK exports to some key markets. Each limit will be subject to a market review over the coming months and some country limits will be doubled.

In addition to these measures, UKEF has quadrupled the number of local currencies that it can support, making UK exports more attractive to overseas buyers and giving UK exporters a clear competitive advantage.

■ Overseas Trade

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:

[\[57190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of investor-state dispute settlement measures in supporting growth in international trade.

Greg Hands:

The government is currently reviewing its trade policy as the UK prepares to leave the EU. In light of this, the government is considering all options including the design of

future bilateral trade and investment agreements, and the most appropriate means of providing investors with the necessary protections.

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh: [\[57236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many bilateral trade deals he estimates the UK will sign by 2020.

Greg Hands:

As the UK leaves the EU, we have an opportunity to forge a new role for ourselves in the world, ensuring we become a global leader in free trade. We are working closely with counterparts across a wide range of countries and markets, in order to take all opportunities to promote the UK as a great place to do business and with which to trade.

■ Overseas Trade: Gulf States

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [\[57796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech to the Gulf Cooperation Council on 7 December 2016, what assessment his Department has made of the trading opportunities for UK businesses in the Gulf over the next five years.

Greg Hands:

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region is an important market for British business. The GCC has a combined GDP of \$1.4trn. In 2015 UK exports to the region were worth £20.4bn. In 2015 the Department for International Trade (DIT) facilitated over £2.1bn of Gulf investment into the UK. Through UK Export Finance, DIT has provided nearly £16bn in financial support to UK exporters in the GCC market since 2011, and we continue to support new business opportunities in the region in order to promote British exports.

■ Small Businesses: Digital Technology

Karl McCartney: [\[907898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the level of SME business interest in the great.gov.uk digital platform.

Greg Hands:

DIT's marketing campaign is targeting high potential SMEs across a number of channels and directing them to GREAT.gov.uk. We're focusing predominantly on young, small businesses with a modest turnover that have the potential to export their products and services overseas. Since going live, over 200,000 users have visited GREAT.gov.uk. More than 12,186 users have made use of our Selling Online Overseas service and 1100 businesses have created a profile on our 'Find a Buyer' service.

■ Trade Agreements

Jonathan Edwards:

[57917]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what mechanisms he plans to use to involve the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in future free trade agreement negotiations.

Greg Hands:

While the UK remains a member of the EU, we are unable to negotiate and conclude trade agreements. As we review our trade policy ahead of our withdrawal from the EU, we are committed to working closely with the devolved administrations. My noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Lord Price) recently visited all three of the devolved administrations, holding productive meetings with counterpart ministers.

■ UK Export Finance

Diana Johnson:

[57718]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reasons UK Export Finance does not have export finance managers based in every region of the UK; and if he will make it his policy to employ such managers in every region.

Greg Hands:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) currently has a network of 22 Export Finance Managers (EFMs) who cover all regions of the UK. No regions are overlooked. In some cases, an EFM whose physical office is located in one region will also provide full coverage for a neighbouring region. In January 2017, this network will be enhanced by the recruitment of an additional Senior Export Finance Manager, providing further support to exporters and businesses located across the North of England.

EFMs play an important role in fulfilling UKEF's mission that no viable export fails for want of finance or insurance from the private sector. EFMs act as local points of contact to introduce exporters and businesses with export potential to finance providers, credit insurers, insurance brokers, trade support bodies and sources of government support (including support provided by UKEF itself).

UKEF publishes the names and contact details of its EFMs on its website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-an-export-finance-manager>

JUSTICE

■ Bedford Prison

Richard Burgon:

[52183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prisoners have been removed from and (b) cells require repair in HMP Bedford after the disturbance on 6 November 2016.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Improving safety and decreasing violence in prisons is a key priority. Last month we launched the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper and we are already implementing

measures to tackle drugs, drones and phones. This major overhaul of the prison system will include the recruitment of an extra 2,500 frontline officers. Our reforms will empower governors to make the changes they need, ensuring that prisons are places of safety and reform.

225 prisoners were removed from HMP Bedford following the disturbance on 6 November 2016. 140 cells required repair. A programme of works was immediately put in place to bring cells back into operation as soon as possible.

Richard Burgon: [\[52184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that recommendations by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in its February 2014 and May 2016 inspections into HMP Bedford are put into effect.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The work of HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) is vital to our prison system. We have taken immediate action to address the recommendations made by HMIP.

Additional resources are being provided to help HMP Bedford to improve safety, including the introduction of body worn cameras, upgraded CCTV, and HMP Bedford will also receive additional staff as part of plans to increase staffing levels across the estate.

■ Dangerous Driving: Sentencing

Greg Mulholland: [\[55348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on what date she plans to launch her Department's consultation on sentencing for dangerous driving.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government is committed to making sure that sentencing for those who kill or cause serious injury on the roads is proportionate within the context of our wider sentencing framework.

We published the consultation on driving offences and penalties on 5 December.

■ Judiciary: Greater London

Paul Scully: [\[55094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training is provided to magistrates and judges in Greater London on understanding the nature and effect of domestic abuse and of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Dr Phillip Lee:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given to PQ 54250 on 22 November 2016.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Wansbeck

Ian Lavery:

[\[57191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people attempted to access legal aid and were declined in Wansbeck constituency in the last three years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We must ensure legal aid is sustainable and fair - both for those who need it and the taxpayer who pays for it. That is why we have made sure support remains available to the most vulnerable and in the most serious cases.

The table below shows the total number of legal aid applications received by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) alongside those not granted legal aid in the Wansbeck constituency. This information is based upon applications made to legal aid providers located and offering services within the Wansbeck constituency. Figures for those applications not granted include both those refused as well as those rejected due to incomplete information (which may then be granted in any subsequent application).

	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS NOT GRANTED
2013-2014	741	71
2014-2015	671	33
2015-2016	614	34

These figures reflect applications made via the criminal courts, civil representation and exceptional case funding schemes only. Data are not held for the legal aid schemes covering Legal Help and pre-charge criminal advice .

■ Littlehey Prison

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[51111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to improve resettlement activity at HM Prison Littlehey.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We are committed to helping offenders turn their lives around and to reducing reoffending. We know that providing advice and support to prisoners before release can help them settle back into the community on release and reduce the likelihood of their committing further crimes. At HMP Littlehey prisoners' resettlement needs are identified and they have access to help finding suitable accommodation on release, setting up a bank account and finding employment.

■ Ministry of Justice: Pay

Jake Berry:

[\[56993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in her Department.

Jake Berry:

[57037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in her Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Office for National Statistics publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organization. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

■ **Ministry of Justice: Staff**

Helen Whately:

[57124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what measures her Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Wellbeing Strategy, launched in November 2015, sets out MoJ's commitment to supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of all our staff.

Employees can find additional information and signposting to the support available on internal Wellbeing pages on the MoJ intranet, and can seek advice and peer support from the MoJ Disability Staff Networks. In addition our independent Employee Assistance Provision provides confidential counselling sessions for employees, 24 hour telephone support, coaching for managers, mediation and group counselling.

■ **National Offender Management Service: Staff**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[57235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total cost has been of capped public interest transfers to HM Prison Berwyn; and how many staff of each grade have been involved in such moves.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Learning from the experience of previously opening new prisons, in order to support the opening of HM Prison Berwyn in North Wales experience from previously opening new prisons means that there is a need for Berwyn to be staffed by a balance of new and experienced staff. To facilitate the relocation of experienced staff to move to Berwyn, a bespoke relocation package was offered and capped at £22,000 which covered the total cost of a move of home or assisted travel to the vicinity of the new prison.

For 2015 and 2016 (to date) the cost of public interest transfers to HM Prison Berwyn is £200,484. This relates to 25 employees.

Information on the grades of these staff is not available.

■ Prisoners: Suicide

Luciana Berger:

[57952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December 2016 to Question 52460, (a) which months the years provided run from and to and (b) when the full data for 2016 will be made available.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The data provided in the previous answer, about self-inflicted deaths of prisoners who were not being managed using the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process, are for the calendar years 2010-2015. The full data for 2016 will be made available at the time of the publication of the next Safety in Custody Quarterly update, on 26 January 2017.

■ Prisons: Mobile Phones

Jim McMahon:

[57130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of current controls of mobile telephones in prisons.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We take the issue of mobile phones in prisons very seriously and are committed to minimising the number of mobile phones entering prisons and to detecting and disrupting their use by prisoners when they are smuggled into prisons.

With the help of leading mobile phone companies and cutting edge technology, we are stepping up measures to find and block mobile phones.

The Secretary of State has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mobile Phone Network Operators to develop a system which prevents unauthorised mobile phone use within prisons.

■ Small Claims

Mr David Nuttall:

[57775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the evidential basis was for the Government's decision to consult on raising the small claims limit from £1,000 to £5,000 for (a) employer liability, (b) public liability and (c) clinical negligence.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

A consultation paper and impact assessment setting out the case for reform were published on 17 November and are available on gov.uk.

The small claims limit for personal injury claims has not been increased for 25 years, and raising the limit to include some low level employers liability, public liability and clinical negligence claims would make sure all types of PI claims are treated uniformly.

The consultation closes on 6 January and the government is due to publish its response by Friday 7 April 2017.

NORTHERN IRELAND■ **Northern Ireland Office: Pay**

Jake Berry: [56994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

James Brokenshire:

Government departments do not publish details of the salary of their highest to lowest paid employees.

The Office for National Statistics do, however, publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organization. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

Jake Berry: [57038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

James Brokenshire:

The Office for National Statistics publish the salary ratio of highest to median earners for each Civil Service organization. These ratios are published annually as part of Civil Service Statistics and can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

SCOTLAND■ **Jobcentres: Glasgow**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [58060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Department of Work and Pensions on the proposals for the closure of jobcentres in Glasgow.

David Mundell:

I refer the hon Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West on 14 December 2016, UINs 56910 and 56916.

In addition, for JobCentre Plus offices over three miles or 20 minutes away by public transport, DWP are carrying out local consultation prior to implementing any changes to help inform decisions about additional provision, such as outreach services. The consultation is available online and through the affected Jobcentres. This consultation was launched immediately after the announcements were made, and is open until 31

January. Staff will also advise customers on alternative Jobcentre locations, taking into account travel and access to the local labour market.

■ Jobcentres: South Lanarkshire

Chris Stephens:

[\[57929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions have taken place between his Department and the Department for Work and Pensions on the proposed Jobcentre closures in Glasgow and South Lanarkshire; and if he will make a statement.

David Mundell:

I refer the hon Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West on 14 December 2016, UINs 56910 and 56916.

In addition, for JobCentre Plus offices over three miles or 20 minutes away by public transport, DWP are carrying out local consultation prior to implementing any changes to help inform decisions about additional provision, such as outreach services. The consultation is available online and through the affected Jobcentres. This consultation was launched immediately after the announcements were made, and is open until 31 January. Staff will also advise customers on alternative Jobcentre locations, taking into account travel and access to the local labour market.

TRANSPORT

■ Airports

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[57934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) regional, (b) local and (c) general aviation airports that have been operating in the UK in each of the last 20 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[57937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) regional, (b) local and (c) general aviation airports currently operating in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department does not hold data on the number of (a) regional, (b) local or (c) general aviation airports operating in the UK.

The table below however shows the overall number of airports operating in the UK and reporting aircraft movements to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for each of the last 20 years:

YEAR	NO. OF AIRPORTS ¹
1995	57
1996	58

YEAR	NO. OF AIRPORTS ¹
1997	59
1998	59
1999	59
2000	59
2001	59
2002	58
2003	59
2004	61
2005	61
2006	60
2007	60
2008	60
2009	61
2010	61
2011	60
2012	59
2013	57
2014	57
2015	56

¹ Includes all airports handling scheduled and major charter services and reporting aircraft movements according to the CAA.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[57935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the proportion of the total value of (a) regional, (b) local and (c) general aviation airports in the UK that is in public ownership; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

Airports in the UK are mainly privately owned or operated. The UK aviation industry contributes £20 billion annually to UK GDP.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[57936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of how much his Department has spent on general aviation airports in each of the last six years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport has spent no money on general aviation airports in the last six years. Airports in the UK operate in a competitive, commercial environment. It is for airports' owners to take commercial decisions about financial investment.

■ Aviation

Drew Hendry:

[\[56931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the devolved administrations on the modernisation of UK airspace.

Drew Hendry:

[\[56932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the aviation industry on the Government's agenda for airspace modernisation.

Drew Hendry:

[\[57091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the environmental benefits of modernising the UK's airspace.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government supports the need for airspace modernisation. In October 2016, the Aviation Minister, Lord Ahmad discussed airspace matters with the Scottish Transport Minister and expects to have further discussions with representatives of the devolved administrations regarding airspace matters over the coming months.

Ministers do meet representatives from the aviation industry regularly and the need for airspace modernisation is often on the agenda.

The Government supports the need for airspace modernisation, but has not made a specific assessment of its environmental benefits.

■ Cycling and Walking

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[57881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the cycling and walking investment strategy.

Andrew Jones:

We will publish the Strategy shortly but we are not able to specify a precise time.

■ Department for Transport: Equal Pay

Jake Berry:

[\[57158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

Mr John Hayes:

My Department will publish information on the gender pay gap among employees in due course as outlined by the Regulations due to be laid in the Equality Act 2010.

■ **Department for Transport: Pay**

Jake Berry: [56997]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

Mr John Hayes:

Information on the gap in earnings between the highest and lowest paid full time employee can be found in the Remuneration and Staff Report section of the 2015/16 Department for Transport Annual Report and Accounts, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dft-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

■ **Department for Transport: Staff**

Jake Berry: [57019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Mr John Hayes:

I refer the Hon. Member to the oral statement on Corporate Governance of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408, and to the associated green paper itself which can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573438/beis-16-56-corporate-governance-reform-green-paper-final.pdf

Jake Berry: [57041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Mr John Hayes:

The percentage gap between full-time staff in the highest pay grade and average full-time pay in the Department (including the Executive Agencies) is 84%.

Helen Whately: [57138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport (DfT) and its agencies take the mental wellbeing of its staff very seriously. DfT has a variety of policies and programmes designed to help staff that find themselves suffering with poor mental health.

DfT has recently published an easy to access, practical guide for line managers on how they can support mental wellbeing in the workplace. It also includes advice on

understanding the early warning signs and how to manage difficult conversations around mental health.

DfT also supports workplace adjustment passports which are a living record of adjustments that a disabled member of staff requires, including staff with mental health problems. These documents are designed to do the following:

- A) Ensure that both parties, the individual and the employer, have an accurate record of what has been agreed
- B) Minimise the need to re-negotiate workplace adjustments every time the employee changes jobs, is re-located or assigned a new manager within the organisation
- C) Provide employees and their line managers with the basis for discussions about workplace adjustments at future meetings.

DfT has an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). EAP support is tailored to the department and is provided by expert staff who understand our business. It offers support and signposts individuals to advice on things such as bereavement, depression, and anxiety. It also offers counselling sessions.

DfT has a Mental Health Buddy Network, set up by staff, for staff. It connects people who are suffering from mental health problems with another member of staff who is able to meet with them in complete confidence. The buddies are aware that they are not trained psychiatrists; they do not give advice but provide a listening ear, and signpost to the relevant, professional organisations.

DfT has a dedicated mental health staff network, Time to Change, which is dedicated to changing the department's culture, and remove the stigma surrounding mental health.

■ Driving: Licensing

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[57860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring new drivers to have driven for a minimum number of hours before being granted a driving licence.

Andrew Jones:

The Department for Transport has commissioned research on and considered a range of measures, including a minimum number of hours.

■ Electric Vehicles: Bicycles

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[57373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to incentivise the take-up of electric bicycles.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[57508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's news story of 13 October 2016, £35 million boost for ultra low emission vehicles, whether that funding will include measures to encourage the take-up of electric bicycles.

Andrew Jones:

In March 2015 the Coalition Government agreed £700,000 funding for an Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle sharing pilot in England as a means of testing the appetite for such schemes. The Department for Transport is currently evaluating the outcomes of the pilot and will continue to work with stakeholders to consider new initiatives that will encourage the uptake of electric bikes.

The Office for Low Emission Vehicles is working to encourage the transition from internal combustion engines to cleaner electric vehicles, the £35 million boost for ultra-low emission vehicles announced on 13th October will be focussed on that objective.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway

Andy McDonald: [57821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Network Rail paid in schedule and compensation payments to Govia Thameslink Railway in 2016-17.

Paul Maynard:

This information is published by Network Rail annually at <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/transparency/datasets/>. As financial year 2016-17 is ongoing, these figures are not yet available.

Andy McDonald: [57973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether fares revenue not received by Govia Thameslink Railway on account of poor performance and industrial action is to be paid back to the public purse.

Paul Maynard:

There is no mechanism within the Franchise Agreement for such an action. The Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise agreement is a management contract in which the operator manages the delivery of rail services on the franchise network on behalf of the Department. Under the terms of the Franchise Agreement government receives the fare revenue from Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), with GTR receiving a subsidy. It is the Department that is therefore on revenue risk. GTR are at risk if its costs are higher than those envisaged at that time.

■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Andrew Selous: [57901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many ultra-low emissions vehicles there are on UK roads now; and how many there are projected to be in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Mr John Hayes:

At the end of the third quarter of 2016 there were 87,366 ultra low emission vehicles licensed in the UK. The Government has a clear goal that all new cars and vans should be zero emission vehicles by 2040, and sales growth currently remains on track.

As part of the Government's forthcoming emissions reduction plan, we expect to update the interim projections set out in the 2011 Carbon Plan and "Driving the future today: a strategy for ultra low emission vehicles in the UK" (2013), to reflect the latest analysis.

■ Official Cars: Exhaust Emissions

Neil Parish: [\[57927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of vehicles in the Government Car Service are ultra-low emission vehicles.

Mr John Hayes:

Ultra low emission vehicles make up 6.3% of the Government Car Service fleet.

■ Railways: Industrial Disputes

Andy McDonald: [\[57527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2016 to Question 55987, on what dates his Department received force majeure claims from train operating companies in relation to industrial action taken by employees of a sub-contractor since January 1996; and what the outcome was in each such case.

Paul Maynard:

The information requested can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Andy McDonald: [\[57840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2016 to Question 55987, on what dates (a) his Department and (b) predecessor departments received force majeure claims from train operating companies in relation to industrial action since January 1996; and what the outcome was in each such case.

Paul Maynard:

Since 2005, 16 events across 7 train operating companies have had force majeure claims agreed in respect of industrial disputes on the railway.

■ Road Traffic Offences

Tim Farron: [\[57865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many incidents of road rage have been recorded in each year since 2010.

Andrew Jones:

The information is not collected centrally.

■ Roads: East Yorkshire

Sir Greg Knight: [\[57452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.6 of the Autumn Statement 2016, how much funding will be provided for highways in East Yorkshire over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government is committed to investing in the East Riding of Yorkshire's highways to improve and maintain roads up to 2020 through the following:

- £65.869m for local highway maintenance from 2015/16 to 2020/21 (Highways Maintenance Block, Pothole Action Fund, Incentive Element and Challenge Fund).
- £9.840m via the Integrated Transport Block for small scale transport improvements.
- £16.7m of Local Growth Funding over the next five years to fund an enhanced programme of highway maintenance on 'A' classified roads in the East Riding to improve the condition and quality of the highways asset and support local economic growth.
- Development funding of £92,000 has been awarded to East Riding of Yorkshire Council from the Large Local Majors Scheme to develop the A1079/A164 Jocks Lodge Junction scheme.

■ **Roads: North East****Ian Lavery:**[\[57194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much he plans to invest in the North East of England's highways to improve roads and to carry out essential maintenance up to 2020.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government is committed to investing in the North East of England's highways to improve and maintain roads up to 2020 through the following:

- Highways Maintenance Block (2015/16 - 2020/21) = £268.0m.
- Integrated Transport Block = £112.2m.
- Two local major road schemes = £61.5m.
- Significant funding to the Local Enterprise Partnerships, including £82.5m for the New Wear Crossing.
- Highways England will be investing in major schemes as part of the Road Investment Strategy = £425m spend up to 2020, with several schemes continuing spend and construction beyond 2020.
- Highways England will also undertake renewals and maintenance across the Strategic Road Network in Yorkshire and the North East up to 2020 = £600m.
- Highways England will also spend in the region of £30m per annum on the routine maintenance of the Strategic Road Network in Yorkshire and the North East.

■ **Southern****Jeremy Quin:**[\[56968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with Govia Thameslink Railway on the action it might take to mitigate the financial effect on retail outlets in train stations of industrial action by employees of Southern Rail.

Paul Maynard:

The unnecessary industrial action is clearly having an effect on both passengers and businesses.

I am in regular contact with Govia Thameslink Railway and any retailer who feels that the disruption has had a detrimental effect on their business, should contact their managing Agent, Amey PT. Govia has assured me that each case will be looked at on an individual basis.

Jeremy Quin:

[\[56969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what reports he has received on Southern trains (a) being taken out of service and (b) skipping stations or suffering delays due to cameras on driver-only operation trains failing.

Paul Maynard:

Govia Thameslink Railway is not required to provide the Department with detailed information on the causes of train failures. Officials have discussed camera failures with Southern, who confirmed that there has been a noticeable increase in camera defects reported. However, when investigated, no faults have been found by technical teams.

■ Southern: Industrial Disputes

Andy McDonald:

[\[57460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what responsibilities the Director of Rail Passenger Services in his Department has in (a) processing and (b) advising on each of Govia Thameslink Railway's claims for force majeure in relation to industrial action on Southern rail services since 26 April 2016.

Paul Maynard:

The team processing Govia Thameslink Railway's force majeure claim sit within the command of the Managing Director of Rail Passenger Services. However, the Managing Director of Rail Passenger Services has had no involvement in processing or advising on the Department's assessment of the claim.

WALES■ **Air Passenger Duty: Wales**

Jonathan Edwards: [57978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what representations his Department has received from the Welsh Government on the devolution of Air Passenger Duty.

Alun Cairns:

The Government has reviewed options to support regional airports that might be affected by the devolution of Air Passenger Duty and received a number of representations in response to the discussion paper that was published as part of that review. HM Treasury published a summary of those responses here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570773/air_passenger_duty_devolution_responses_web.pdf

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES■ **Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Fund**

Paula Sherriff: [57345]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many applications were made to Access to Elected Office Fund 2015-16 by (a) political party, (b) gender, (c) ethnicity and (d) region; and how many such applications were (i) granted and (ii) refused.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Access to Elected Office Fund was set up to help disabled candidates meet their additional costs in standing for election. It was a three-year pilot that ran until the General Election in May 2015. No applications were made after March 2015.

Paula Sherriff: [57346]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to (a) publish the evaluation report on the Access to Elected Office Fund and (b) make a decision on whether that Fund should continue.

Caroline Dinenage:

An evaluation of the Access to Elected Office pilot fund is currently being undertaken. The report from that evaluation will be published when a statement about the future of the fund is made in due course.

■ **Equal Pay**

Dawn Butler: [57803]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the draft Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017, what sanctions will be applied to employers for non-compliance with the new reporting requirements.

Caroline Dinenage:

Non-compliance with the regulations will constitute an 'unlawful act' and fall within the existing enforcement powers of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) under the Equality Act 2006.

The regulations require that, in addition to publishing the information on their own website, employers must also publish the information on a government website. This will allow us to closely monitor levels of compliance and keep this position under review by establishing a database of compliant employers.

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission**Dawn Butler:**[\[57766\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether an equality impact assessment has been carried out on planned reductions in funding of the Equality and Human Rights Commission up to 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has a budget of £20.4m for 2016-17. Budgets for the years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 are being finalised by the Department for Education in consultation with the EHRC, and are consistent with the spending review settlement provided to the Department. We hope to be in a position to confirm budgets for these years shortly.

The EHRC has, and will, continue to receive sufficient funds to enable it to fulfil its statutory functions.

In finalising the budget allocation for the spending review period, the Government Equalities Office will have continued due regard to its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission: Staff**Dawn Butler:**[\[57735\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what estimate the Government Equalities Office has made of the number of jobs in the Equality and Human Rights Commission that will be lost as a result of changes to that body's funding up to 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is an independent body established under the Equality Act 2006. The Commission is responsible for its own staff management, including the number of staff it employs. However, its current re-structuring is intended to enable it to make necessary financial savings while continuing to fulfil all its statutory functions in an efficient way.

■ Minister for Women and Equalities: Horizon 2020**Helen Goodman:**[\[57696\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response

to Q311, who in the Government Equalities Office is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Caroline Dinenage:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Maintenance

Deidre Brock: [\[57806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance and training is provided by his Department for staff administering the child maintenance scheme on working with parents who have been victims of domestic violence.

Caroline Nokes:

When a client first makes a call to the Child Maintenance Options service they have the opportunity to declare if they have experienced domestic violence which allows us to understand whether or not it is appropriate to waive the £20 application fee. This information will be passed to the Child Maintenance Service Applications Caseworker who will use subtle probing questions to gather further information.

Child Maintenance Caseworkers and Child Maintenance Options agents receive a significant amount of behavioural training around managing sensitive and difficult client interactions that will equip them to deal with clients professionally and empathetically.

This training is not specifically related to domestic violence, however following recent feedback we are engaging with stakeholders to develop the enhanced learning packages to include this.

Deidre Brock: [\[57808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much has accrued to the public purse from enforcement charges for non-compliance with child maintenance commitments by paying parents in each year since that system has been in operation.

Caroline Nokes:

I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Glasgow South West on 4th November 2016 [\[51323\]](#) which reflects the information to March 2016 audited by National Audit Office as part of the 2015/16 Audit. Information on fees in the financial year to date will not be available until audit of the 2016/17 Client Funds Account has been completed.

■ Children: Poverty

Tulip Siddiq: [\[57897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children have been in poverty in each year since 2010; and what steps he is taking to reduce child poverty.

Damian Hinds:

Estimates of the average numbers of children living in households classed as being in relative low income since 2010 are published annually in Households Below Average Income (HBAI) data tables.

These are publicly available in the link shown (see file "4_children_trends.xls" and tab 4.3tr)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/532115/hbai-2014-2015-supporting-excel-files.zip

The Prime Minister is clear that tackling poverty and disadvantage, and delivering real social reform, is a priority for this Government. We intend to bring forward a social justice green paper in the new year.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Equal Pay**Jake Berry:**[\[57160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

Caroline Nokes:

Our department has reported mean and median gender pay gap data since 2008 as part of the annual release of Civil Service Statistics by the Office for National Statistics.

The latest gender pay gap data (published in October earlier this year) can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

In October 2015, the then Prime Minister announced that new gender pay gap reporting measures being introduced across the private and voluntary sector from April 2017 would be extended to also apply across the public sector. We are actively working to ensure the gender pay gap data we report in future fully mirrors these new requirements.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Horizon 2020**Helen Goodman:**[\[57695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Damian Hinds:

In response to Q311, at the Treasury Committee on Monday 12 December, the Chancellor made reference to the process for EU Structural Funds rather than for Horizon 2020

The Treasury will underwrite all successful bids for Horizon 2020 that are approved by the Commission, even when specific projects continue beyond the departure from the EU.

Government departments will not assess Horizon 2020 grant applications – Horizon 2020 is an EU programme, independent of the UK government, and grant funding is awarded by the Commission based on peer review.

UK businesses and Universities should continue to bid for competitive EU funds while we remain a member of the EU. We will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Helen Whately: [\[57139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what measures his Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Caroline Nokes:

DWP is committed to creating an environment with parity of esteem for both mental and physical ill health; where mental health can be discussed honestly and openly without fear of discrimination.

The Department holds the status of Mindful Employer and is also a disability confident employer.

All staff and Line managers have access to comprehensive support via Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Provision, The department also has membership with organisations offering employees access to a wealth of practical advice and support on all aspects of disability, including mental health.

Mental health remains a top priority under the new departmental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 'Working Well Together', fully endorsed by Debbie Alder, executive level Disability, Health and Wellbeing Champion.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Diana Johnson: [\[57149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, following changes to the weekly support for new work-related activity group (WRAG) claimants on employment support allowance effective from April 2017, whether any pre-April 2017 WRAG claimants will receive the lower weekly payment if they are re-assessed as still being in the WRAG following the end of their review period.

Penny Mordaunt:

All existing Employment and Support Allowance claimants in receipt of the work related activity group component on 3 April 2017 who are re-assessed thereafter and remain in the work related activity group will continue to receive the component.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Glasgow

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[57955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have received employment and support allowance as a result of using the services at (a) Castlemilk and (b) Langside job centres in the last 12 months.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Statistics on the number of Employment and Support Allowance on-flows can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-statistics-tabulation-tool>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-tabulation-tool-guidance>

■ Housing Benefit and State Pension Credit (Temporary Absence) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Alex Chalk:

[57982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Housing Benefit and State Pension Credit (Temporary Absence) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, how his Department defines the term medically approved treatment or care for persons temporarily absent from than UK for more than four weeks; and whether that definition extends to domiciliary care provided by non-professionals when that care is endorsed by a GP or consultant.

Caroline Nokes:

Regulation 3(3) of the State Pension Credit Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/1792) provides that Pension Credit may continue for up to 26 weeks notwithstanding a temporary absence from Great Britain where the absence is in connection with medical treatment by, or under the supervision of, a qualified practitioner or where the absence is in order to undergo medically approved convalescence. The regulation defines “qualified practitioner” as meaning a person “qualified to provide medical treatment” and “medically approved” is defined as meaning “certified by a registered medical practitioner”. Therefore in cases where a person has gone abroad to undergo convalescence, it has to be certified by a registered medical practitioner and the absence should not be expected to exceed 26 weeks.

Guidance on the Pension Credit Temporary Absence rules can be seen [here](#).

Regulation 7(16) of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/213) and the Housing Benefit (Persons who have reached the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/214) provide a similar 26 week absence rule for Housing Benefit. Medically approved is defined in regulation 7(18) of those Regulations, as “certified by a medical practitioner”. Further guidance is at paragraphs 3.541 to 3.543

[Chapter A3 of the Housing Benefit Guidance manual](#). In particular, paragraphs 3.542 and 3.543 give guidance on who might be providing care, and where.

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

Graham Jones: [\[57084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of future changes to housing benefit for claimants under 21 years of age on (a) claimants' labour mobility and (b) the wider economy.

Caroline Nokes:

This policy will not affect Housing Benefit claimants; rather it will affect new claims to Universal Credit Full Service from 1 April 2017. This policy will also be implemented alongside the Youth Obligation – a new and intensive package of labour market support for 18-21 year-olds looking to get back into work.

Dr Eilidh Whiteford: [\[57415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much the Government has spent on housing benefit for people aged under 21 in each local authority area in each year since 2007.

Caroline Nokes:

The requested age breakdown of Housing Benefit expenditure is only available for financial years from 2011/12 onwards. The available information is in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Housing Benefit Expenditure [57415_Housing Benefit Expenditure.pdf]

Dr Eilidh Whiteford: [\[57619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of people aged under 21 who will be affected by the proposed removal of the housing benefit element of universal credit.

Caroline Nokes:

Current estimates suggest that 10,000 people will be affected by the policy by 2020/21.

■ Jobcentres: Glasgow

Patrick Grady: [\[57924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to publish details of the public consultation on the closure of job centres in Glasgow on his Department's website.

Damian Hinds:

The current consultation process for the proposed closure of some Glasgow Jobcentres started on 7 December 2016 and now includes, as of 19 December, information on the Gov.uk website.

The consultation will close on 31 January 2017.

■ Jobcentres: Lanarkshire

Natalie McGarry:

[\[57928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what percentage of the estate is in use at the Jobcentre Plus offices in (a) Shettleston, (b) Easterhouse, (c) Parkhead, (d) Bridgeton, (e) Castlemilk, (f) Langside, (g) Newlands, (h) Anniesland, (i) Partick, (j) Maryhill, (k) Springburn, (l) Cambuslang and (m) Rutherglen.

Damian Hinds:

Since 1998 the Department occupies the majority of its accommodation under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) known as the PRIME contract. Under the terms of this 20-year PFI, the Department contracts to occupy fully serviced accommodation from its private sector partner, Telereal Trillium.

The following percentages represent the utilisation of these buildings: (a) Shettleston 22%, (b) Easterhouse 25%, (c) Parkhead 46%, (d) Bridgeton 37%, (e) Castlemilk 57%, (f) Langside 64%, (g) Newlands 62%, (h) Anniesland 30%, (i) Partick 32%, (j) Maryhill 32%, (k) Springburn 46%, (l) Cambuslang 96% and (m) Rutherglen 54%.

Even though the department does not fully occupy the space it has, it still pays for 100% of it through the PFI arrangements. Our aim is to make more efficient use of this space to reduce our estate costs going forward.

■ Jobcentres: Scotland

Patrick Grady:

[\[57923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answers of 13 December 2016 to Questions 56723 and 56760, on what dates and in what locations Ministers of his Department have met with Ministers of the Scottish Government to discuss the job centre estate in Glasgow and Scotland.

Damian Hinds:

The department meet regularly with Scottish Government officials and Ministers are routinely briefed on the outcomes of those discussions. However, commercial sensitivities have limited our ability for detailed discussions with Scottish Government on specific site proposals. In recent months DWP officials have been in discussion with local authorities, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government regarding the overall estates strategy.

We remain committed to working with Scottish Government and other stakeholders to ensure effective support for unemployed people.

I held a meeting last week with the MP's for Glasgow, Rutherglen and Hamilton West to discuss the proposals for the jobcentre estate in Glasgow.

■ Jobseeker's Allowance: Glasgow

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[57956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have received jobseeker's allowance as a result of using the services at (a) Castlemilk and (b) Langside job centres in the last 12 months.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[57957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have found part-time employment as a result of using the services at (a) Castlemilk and (b) Langside job centres in the last 12 months.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[57958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have found full-time employment as a result of using the services at (a) Castlemilk and (b) Langside job centres in the last 12 months.

Damian Hinds:

The information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Stephen Kinnock: [\[57751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independence payment claimants have died within six months of receiving their claim.

Penny Mordaunt:

Between April 2013 and April 2016, 30,300 Personal Independence Payment claimants in Great Britain died within 6 months of first receiving their claim. 77% of those who died were in receipt of PIP under special rules for terminally ill.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Terminal Illnesses

Stephen Kinnock: [\[57731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what procedures are in place to transfer personal independence payment claimants on the fast-track system when it becomes clear they have a terminal illness.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[57733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what procedures are in place to identify people who are terminally ill when they apply for personal independence payment.

Penny Mordaunt:

Claims under the special rules for terminally ill must be made especially for that purpose by the claimant or a 3rd party. The Department provides a dedicated claim line with specially trained service agents to handle these sensitive claims. During the course of any claim where it becomes apparent that an existing claimant is or has become terminally ill, staff will actively look to see if they can turn the normal rules claim into a fast tracked

Special Rules Terminally Ill claim, which the current clearance times are within 5 working days.

Stephen Kinnock: [57732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what procedures are in place to notify terminally ill personal independence payment claimants of the DS1500 form.

Penny Mordaunt:

Information regarding DS1500 is included within the script during the telephone claim process for terminally ill people, explaining what it is and where it can be obtained.

Whilst the DS1500 can contain important information, we would not want to delay a terminally ill person from making a claim if one was not available, as Assessment Providers can actively obtain medical evidence regarding prognosis as necessary.

■ Poverty: East Midlands

Gloria De Piero: [57931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in the East Midlands are living in poverty (a) before taking housing costs into account and (b) after housing costs have been deducted from their incomes.

Caroline Nokes:

Estimates are available from the published Households Below Average Income (HBAI) data tables. These are publicly available in file 3_population_timeseries_region.xls, table 3.18ts here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/532115/hbai-2014-2015-supporting-excel-files.zip

■ Relate

Mr Charles Walker: [57551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent representations he has received on Government funding of services provided by Relate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Charles Walker: [57552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government has made of the (a) effectiveness of those relationship support services provided by Relate which are funded from the public purse and (b) effect of those services on family stability.

Caroline Nokes:

Relate is one of a number of organisations which the DWP currently funds to provide services to help reduce couple conflict and promote family stability. All of the organisations are subject to rigorous contract management by DWP which includes regular scrutiny of their effectiveness and impact on families.

■ Social Security Benefits: Children

Alison Thewliss: [56937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2016 to Question 55878, on social security benefits: children, whether his Department discussed that matter with Unison.

Damian Hinds:

The Department has not met with Unison specifically on this issue. However, Ministers have met with officials and a wide range of stakeholders whilst developing the non-consensual sex exception. The Government has also run a public consultation on all the exceptions which closed 27 November 2016. The Government will publish the consultation response in due course.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Ian Lavery: [57281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been sanctioned by his Department in (a) Wansbeck constituency, (b) the North East of England and (c) the UK in the last (i) six months and (ii) three years for which figures are available.

Damian Hinds:

The available information on Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance sanction decisions in Great Britain is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Information for Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the Department for Social Development. Northern Ireland statistics can be found at:

http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/benefit_publications.htm

Mr Jim Cunningham: [57752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit sanctions were imposed by his Department in each of the last six years; and if he will make a statement.

Damian Hinds:

The available information on Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance sanction decisions in Great Britain is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Mr Jim Cunningham: [57753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit sanctions were imposed and later lifted by his Department in each of the last six years; what average length of time it took to reverse a decision to impose a sanction; and if he will make a statement.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested on average length of time is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The available information on Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance sanction decisions in Great Britain is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud

Neil Gray:

[57988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, under what (a) criteria and (b) circumstances his Department disregards a judge's recommendations on not pursuing a claimant for benefit overpayments in criminal cases relating to fraud.

Caroline Nokes:

An overpayment of benefit is a civil debt owed to the Secretary of State and separate to any criminal proceedings taken against the claimant.

No criminal court, including the Crown Court or the Sheriff's Court, has the jurisdiction to reduce, change or otherwise alter the Secretary of State's decision on an overpayment of benefit. The right to recover an overpayment in accordance with Section 71 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 remains, despite any action taken by the Court.

Where a claimant is found not guilty of benefit fraud, and receives no sentence or financial penalty, they would still be liable to repay the overpayment. This is because they received benefit which would not have been paid had the true facts been known.

The Department has a duty to protect public funds and to recover overpaid benefits whenever possible. However, the Secretary of State does have the discretion to waive recovery of any overpayment where there are exceptional circumstances. Where a waiver is requested, each case is decided on its merits, with particular attention being paid to overpayments where recovery would be likely to be detrimental to the health and/or welfare of the claimant.

The Department, in line with Treasury guidance, does not generally waive overpayments that have arisen as a result of fraudulent activity, as good faith is one of the key considerations within the waiver policy.

Any disputes about the amount of the overpayment or the Secretary of State's right to recover are addressed by mandatory reconsideration under social security legislation or by appeal to an independent tribunal service.

■ Universal Credit: Housing Benefit

Dr Eilidh Whiteford: [\[57413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the estimated average annual cost to the public purse will be of removing the housing benefit element of universal credit from 18 to 21 year-olds.

Caroline Nokes:

Current estimates suggest that the removal of the housing costs element of universal credit from 18 to 21 year olds will save £95 million over the course of the current Parliament.

Dr Eilidh Whiteford: [\[57414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to publish legislative proposals on removing the housing benefit element of universal credit for 18 to 21 year-olds.

Caroline Nokes:

Details of the regulations will be published when they are laid in early 2017.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Packaging: Waste

Rachael Maskell:

[\[56277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the proportion of packaging waste which will be recycled or recovered in each of the next three years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 December 2016. The correct answer should have been:

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The proportion of packaging waste that was recycled or recovered in each year since 2010 was:

%	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
% recycled	60.7	60.8	61.4	64.6	59.2	59.1
% recovered	67.3	67.1	69.1	72.7	64.1	65.1

The proportion of packaging waste that will be recycled or recovered in each of the next three years is:

%	2017	2018	2019
% recycled	62	58-60	63-67 58-62
% recovered	67	63-65	58-62 63-67

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Public Bodies 2016

Minister for the Constitution (Chris Skidmore):

[\[HCWS384\]](#)

Public Bodies are a crucial part of how Government delivers its priorities. Well-governed, effective and efficient public bodies help contribute to building public trust in Government at a time when this has never been more important.

CO is collaborating across Government, engaging with senior leaders and Non-Executive Directors from departments and arm's-length bodies to promote good governance, disseminate best practice and drive reform. Together, we aim to deliver a more cost-effective, transparent and simplified landscape that is better able to meet the needs of the people it serves.

Public Bodies 2016 is an annual Directory which provides a single source of top-level cost and non-cost data on all executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies and non-ministerial departments. It also sets out the government's strategy for public bodies reform for the remainder of the Parliament.

The Cabinet Office will today publish Public Bodies 2016 and I am also placing it in the Library of the House.

TREASURY

■ Decommissioning Relief Deeds

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jane Ellison):

[\[HCWS393\]](#)

At Budget 2013, the government announced it would begin signing decommissioning relief deeds. These deeds represent a new contractual approach to provide oil and gas companies with certainty on the level of tax relief they will receive on future decommissioning costs.

Since October 2013, the government has entered into 76 decommissioning relief deeds. Oil & Gas UK estimates that these deeds have so far unlocked more than £5.9bn of capital, which can now be invested elsewhere.

The government committed to report to Parliament every year on progress with the deeds. The report for financial year 2015-16 is provided below.

1. The number of decommissioning relief agreements entered into: the government entered into no decommissioning relief agreements in 2015-16.
2. The total number of decommissioning relief agreements in force at the end of that year: 72 decommissioning relief agreements were in force at the end of the year.

3. The number of payments made under any decommissioning relief agreements during that year, and the amount of each payment: no payments were made under any decommissioning relief agreements in 2015-16.

4. The total number of payments that have been made under any decommissioning relief agreements as at the end of that year, and the total amount of those payments: no payments had been made under any decommissioning relief agreement as at the end of the 2015-16 financial year.

5. An estimate of the maximum amount liable to be paid under any decommissioning relief agreements: the government has not made any changes to the tax regime that would generate a liability to be paid under any decommissioning relief agreements. HM Treasury's 2015-16 accounts recognise a provision of an aggregate £327m in respect of decommissioning expenditure incurred as a result of a company defaulting on their decommissioning obligations. The majority of this is expected to be realised over the next five years.

■ Economy

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond):

[\[HCWS394\]](#)

Today I can inform the House that I will deliver my Spring Budget statement on Wednesday 8 March 2017.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Locally Employed Civilians

Minister of State (Ministry of Defence) (Mike Penning):

[\[HCWS388\]](#)

The UK remains committed to supporting our current and former local staff in Afghanistan. They played a vital part in our efforts towards a more secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, and our well-established redundancy and intimidation schemes recognise their contribution and the debt of gratitude we owe them.

During the past 12 months, our cross-Government ex-gratia redundancy scheme has continued to see real progress, with around 130 former local staff being relocated to the UK with their immediate families. Since the start of the scheme, we have relocated around 350 former local staff and their families, more than 900 people in total, and there are a number of cases currently going through the relocation process. Around 20 Local Authorities across the UK have supported the relocation of these families.

There are fewer than 100 local staff still to be made redundant as a result of the drawdown of UK Forces. We expect these redundancies to be complete by the end of 2017. It is estimated that around half of these will be given the option to apply for relocation to the UK, with the remainder being eligible for the in-country training or finance options.

There are currently over 100 local staff who are benefitting from our in-country option which offers up to five years of training and financial support. These scholars are undertaking a range of courses such as High School diplomas, and qualifications in

Engineering and Law. Around 20 former staff have gifted the training and support to eligible family members, in many cases to daughters who would not have otherwise had the opportunity to attend higher education.

Under a separate Government initiative, a dedicated in-country team has supported almost 400 local staff who have raised concerns about intimidation as a result of their employment with us. This has ranged from providing bespoke security advice, to providing financial support to over 30 staff to help them relocate to safer areas within Afghanistan. We have also provided interim payments in a number of cases to allow individuals assessed to be at high risk to move to a safe location whilst a full investigation is completed. The levels of intimidation faced in these cases has not so far been such that we have had to relocate individuals to the UK to ensure their safety, but we keep the security situation in Afghanistan under careful review.

Over the past year, we have seen the number of claims of intimidation reduce from around 15-20 cases to about six cases per month. Notwithstanding this, I am still committed to ensuring that investigations into claims of intimidation are conducted in an effective and professional manner, and the safety of our former staff remains the paramount consideration.

A Danish military legal adviser has provided a non-UK perspective to the decision-making process. In addition, we have put in place a number of measures to provide outside assurance of the intimidation policy: a randomly selected 20% of case decisions are subject to legal review to ensure that the policy is working as it should; and, as announced in November last year, a Committee has been established to provide additional external assurance of the delivery of the policy.

The Locally Engaged Civilians (LEC) Assurance Committee, which I chair, has oversight and scrutiny of the intimidation policy. We have held four meetings this year. Each Committee member has been selected to ensure they can provide expert, independent and impartial advice on the application of the policy. They include advisers drawn from the House of Lords; the Intimidation Investigation Unit in Kabul; and HM Forces. Additionally, I am pleased to confirm the appointment of a former LEC as an adviser to the Committee. He brings with him a first-hand perspective of the issues, and provides invaluable insight into the genuine threat faced by local staff in Afghanistan, as well as the viability of the proposed mitigation measures. These Committee members are supported by representatives from the Government Departments involved in the policy.

The Committee has agreed a robust set of terms of reference that empower us to identify areas where the administration of the policy could be improved. We have so far reviewed the application of the policy in three closed cases, and some areas for improvement are being addressed as a result. These include a review of the guidance provided to those involved in the decision-making process, to clarify inconsistent or ambiguous language.

We believe our schemes compare well with those provided by other nations that have operated in Afghanistan. On termination of employment, other nations generally offer either a financial lump sum or a relocation package. However, unlike our ex-gratia redundancy scheme, most nations also require staff to prove they are at risk in order to relocate. The UK

is the only nation with a permanent team of trained investigation officers in country to investigate claims of intimidation.

I am confident that the UK's arrangements meet our commitment to protecting our locally employed staff when their safety is at threat as a result of their work for us.

■ **Future Nuclear Deterrent - 2016 Update to Parliament**

Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS383\]](#)

On 18 May 2011 the then Defence Secretary, the Right Hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr Liam Fox), made an oral statement to the House (Official Report, column 351) announcing the approval of the Initial Gate investment stage for the procurement of the successor submarines to the Vanguard Class ballistic missile submarines. He also placed in the Library of the House a report "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report".

As confirmed in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, and in accordance with the motion approved by this House on 18 July 2016, this Government is committed to publishing an annual report on the programme. I am today publishing the fifth report, "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2016 Update to Parliament". A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

■ **Reserve Forces and Cadets Association External Scrutiny Team Report 2016**

Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS385\]](#)

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of a letter that I have sent to Lt Gen (Retd) Brims, the Chair of the Future Reserves 2020 External Scrutiny Team to update him on the programme, and particularly on the recommendations that his team's report made. I am grateful for their work.

EDUCATION

■ **Schools Revenue Funding Settlement 2017 to 2018**

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):

[\[HCWS389\]](#)

Today I am announcing details of schools revenue funding for 2017-18. This announcement includes the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the Education Services Grant (ESG) Transitional Grant and the Pupil Premium.

The distribution of the DSG to local authorities will continue to be set out in three spending blocks for each authority: a schools block, a high needs block and an early years block.

The schools block has been allocated on the basis of the schools block units of funding announced in the Secretary of State's statement to the House on 21 July 2016. To protect schools from significant budget reductions, we will continue with a minimum funding guarantee that ensures no school loses more than 1.5% per pupil in its 2017-18 budget (excluding sixth form funding and ESG) compared to 2016-17, and before the Pupil Premium is added.

We have been able to provide an additional £130 million for the DSG high needs block. The high needs block supports provision for pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), up to the age of 25, and alternative provision for pupils who cannot receive their education in schools.

The DSG early years block comprises funding for the 15 hours entitlement for three- and four-year-olds: the additional 15 hours for three- and four-year-old children of eligible working parents from September 2017; participation funding for two-year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds; the early years pupil premium; and the disability access fund. The provisional allocations for this block were announced in the Secretary of State's statement of 1 December 2016.

The ESG Transitional Grant for local authorities will be set at a financial year rate of £66 per pupil and paid for the period April to August 2017. We will also continue to provide a protection to limit the reduction of academies' budgets as a result of the ending of ESG from September 2017.

The pupil premium per pupil amounts for 2017-18 will be protected at the current rates, which are:

PUPILS	PER PUPIL RATE
Disadvantaged pupils: Primary	£1,320
Disadvantaged pupils: Secondary	£935
Pupil Premium Plus: Looked After Children (LAC) ¹ and those adopted from care or who leave care under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order (formally known as a residence order).	£1,900
Service children	£300

A looked after child is defined in the Children Act 1989 as one who is in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, an English or Welsh local authority.

Pupil premium allocations for financial year 2017-18 will be published in June 2017 following the receipt of pupil number data from the spring 2017 schools and alternative provision censuses.

Details of these arrangements have been published on GOV.UK.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Avian Influenza update**

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Andrea Leadsom):
[\[HCWS386\]](#)

The Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed a case of avian flu in a turkey farm in East Lindsey, Lincolnshire.

Test results have confirmed the presence of a high pathogenicity H5N8 strain of the disease. This is the strain currently circulating in Europe. As a result, the Animal and Plant Health Agency has raised the risk of an incursion into wild birds in the UK from medium to high and into poultry from low but heightened to low to medium, dependent on geographic location.

While this disease affects birds severely, the advice from Public Health England is that the risk to public health from this strain of bird flu is very low with no human cases ever reported, and the Food Standards Agency has said there is no food safety risk for consumers.

We have taken robust action, imposing a 3 kilometre protection zone and 10 kilometre surveillance zone last Friday to limit the risk of disease spreading. The birds on the farm have either died or were humanely culled. All carcasses have been removed and rendered under strict biosecurity standards. Cleansing and disinfection of the site has commenced.

We have tried and tested procedures for dealing with such animal disease outbreaks and a strong track record of controlling and eliminating previous outbreaks of avian flu in the UK. We are working closely with operational partners, devolved administration colleagues and the industry to deal effectively with this outbreak.

My Department continues to carefully monitor the situation in the UK and Europe. Following my statement of the 7th December where I announced the mandatory housing of poultry and other kept birds, and as a result of the increased risk to UK poultry, I have today announced a change to the licensing of bird gatherings including sales and auctions. This prevents until further notice, gatherings of domestic poultry, and places enhanced biosecurity requirements on gatherings of other species including aviary birds, pigeons and raptors. This follows veterinary advice on the risk of disease spread through such gatherings.

I continue to urge bird keepers to be vigilant for any signs of disease, ensure they are maintaining good biosecurity on their premises, seek prompt advice from their vet and report suspect disease to their nearest APHA office.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ General Affairs Council 2016**

The Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr David Jones):
[\[HCWS381\]](#)

I attended the General Affairs Council on 13 December. The meeting was chaired by the Slovak Presidency and held in Brussels.

The General Affairs Council discussed: the mid-term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework; Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making; Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process; Preparation of the European Council on 15 December 2016 and the European Semester 2017.

A provisional report of the meeting and the Conclusions adopted can be found at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2016/12/13/>

Multiannual Financial Framework

There was no agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework and discussions will continue into next year. With the exception of Italy, who maintained their reserve, all Member States were supportive of the current Mid-Term Review proposal.

Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making

The Joint Declaration on legislative programming was adopted. This was signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in Strasbourg. Vice-President Timmermans flagged this achievement saying it focussed on real deliverable priorities.

Preparation of the European Council on 15 December 2016

There was a discussion of the agenda items for the European Council which took place on 15 December. The agenda would cover: migration, security (internal and external / defence) economic and social development (youth) and external relations, which will cover the EU/Ukraine Association Agreement.

I intervened to underline the importance of preparing business affecting all Member States at meetings of the 28, and our intention to observe the rights and obligations of membership until we leave the EU.

On migration, I intervened to express our on-going commitment to a comprehensive approach, and sought proper evaluation of existing partnership frameworks before extending them to new countries.

On external security, I requested that the text of the draft Council Conclusions be amended to clarify that the proposed planning and conduct capability should be for non-executive purposes only, to bring the text in line with Conclusions at the FAC Defence in November, which had outlined a balanced approach that avoided duplication with NATO.

On economic and social development, I registered the UK's support of ambitious language on the single market, including maintaining momentum on services and deepening of the single market.

On external relations, I supported the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on Syria and pressed for explicit reference to Iran as an ally of the Syrian regime and a reference to restrictive measures among the options the EU ought to consider within the European Council Conclusions.

European Semester 2017

This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting, but the inclusion of the item followed the Commission publishing the Autumn Package of the European Semester on 16 November 2016.

Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process

The Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Alan Duncan MP, took part in a discussion on enlargement, which focussed on Turkey's EU accession path. The Council could not reach agreement on the overall package of enlargement conclusions. Instead, the Presidency issued a statement covering the conclusions which enjoyed broad support from the overwhelming majority of Member States. We remain firmly committed to driving forward reform, embedding stability and addressing shared challenges in the Western Balkans and Turkey. EU and NATO accession processes are fundamental to delivering these objectives.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Foreign Affairs Council – 12 December 2016

The Minister for Europe and the Americas (Sir Alan Duncan):

[[HCWS391](#)]

I attended the Foreign Affairs Council on 12 December. The Foreign Affairs Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The meeting was held in Brussels.

Foreign Affairs Council

A provisional report of the meeting and Conclusions adopted can be found at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2016/12/12/>

EU – Africa relations

The Council discussed EU-Africa relations in preparation for the EU-Africa summit in November 2017. Ministers discussed priorities in the EU's relations with Africa, as well as how those relations should evolve in the light of emerging economic, security, demographic and migration challenges. I encouraged the EU to fulfill its security commitments, whilst supporting capacity building and African ownership of African challenges in the longer term.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council adopted restrictive measures against seven DRC officials, and had a short discussion on the situation in the country. Ms Mogherini set out the clear aim of the measures: to deter a violent response to likely protests on 19 December when President Kabila's mandate would come to an end.

Syria

Over lunch, Ministers discussed the situation in Syria in view of the latest developments, in particular in Aleppo. I stressed the severity of the situation in Aleppo, underlining the role of

Russia and Iran as well as the Syrian regime, and the importance of holding to account those responsible for the appalling situation.

Migration

Ministers discussed migration issues ahead of the European Council on 15 December. The Council took stock of the progress made on the migration partnership framework approach; and on the country-specific compacts with the five priority countries (Mali, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria and Ethiopia).

Any Other Business (AOB)

France raised the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, noting the importance of swift implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2270 and encouraging consideration of further EU autonomous measures.

In the margins of the Council, Ms Mogherini, EU Foreign Ministers and the Cuban Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, signed the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement. After the Council meeting, Ministers had an informal discussion with President Santos of Colombia. The EU and participating Member States then signed the constitutive agreement of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia.

Ministers agreed without discussion a number of measures:

- Council Conclusions on South Sudan.
- Council Conclusions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- A protocol to the framework agreement on comprehensive partnership and cooperation between the EU and Vietnam, to take account of the accession of Croatia.
- The EU position for the 3rd meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council in Brussels on 19 December 2016.
- Prolonging the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia for a further period of two years (until 14 December 2018) and allocating to the mission a budget of €18 million for the period 15 December 2016 to 14 December 2017.
- Prolonging the mandate of the two Common Security and Defence Policy missions in Somalia, the civilian capacity-building mission (EUCAP Nestor) and the military training mission (EUTM), until 31 December 2018. The Council renamed EUCAP Nestor capacity-building mission 'EUCAP Somalia'.
- Renewing for two years the declaration on the common funding of the deployment of EU battlegroups, until December 2018.

■ Travel Advice

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson):
[\[HCWS390\]](#)

Travel Advice is one of the most important public services which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) delivers. Its purpose is to give British nationals the best possible

understanding of the context, threats and hazards they face overseas, in order for them to make informed decisions about travel. It draws on a range of sources, including intelligence assessments, open source and media reporting, the local knowledge of our overseas posts and their diplomatic reporting. Travel Advice is, however, precisely that. A decision on whether to travel to a specific country or area has to be for the individual concerned.

The FCO provides Travel Advice notices for 225 countries and territories worldwide. There were more than 40 million individual hits on the online travel advice service in 2015. The FCO in London and all posts throughout our diplomatic network overseas actively monitor safety and security issues on a 24-hour basis and we made 2,200 updates to our Travel Advice in 2015. Where possible, we publish country maps to help communicate this advice. In some cases we will advise against travel or all but essential travel to a country or region as a result of terrorism, security concerns or other risks. We know that when we advise against travel it can have an impact on individuals and business, but the safety of British nationals is our overriding concern.

The threat from terrorism is evolving. Despite the pressure of military action in Syria and Iraq and concerted and sustained counter-terrorism action globally, the main terrorist groups – Daesh, Al Qaeda and groups associated with them – continue to pose a threat to UK interests globally, including British travellers. Since 2012, there have been more than 25 major terrorist attacks resulting in the deaths of at least 300 tourists around the world, including 31 British nationals. In particular, we have seen the growth of so called “lone wolf” attacks, which are difficult to predict and disrupt and could take place in almost any country.

In response to the changing nature of the threat the former Foreign Secretary, my Rt hon. Friend, the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), commissioned a review to assess whether changes in how we present travel advice might help us reflect the evolving threat from terrorism, whilst providing the clearest possible advice to the public. This included a public consultation to help consider potential improvements to the Travel Advice service. 1,009 people responded to the online consultation in March and April 2016. The consultation team met stakeholders, including the travel and insurance industries; encouraged written feedback; and consulted other government departments, including the Department for International Development and UK Trade & Investment, as well as several other countries whose travel advice systems are comparable with our own. The aim of the public consultation was to make sure British nationals continued to have information that was readily accessible and easy to understand so they could make informed decisions whenever and wherever they travel. The consultation sought to find out how people used the Travel Advice service; whether they found it useful; and whether the way information was presented could be improved to make it more accessible. It also looked at whether changes could be made to provide a greater level of detail and better understanding of the level of risk travellers face in any given country.

Taking all of this in to account, I have decided to make a number of improvements to the Travel Advice service. I want British nationals to be able to travel abroad for business, study or pleasure, but with a clear personal understanding of the risks entailed in doing so.

While the principles of Travel Advice set out in the 2004 Review (*Review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel Advice, Cm 6158*) in relation to the threat from terrorism remain unchanged, we shall now describe the threat in greater narrative detail, moving away from simple descriptors (e.g. “there is a high threat from terrorism”). This is to provide a greater level of information to the public, helping them to understand better the levels of risk in their travel plans. The new expanded text will describe the threat in terms of its predictability (whether attacks are likely to happen), extent (targets and locations of previous attacks and methodologies employed), context (which groups are responsible, and the history of attacks) and, where appropriate, mitigation (where host nations are actively countering the threat, including through publicly avowed counter terrorism measures and arrests). During the consultation, the public and travel industry said they would welcome this approach. We will also make design improvements to Travel Advice pages so that users can more easily find the information relevant to them. These changes will be introduced over the coming months, building on work that officials have already begun to increase the amount of detailed information about terrorism in our advice.

I am confident that these changes will ensure our Travel Advice continues to provide effective information to help British travellers make informed decisions about their personal travel plans and security overseas. Our Travel Advice will continue to reflect the best judgements we can make on the information available to us at the time.

HOME OFFICE

■ Policing and Crime Bill

The Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS387\]](#)

I will shortly be placing in the House Library the Department’s analysis on the application of Standing Order 830 of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons relating to public business in respect of the Lords amendments to the Policing and Crime Bill.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Appointments to Parliamentary Delegations

Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May): [\[HCWS382\]](#)

The hon. Member for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (Simon Hart) and the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Craig Tracey) have been appointed as Full Members of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in place of the rt. hon. Member for Clwyd West (David Jones) and the hon. Member for Romsey and Southampton North (Caroline Nokes). The hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn) has also been appointed as an Alternate Member in place of the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Nick Smith).

The rt. hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Cheryl Gillan) has been appointed as a representative member of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in place of the hon. Member for Aberconwy (Guto Bebb). The hon.

Member for Edinburgh South (Ian Murray) has been appointed as a substitute member of the Delegation in place of the hon. Member for Ealing, Southall (Virendra Sharma), who has been appointed as a representative member in place of the hon. Member for Brent Central (Dawn Butler). The rt. hon. Member for Doncaster Central (Dame Rosie Winterton) has been appointed as a representative member of the Delegation in place of the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Paula Sherriff). The hon. Member for Bristol East (Kerry McCarthy) and the hon. Member for Penistone and Stocksbridge (Angela Smith) have been appointed as substitute members of the Delegation in place of the hon. Member for Newport East (Paul Flynn) and the hon. Member for Perry Bar (Khalid Mahmood). Lord Wilson of Tillyhorn has also been appointed as a substitute member of the Delegation in place of Lord Wright of Richmond.

TRANSPORT

■ Update on Road Freight

Minister of State for Transport (Mr John Hayes):

[\[HCWS392\]](#)

I chaired a round table on 2nd November about roadside facilities and parking for lorry drivers. This followed an adjournment debate, secured by Helen Whately, the Member for Faversham and Mid Kent, on 7th September about fly-parking in Kent.

Key issues identified at the round table, which could be considered in the Kent context and which will have wider applicability and interest, are:

- the join up between national and local planning frameworks;
- provision of lorry parking facilities
- minimum standards at such parking facilities;
- payment systems for facilities; and
- when facilities are supplied ensuring there is enforcement against lorries stopping in the wrong place (including achieving that without a proliferation of signs and lines).

In due course I will set out actions to tackle each and all of these.

Some of these issues as they relate to Kent, in particular, were discussed at a meeting of the Kent Strategic Freight Group on 2nd December, chaired by the County Council. I am urgently considering how they can be progressed, including how enforcement against fly-parking can be made to work better.

A contract was awarded last week for an extensive national survey of lorry parking to be completed by the Spring will add to the evidence about what should be done where.

Work is also underway to encourage private sector distribution centres to allow drivers to have access to decent facilities when supplying them.

I chaired another round table on 17th November about recruitment into the logistics sector. Better lorry parking and facilities can contribute to improving the recruitment and retention of drivers. However it is one of many issues where Government working with the private sector can contribute.

Already waiting times for lorry driving tests have been reduced substantially at a time of increasing demand for tests, through the recruitment of more examiners. Processes for licence renewals are being streamlined. Apprenticeships for lorry driving and other jobs in the road haulage and logistics industry start early next year through the new Trailblazers scheme.

I look forward to working with Members of Parliament (including the All Party Parliamentary Group on Freight), local authorities, the haulage industry, the trade unions and all other interested stakeholders to develop our plans.