

Daily Report
Tuesday, 31 January 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 31 January 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:37 P.M., 31 January 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Females

Dr Paul Monaghan:

[\[61787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Minister for Women and Equalities on encouraging involvement by women in business at all levels.

Margot James:

I met my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Early Years in November to discuss a number of issues around women and the labour market. The issues covered included pregnancy and maternity discrimination; the gender pay gap; the Hampton-Alexander review; and women and start-ups.

The Department and the Government Equalities Office are working together to encourage involvement by women in business, for example by supporting the independent Hampton-Alexander Review. The review is a key part of our work to reflect modern Britain by increasing the representation of women at senior leadership positions and below in FTSE 350 Companies.

We are also working to ensure we have the right businesses environment for everyone, including women, to set up and grow a business. Women are able to benefit from the full range of business support available from government, including Start-Up Loans, of which to date 38% have been issued to women.

■ Business: Technology

Chris White:

[\[61871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to paragraph 3.36 of the Autumn Statement 2016, if his Department will support firms specialising (a) in video and mobile game development and (b) on artificial intelligence, data analytics and virtual reality.

Margot James:

At the Autumn Statement 2016, the British Business Bank was provided with £400m of additional funding to unlock up to £1 billion of new investment in innovative firms planning to scale up.

This will primarily be achieved by broadening the mandate of Bank's Venture Capital Catalyst programme. The programme is able to invest across a wide range of sectors, including businesses which specialise in video, mobile game development, artificial intelligence, data analytics and virtual reality.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[61793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to meet energy industry representatives to discuss the cancellation of the carbon capture and storage competition.

Jesse Norman:

The Government continues to meet with the carbon capture and storage (CCS) industry on the future of carbon capture and storage in the UK following the decision to close the CCS Competition in January 2016.

■ Construction: Skilled Workers

Oliver Colvile:

[61184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to tackle future skills shortages in the construction industry.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy works closely with the Department for Education (DfE) which is responsible for skills policy and also the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the body that supports training and skills in construction.

DfE is currently working with employers in the construction industry to develop new apprenticeships for the sector. While evidence suggests there are sufficient learners going through the skills system, with over 200,000 construction qualifications being taken each year, reforms set out in the skills plan (July 2016) will ensure these qualifications become more relevant and meet the industry's needs.

Additionally, the Construction Leadership Council, the business led sector council which advises Government on key strategic issues, has investigated the labour model in their construction and commissioned an independent report from Mark Farmer (published in October 2016, <http://www.cast-consultancy.com/news-casts/farmer-review-uk-construction-labour-model-3>) making recommendations for industry and Government. Both the Government and the Construction Leadership Council is currently considering the review's recommendations.

Oliver Colvile:

[61185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the availability of skilled construction workers.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government continues to monitor the potential impacts that leaving the EU may have on the availability of skilled workers. We cannot speculate on the outcome of Brexit negotiations, but the Government has made it clear that the UK remains open to the talent we need from Europe and the rest of the world.

The Department for Education (DfE) is currently working closely with employers in the construction industry to develop new apprenticeships for the sector. While evidence suggests there are sufficient learners going through the skills system, with over 200,000 construction qualifications being taken each year, reforms set out in the skills plan (July 2016) will ensure these qualifications become more relevant and meet the industry's needs.

■ **Defence Growth Partnership**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[61199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2017 to Question 60622, if he will place in the Library minutes from the 10 November 2016 meeting of the Steering Committee of the Defence Growth Partnership.

Jesse Norman:

The minutes of the Ministerial Defence Growth Partnership (DGP) meetings are published on the DGP website. The minutes of the DGP Steering Committee are produced and owned by the DGP industry members and are not routinely published.

Departmental officials have sent your request to the DGP to consider whether they could release the minutes; they have requested that the DGP respond directly to the hon. Member and a copy of their letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

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

Paul Blomfield:

[61104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Corrected Answer of 16 January 2017 to Question 43632, what decision his Department has made on the future role of his Department's Sheffield office at St Paul's Place.

Margot James:

The decision to close the BIS Sheffield office was confirmed by the former BIS Board in May 2016 and plans have been implemented to a large extent. BEIS remains committed to honouring the full package of support offered to the small remaining number of affected staff.

BEIS has held constructive dialogue with the trade unions regarding the remaining staff and continues to work closely with OGDs to explore opportunities for redeployment.

■ Electricity Generation

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[61669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) UK security of supply and (b) consumer costs of holding the early capacity auction prior to Ofgem reporting its final decision on charging arrangements.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[61673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of current charging arrangements on the ability of gas plants which already possesses capacity contracts to bid into the early capacity auction on 31 January 2017.

Jesse Norman:

Ofgem's review of network charges for smaller generators (so called 'embedded benefits') was prompted by concerns that current arrangements may over-reward smaller generators at the expense of the end consumer and may distort competition, including within Capacity Market auctions.

The timing of the review is a matter for Ofgem as independent regulator. Ofgem has said that it will undertake a further consultation and impact assessment in early 2017, with a final decision later in the year.

Ofgem published an open letter in December 2016 which confirmed that none of the proposed modifications would alter charges for 2017/18, the delivery year of the early Capacity Market auction, and outlined a level of embedded benefits in future years that it would be prudent for participants in the Capacity Market auctions to assume.

Departmental officials will work with Ofgem as part of its assessment process to ensure that key Government policy interests are taken into account, including aspects such as the potential impacts on security of supply.

■ Energy: Conservation

Steve McCabe:

[\[61718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 December 2016 to Question 57829, on energy: conservation, what role the new apprenticeship standards will play in improving energy efficiency and decarbonisation in buildings.

Jesse Norman:

The development of apprenticeship standards in England is led by employers, subject to quality criteria set by Government. So far, occupations covered by standards relating to energy efficiency in place or in development include Dual Fuel Smart Meter Installer, Junior Energy Manager, Community Energy Specialist and Thermal Insulation Operative.

The Government is also working with industry to support robust and effective quality and standards for energy efficiency, in light of the recommendations of the recently published Each Home Counts review. Those recommendations, implementation of which will be led by industry, include the creation of a Quality Mark against which all those engaged in design and installation of measures will be assessed and certified.

■ Energy: Prices

Dawn Butler:

[\[61353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to reduce the difference in cost paid for energy between customers with prepayment meters and other energy customers.

Jesse Norman:

On 7 December 2016, the Competition and Markets Authority published a final order that requires suppliers to cap the amount they can charge pre-payment customers. The cap will come into effect in April this year.

■ Higher Education: EU Grants and Loans

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[61866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much EU funding was received by the higher education sector in the (a) UK and (b) North West in each financial year since 2010-11.

Joseph Johnson:

The table below shows the level of funding Higher Education Institutions in (a) the UK and (b) the North West, received from EU government bodies for research grants and contracts, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

REGION	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
North West (£ thousands)	44,358	45,624	53,153	59,752	67,035
UK (£ thousands)	496,734	589,425	694,731	787,047	821,280

Source: BEIS analysis of the HESA Finance Record and the HE-BCI Survey

■ Post Offices: Rural Areas

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[\[61334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the implications for his policies are of the call by the Association of Convenience Stores for the Government to review the costs, income and viability of rural post offices on its Rural Shop Report 2017, published in January 2017.

Margot James:

The Government entrusts the Post Office's management to keep the health of the network under review in order to meet the commitment we have set to maintain the network at over 11,500 branches. The commercial agreements it has with subpostmasters, rural and urban, covering costs and revenue form a key part of ensuring the health of the network. While these arrangements are commercially sensitive between both parties the evidence of their success is in the fact that the network is at its most stable in decades.

Dr Sarah Wollaston:[\[61560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans for the increase in Post Office outreach services in rural communities over the last five years to continue; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy keeps the state of the network under review including the provision of rural services through outreaches. Outreaches are provided so Post Office can maintain access to communities, most often in rural areas, where the old post office has closed. These provide a regular part time service, with hours tailored to the levels of demand in the community. They provide a welcomed link to the network for many isolated communities.

■ Savvibuy**Jeff Smith:**[\[61672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the owners of Savvibuy on that company's service to consumers since 1 December.

Margot James:

I have not had any such discussions.

Jeff Smith:[\[61701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations his Department has received on Savvibuy's refunding practices for customers who have experienced delayed deliveries and refunds.

Margot James:

The Insolvency Service, an Executive Agency of the Department, has been contacted about the actions of Savvibuy. Due to legal restrictions the Insolvency Service cannot comment in detail on the information it has received.

The Department has received no other representations on this matter.

■ Small Business Commissioner

Dr Paul Monaghan:

[\[61789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress he has made on establishing the office of the Small Business Commissioner.

Margot James:

We expect to appoint the Commissioner in 2017 and we continue to make progress on implementation. Our public consultation on the policy for regulations underpinning the Commissioner's complaints handling function closed in December and we are preparing the Government Response.

■ Small Businesses: Billing

Charlotte Leslie:

[\[61531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of late payment by large firms on small businesses and suppliers in the last 12 months.

Margot James:

The Department does not collect data on the effect of late payment by large firms on small businesses and suppliers. Other organisations have made assessments. For example, in December 2016 BACs reported the overall level of late payment debt owed to small and medium businesses standing at £26.3 billion.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Veterans: Military Decorations

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[61696\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2016 to Question 34745, if his Department will take steps to recognise the contributions of veterans by introducing a National Defence Medal.

Ben Gummer:

There are no current plans to reconsider the award of a National Defence Medal.

TREASURY**■ Enterprise Investment Scheme: Tax Allowances**

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61979]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people benefitted from income tax relief through the Enterprise Investment Scheme in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

Statistics on the number of investors claiming income tax relief on investments in Enterprise Investment Schemes in 2013-14 and 2014-15 are available in table 8.5 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/enterprise-investment-scheme-and-seed-enterprise-investment-scheme-statistics>.

■ Enterprise Management Incentives: Tax Allowances

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61953]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people benefitted from income tax relief through Enterprise Management Incentives in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

Latest statistics on Enterprise Management Incentives can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/enterprise-management-incentives-share-option-schemes>.

The 2014-15 data is not currently available.

■ EU Grants and Loans

Dan Jarvis: [61971]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Government's current policy is on maintaining similar levels of funding to that delivered through the European Regional Development Fund and European Social fund after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr David Gauke

The Government will guarantee projects funded by European Structural and Investment Funds where contracts have been signed prior to the UK leaving the EU. This therefore includes schemes delivered through the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund. Such assurances apply even when these projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU.

Funding for these projects will be honoured by the Government, so long as they meet the following conditions:

They are good value for money

They are in line with domestic strategic policies

Leaving the EU means we will want to take our own decisions about how to deliver the policy objectives previously targeted by EU funding. We will consult closely with

stakeholders to review all EU funding schemes in the round, to ensure that any ongoing funding commitments best serve the UK's national interest, while ensuring appropriate investor certainty.

■ **Revenue and Customs: West Lothian**

Martyn Day: [\[61840\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that HM Revenue and Customs immediately initiate the 1-2-1 redeployment consultation process for all staff working in its West Lothian offices to ensure that that process reflects ongoing dialogue between each worker and their manager.

Martyn Day: [\[61841\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of HM Revenue and Customs staff working in West Lothian who will not be able to relocate to a regional centre; and what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of exit packages for those staff.

Martyn Day: [\[61842\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if Ministers of his Department will meet with local elected representatives and other key stakeholders in Bathgate to discuss the potential effect of proposals to relocate jobs to regional centres on the local communities affected.

Martyn Day: [\[61843\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of HM Revenue and Customs staff working in West Lothian who will be able to relocate to a regional centre; and what estimate he has made of the cost of additional daily travel assistance for those staff.

Jane Ellison:

Officials meet regularly with stakeholders to discuss a wide range of matters, including HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) regional transformation plans. In addition, Ministers have discussed this issue with elected representatives.

The decision to move to regional centres is part of the wider Government strategy to develop Government hubs. For HMRC this includes consolidating 170 offices, many ageing and in poor condition, across the UK into thirteen new regional centres, four specialist sites and a base at 100 Parliament Street. This will help to maximise flexibility, collaboration and customer service while reducing costs to the taxpayer.

HMRC's internal management information indicates that the vast majority of staff in West Lothian will be within reasonable travelling distance of the Regional Centre. HMRC will conduct one to one meetings with staff about a year in advance of the move to discuss their personal circumstances, whether or not they can move and what more can be done to support them. One to one meetings are held at this time to ensure that the most up to date information on the specific location of the Regional Centre is available to allow decisions to be made.

HMRC will support staff moving to the new Regional Centre by helping them with a contribution to additional travel costs, for three years for staff within reasonable daily travel and five years for those who live outside reasonable daily travel, after the move. For any staff who are unable to move, HMRC will look at redeployment options. This will include helping staff to find another role within the Department, or if necessary in other government departments. It is HMRC's desire to retain as many existing staff as possible within the Department. Exit packages will only be considered when it is established that moving office or redeployment is not an option.

HMRC expects that travel support for staff moving to Edinburgh from Bathgate and Livingstone will cost approximately £2 million over a five year period. The estimated exit costs are expected to be approximately £1.45 million.

■ Save As You Earn: Tax Allowances

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[61954]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people benefitted from income tax relief through Save As You Earn in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

Latest statistics on SAYE option schemes can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/save-as-you-earn-share-option-schemes>

The 2014-15 data is not currently available.

■ Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme: Tax Allowances

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[61955]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people benefitted from income tax relief through the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

Statistics on the number of investors claiming income tax relief on investments in Seed Enterprise Investment Schemes in 2013-14 and 2014-15 are available in table 8.15 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/enterprise-investment-scheme-and-seed-enterprise-investment-scheme-statistics>.

■ Subscriptions: Tax Allowances

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[61957]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people benefitted from income tax relief for professional subscriptions in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

An estimate of the total number benefiting from the relief is not available; when employers bear the cost of the subscriptions there is normally no requirement to report amounts to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Claims for relief on unreimbursed subscriptions are however made to HMRC. Such claims were received from 1.25 million employees in respect of tax year 2013-14 and 1.29 million employees for tax year 2014-15.

■ VAT

David Morris:

[61847]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many new businesses registered for VAT in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2012-13, (d) 2011-12 and (e) 2010-11.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs publishes the number of new businesses registered for VAT in the statistical bulletin on VAT. This can be found at:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Statistics/Pages/TaxAndDutybulletins.aspx>

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing: Finance

John Healey:

[61371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what funding has been earmarked for the (a) Affordable Homes Programme 2015-2018 and (b) Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21, broken down by budget heading.

Gavin Barwell:

The 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme, announced in September 2014 under the Coalition Government, included £2.9 billion grant funding and £400 million loan funding.

At the Spending Review 2015, Government announced the new Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21, with £5.7 billion budget including £1 billion for existing commitments from the Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18, in addition to the funding already allocated.

At Autumn Statement 2016, the Government announced an additional £1.4 billion investment to the Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21, increasing the overall budget to £7.1 billion.

■ Compulsory Purchase: Agriculture

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[R] [61671]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what metrics his Department uses to calculate compensation for owners of agricultural land under compulsory purchase.

Gavin Barwell:

Compensation is a matter for negotiation between the acquiring authority and the claimant according to the Compensation Code determined, if necessary, by the

Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber). The Department does not, therefore, have any role in the calculation of compensation in any particular case.

The Department has published guidance on the compulsory purchase process which can be found at the following link: [Guidance](#) in particular see Stage 6 on Compensation.

There are some additional measures in relation to compensation where the Compulsory Purchase Order includes agricultural land and these can be found in Booklet 3 at the following link: [Booklet 3](#).

■ Floods: European Union Solidarity Fund

Mary Creagh:

[\[61219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how the Government plans to spend the £60 million which the European Commission proposes to award the UK from the EU's solidarity fund after the floods of winter 2015-16.

Andrew Percy:

In the days that followed the flooding in December 2015 and early January 2016, the Government very quickly identified that the immediate priority was to respond to the urgent needs of those affected and we have paid out almost £300 million.

The Commission has now completed its assessment of the UK Government's European Union Solidarity Fund application and has proposed to the European Parliament and Council that the UK receives a notional €60 million (circa £51.6 million) in assistance (subject to approval by the two bodies). However, owing to the costs involved in making an application and the effect of clawback through the UK rebate, the overall net benefit to the UK is only estimated to be €17 million (circa £15 million).

This will be further offset by a payment of £14.5 million that the UK is legally obliged to make to the EU in respect of the UK's 2007 application (by the then Labour Government) for Solidarity Fund assistance following the serious floods that year. The UK Government is obliged to repay funding where there was ineligible spending under the Labour administration. Consequently, this funding does not offer additional support.

This funding can only be used to reimburse public sector costs so cannot be paid directly to individual householders and businesses.

■ Homelessness

Charlotte Leslie:

[\[61688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the costs to local authorities of supporting people made intentionally homeless.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Where a household is found to be intentionally homeless, but is in priority need, the local housing authority must also ensure that accommodation is available for long enough to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity to find a home. An applicant can ask the authority to review a decision that they are intentionally homeless and, if still dissatisfied, can appeal to the county court on a point of law. Over the next four years the Government will invest £149 million in central programmes to prevent and reduce homelessness in England. We have also protected and maintained homelessness prevention funding for councils, reaching £315 million by 2019/20, to ensure they can provide advice to all those who approach them for help. In addition, £870 million in Discretionary Housing Payment funding is being provided to councils across the Parliament.

Homelessness data, including households who are intentionally homeless, is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

Charlotte Leslie:**[61689]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to establish a time-limit on the housing records of people made intentionally homeless.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We have no plans to set out a time limit. Where a person becomes homeless intentionally, that condition may persist until the link between the deliberate act or omission that caused them to become intentionally homeless and the intentional homelessness itself has been broken. Whether that has happened will depend on the circumstances of the particular case and can be best judged by the local housing authority.

■ Housing: Construction**John Healey:****[61372]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution of 28 November 2016, Official Report, column 1229, who the intended recipients are of the Government's £25 billion investment; how much each of those recipients will receive; and on what basis that funding will be granted.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government's planned £25 billion investment in housing means we expect to double, in real terms, our annual capital spending on housing over this Parliament. The funding includes:

- £7.1 billion to deliver affordable housing.
- £2.3 billion to deliver starter homes across the country to support first time buyers.
- £8.6 billion to extend the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme to 2021 which will help more people take steps towards owning their own home.

- £2.3 billion for a new Housing Infrastructure Fund which will be allocated to local government on a competitive basis. The Fund will provide infrastructure targeted at unlocking new private house building in the areas where housing need is greatest.
- £3 billion for the Home Building Fund, including £1 billion for loans of up to five years and aimed at SMEs and custom builders. £2 billion of the fund is available for larger sites and infrastructure with a much longer loan period.
- £1.7 billion of funding to pilot 'accelerated construction' to speed up house building on surplus public sector land.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[61960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the letters of 20 October and 30 November 2016 and the email of 12 January 2017 from the hon. Member for Oldham East and Saddleworth on sitting councillors and child sex offences.

Mr Marcus Jones:

A response was sent to the hon Member for Oldham East and Saddleworth today.

■ **Mobile Homes**

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[61818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2016 to Question 45729, what assessment he has made of the implications of his policies of the final recommendations of the Park Homes Working Group; and if he will place his plans to take forward those recommendations in the Library.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[61819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when the Government's planned review of the Mobile Homes Act 2013 will begin; what that review's terms of reference will be; and whether that review will have an independent chair.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government is committed to improving the lives of mobile homes residents and welcomes the recommendations of the working group. We have already taken forward their recommendation to write to all local authorities to remind them of their new enforcement powers and available guidance. My Department is considering the other recommendations and will set out its response as part of a review of the effectiveness of the Mobile Homes Act 2013 that we are planning to launch in the Spring.

The review will be conducted by the Department through a consultation exercise which will seek evidence from residents, site owners and local authorities on the effectiveness of two key areas of the 2013 legislation:

- (a) what enforcement local authorities have carried out, any successes and challenges they have faced and what further changes or powers they require and;
- (b) how well the changes to the buying and selling process, pitch fee reviews and site rules have worked.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ 5G: Standards

Louise Haigh:

[\[61565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the National Infrastructure Commission's report, *Connected future*, published 15 December 2016, how standards for 5G coverage will be agreed.

Matt Hancock:

Government will respond to the recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission's response through publication of the 5G Strategy. This strategy will outline the steps the Government is taking to ensure that the UK seizes the opportunity to be a world leader in 5G. Further updates on development of the strategy will issue around Budget 2017.

■ Broadband: Rutherglen and Hamilton West

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[61934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the proportion of (a) households and (b) business premises in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency that have access to superfast broadband.

Matt Hancock:

The information is not available in the requested form.

■ Mobile Phones: Radio Frequencies

Louise Haigh:

[\[61548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her most recent estimate is of the percentage of geographic voice and data coverage provided by (a) O2, (b) EE, (c) Three and (d) Vodafone; and whether she expects those levels to reach 90 per cent geographic coverage for each of those operators by the end of 2017.

Matt Hancock:

All four mobile network operators have a legally binding licence obligation to provide voice and SMS text coverage to 90% of the UK landmass by the end of 2017. Ofcom is responsible to enforce these obligations and the Digital Economy Bill, will give Ofcom the power to issue large fines to any operator who fails to meet their licence obligations.

Further details can be found in Ofcom's 2016 Connected Nations Report: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-2016>.

■ National Lottery

Kevin Brennan:

[61859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the potential effect on the amount of money provided for good causes by the National Lottery of the practice of betting on the result of the Euromillions draw.

Tracey Crouch:

The National Lottery was established in order to support good cause projects across the UK in the Arts, Sport, Heritage and Community sectors, and has raised over £36bn since its launch in 1994.

Under Section 95 of the Gambling Act, betting on the outcome of UK National Lottery draws including EuroMillions is prohibited to prevent funds being diverted from good causes and avoid any public confusion between playing the National Lottery and supporting good causes, and commercial gambling. However, where gambling operators in the UK offer a bet on the outcome of EuroMillions draws offered abroad (for example, a bet on the outcome of the Spanish EuroMillions draw), those bets do not have to return any money to good causes and are contrary to the spirit and intention of the prohibition in the Gambling Act.

While current market is small this is a potential growth market for gambling operators. Should the market expand further, there is a risk that EuroMillions sales, and consequently National Lottery good cause returns, could decrease. We are monitoring the situation closely.

■ Social Networking: Licensing

Nusrat Ghani:

[61018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing licences for the establishment and operation of social media companies.

Matt Hancock:

We have made no assessment of licensing for social media platforms.

■ Sports: Injuries

Jim Shannon:

[60350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) brain injuries and (b) cases of concussion caused as a result of people playing (i) football, (ii) rugby and (iii) other sports have been recorded in each of the last five years.

Tracey Crouch:

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport does not hold information or data on the comparative health risks resulting from taking part in major sports.

The Government takes player safety seriously in all sports. National Governing Bodies with significant risk of this type of injury in their sport put appropriate plans in place, issue guidance across their membership such as recent RFU and FA publications, and set elite level protocols, as the designated authorities with responsibility to regulate their sport. Under the leadership of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, the Forum on Concussion in Sport and Physical Education brings together representatives from a range of sports and government in England to raise awareness and improve support for managing incidents of concussion.

■ UK Trade with EU: Data Protection**Stephen Timms:**[\[61972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to secure a data adequacy decision for the UK from the EU.

Matt Hancock:

The General Data Protection Regulation will apply to EU member states from 25 May 2018. We expect still to be in the EU at that point, and so we will ensure that the General Data Protection Regulation will apply in the UK from then.

As part of plans for the UK's exit from the EU, the Government will be seeking to ensure that data flows between the UK and the EU are uninterrupted, and will be considering all the available options that will provide legal certainty for businesses and citizens alike.

Whilst negotiations to leave the EU have not begun, it would be inappropriate to speculate in any detail as to what arrangement we will seek to put in place.

DEFENCE**■ Air Force: Safety****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[61196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 19 January 2017 to Question 60037, how many Royal Air Force (a) engineering officers and (b) aircraft technicians have been charged for safety lapses in the last two years.

Mark Lancaster:

The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Armed Forces: Railways

Justin Tomlinson: [61593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2016 to Question 55493, what progress has been made on extending the availability of the HM Forces Railcard since the meeting of the Rail Delivery Group in December 2016.

Mark Lancaster:

This issue was raised at meeting with the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) in December 2016.

The Railcard is administered by Ministry of Defence (MOD) Human Resources personnel so the cost of a Railcard to Service personnel is considerably cheaper than the cost of cards administered by Train Company personnel.

The position remains unchanged since 2013 as a Railcard is a concession given by the Rail Companies and the MOD has no power on the decisions made by the commercial Rail Companies.

■ Army: Labour Turnover

Mr Kevan Jones: [61394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many reserve and regular soldiers and officers in (a) Infantry, (b) Royal Artillery, (c) Royal Corps of Signals, (d) Army Medical Services, (e) Adjutant General's Corps, (f) Royal Armoured Corps, (g) Army Air Corps, (h) Royal Engineers, (i) Royal Logistics Corps, (j) Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and (k) Intelligence Corps left the Army in the last 12 months.

Mike Penning:

The number of reserve and regular personnel that left the Arms/Service listed in the last 12 months is shown in the following table. These figures include outflow from both the untrained and trained strength.

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/2017-01-24/61394>

■ Army: Recruitment

Dan Jarvis: [61815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps are being taken to increase army recruiting prior to the introduction of the Army Recruiting Partnership Project.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my noble Friend, the Minister of State for Defence, Lord Howe, to the noble Lord, Lord Touhig, in the House of Lords to Questions HL4639, HL4640 and HL4802.

Attachments:

1. HL4639 - WQnA extract on Armed Forces Recruitment [Hansard Extracts PQN01328.docx]

■ Army: Republic of Ireland**Jim Shannon:****[61263]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to increase levels of recruitment to the army from the Republic of Ireland; and how many soldiers have been recruited to the army from that country in each of the last five years.

Mike Penning:

Citizens of the Republic of Ireland are eligible to apply to join the Regular British Army, although those wishing to join the Army Reserve must be resident in the UK. Applications for enlistment are made through the British Army website which contains extensive information on Army career opportunities and how to apply.

The total inflow to the untrained strength of the Army in the last five years, from those whose nationality is recorded as Irish, is as follows:

CALENDAR YEAR	REGULAR INFLOW	RESERVES INFLOW
2012	100	10
2013	60	10
2014	90	20
2015	80	30
2016 (up to 30 November)	70	20
Total	400	90

Figures have been rounded to ten to limit disclosure and ensure confidentiality; numbers ending in '5' have been rounded to the nearest multiple of twenty to prevent systematic bias.

■ Bomb Disposal**Ronnie Cowan:****[61432]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions the Government has had with industry experts on identifying and dealing with unexploded ordnance.

Mike Penning:

In respect of UK land Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) operations, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has a very close relationship with industry when discussing Countering Explosive Ordnance. Within the last 18 months, the MOD has worked closely with industry to help create 'Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) UK', a body that represents the whole of UK C-IED industry. The MOD sits on the

Executive Committee of that body and ensures that industry understands UK MOD requirements in significant detail.

At present the MOD does not have a requirement to outsource UK maritime EOD tasks to commercial companies, therefore no approach has been made to industry.

■ Defence School of Transport

Diana Johnson:

[\[61409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Babcock International's contract to run the Defence School of Transport, Leconfield has led to the permanent sale of his Department's land to that company.

Harriett Baldwin:

The intent to outsource the Equipment Support activity at the Defence School of Transport does not include the sale or transfer of Ministry of Defence real estate to Babcock. Babcock will operate from the existing workshop facility granted to them under licence for the duration of the contract.

■ Devonport Dockyard

Mr Gary Streeter:

[\[61373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his proposed timetable is to establish Plymouth as an amphibious Centre of Excellence; and when he expects the relocation of various regiments to take place.

Mark Lancaster:

Royal Marines Tamar, located within HM Naval Base Devonport, was established in August 2013 as the Amphibious Centre of Excellence incorporating 1 Assault Group Royal Marines and 539 Assault Squadron. It is now responsible for the training and delivery of all Landing craft and crews. Any further moves of Royal Marines Units are under review as part of the Defence estate optimisation strategy 'Better Defence Estate'.

■ Marines

Mr Gary Streeter:

[\[61363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will discuss with hon. Members representing all affected constituencies his plans for the Royal Marine relocations before making final decisions.

Mark Lancaster:

Parliament will be updated annually on the progress of our 'Better Defence Estate' strategy. This will include updates to the reprovion plan on a rolling five-year basis.

■ Ministry of Defence: Buildings

Wes Streeting:

[61963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much was spent on upgrading heating, washing and electrical facilities across the defence estate in each year since May 2010.

Mark Lancaster:

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

■ Ministry of Defence: Recruitment

Dan Jarvis:

[61816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's annual recruiting target was for each year from 2010-11 to 2015-16; and what that target is in each of the next five years.

Mike Penning:

There is no single target for Departmental recruitment across the Whole Force (military, civilian and contractors). However, Defence Statistics publish information on a regular basis showing military and civilian intake. The most recent information is contained in 'UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics December 2016' and 'Quarterly Civilian Personnel Report' which are available, respectively, at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-civilian-personnel-quarterly-report-2016>

Figures from Financial Years 2010-11 to 2014-15 for the Armed Forces may be found in Quarterly Performance Reports at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-quarterly-personnel-report-2015#>

■ NATO

Catherine West:

[61332]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had on the future of NATO with James Mattis, President Trump's nominee for Secretary for Defense.

Sir Michael Fallon:

I had an introductory call with Secretary Jim Mattis last Monday and discussed our joint leadership in NATO and plans to accelerate the defeat of Daesh. I look forward to meeting Secretary Mattis at the NATO Defence Ministers in February.

■ RAF Regiment: Recruitment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[61397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the shortfall was for the recruitment of reserve and regular gunners and officers in the RAF Regiment in the last 12 months.

Mike Penning:

The information is not held in the format requested as data is collected by Financial Year, not calendar year.

The table below provides the figures for the RAF Regiment Regular and Reserves Gunner and Officer Intake into Training targets, numbers of individuals recruited and the shortfall of recruitment numbers for the current Financial Year (2016-17), note there are three months of the Financial Year remaining.

RAF REGIMENT	TARGET FOR INTAKE INTO TRAINING FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2016-17	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RECRUITED AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2016	SHORTFALL OF RECRUITMENT NUMBERS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2016
Reserve Gunner	137	109	28
Reserve Officer	7	1	6
Regular Gunner	200	146	54
Regular Officer	24	24	0

■ Seas and Oceans: Bomb Disposal

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[61430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking to ensure UK waters are clear of unexploded ordnance.

Mike Penning:

The Ministry of Defence (in conjunction with the Department for Transport) conducts a programme of routinely surveying the Country's strategic waterways to ensure both port security and safety from ordnance.

There are well established maritime procedures to ensure any hazards and associated activities are promulgated to shipping and, where necessary, exclusion zones established and enforced. This ensures that when ordnance is occasionally discovered under water or below the high water mark, it remains undisturbed until rendered safe by a Royal Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit.

■ Stonehouse Barracks

Mr Gary Streeter:

[\[61356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the proposed location for the Royal Marines currently occupying RMB Stonehouse is; and when relocation is planned to take place.

Mark Lancaster:

The 'Better Defence Estate' strategy of 7 November 2016 announced the intended closure of Royal Marines Stonehouse by 2023 and outlined potential options for relocation of the Units currently located there (3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines HQ, Commander Amphibious Task Group HQ and 30 Commando (Information Exploitation Group) Royal Marines). Their future location remains subject to an assessment study that will report in the next 12 to 18 months and will inform more precisely the move dates and locations.

■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Sammy Wilson:

[\[61769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has received requests from other government departments for the use of GPS guided parachutes to drop aid to besieged Syrian civilians in the last 12 months.

Mike Penning:

The UK Armed Forces do not have a GPS-guided parachute capability suitable to drop aid to besieged Syrian civilians. We continue to work with allies and partners on potential options for delivering aid, but the most effective means remains road deliveries of large quantities, organised by Humanitarian agencies and coordinated with authorities on the ground.

■ Syria: Military Aid

Sammy Wilson:

[\[61768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether GPS guided parachutes have been used to facilitate arms drops to rebel forces in Syria in the last 12 months.

Mike Penning:

UK has not provided lethal supplies to opposition groups in Syria by any means.

■ Trident Missiles

Catherine West:

[\[61534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK Trident missiles rely on (a) weather data and (b) navigational data provided by the US.

Sir Michael Fallon:

Our Trident missiles do not rely on US weather and navigational data. The UK's nuclear deterrent is completely operationally independent.

■ Trident Missiles: Testing

Andrew Gwynne: [\[61186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average cost to his Department is of a test of Trident.

Sir Michael Fallon:

The cost of a test launch cannot be disaggregated from the overall cost of a Demonstration and Shakedown Operation (DASO). The 2016 DASO is estimated to have cost around £16 million.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[61370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether officials at his Department alerted officials in the US Department about the misfired Trident missile, during tests off the Eastern US coast in June 2016.

Sir Michael Fallon:

Vanguard ballistic missile submarine Demonstration and Shakedown Operations (DASO) are conducted in conjunction with the US Department of Defense. All 11 DASOs resulted in the submarine successfully being certified to return to the operational cycle.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many VIPs who were invited by commanding officers attended the Trafalgar Dinner Function during Royal Navy SSBN and Trident II D5 Demonstration and Shakedown Operations in (a) 2012 and (b) 2016.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilian guests who were invited by commanding officers attended the Trafalgar Dinner Function during Royal Navy SSBN and Trident II D5 demonstration and shakedown operations in (a) 2012 and (b) 2016.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many military personnel attended the Trafalgar Dinner Function during Royal Navy SSBN and Trident II D5 demonstration and shakedown operations in (a) 2012 and (b) 2016.

Sir Michael Fallon:

In 2012, ten guests attended the Demonstration and Shakedown Operations (DASO) Trafalgar dinner function, six military personnel and four civilians. This included one civilian VIP. There was no DASO Trafalgar dinner in June 2016.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[61464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's policy is on publicising successful test firings of unarmed Trident II D5 missiles.

Sir Michael Fallon:

There is no set approach to publicising Demonstration and Shakedown Operations. This is decided on a case by case basis and is informed by the circumstances and security considerations at the time.

Kelvin Hopkins:[\[61728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria the Government uses to determine whether to announce the (a) date and (b) outcome of tests of Trident missiles.

Sir Michael Fallon:

Prior to conducting a test fire of a Trident missile, the UK strictly adheres to all relevant treaty obligations, notifying relevant nations and interested parties of the test in advance.

There is no set approach to announcing the outcome of a Demonstration and Shakedown Operation. This is decided on a case by case basis and is informed by the circumstances at the time.

Patrick Grady:[\[61814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral statement of the Minister of State for Defence of 23 January 2017, HL Official Report, column 463, how many (a) hon. Members and (b) Members of the House of Lords were (i) invited to be and (ii) onboard the survey vessels observing the trident missile test firing in July 2016.

Sir Michael Fallon:

One Member of the House of Lords attended the Demonstration and Shakedown Operation in June 2016. No hon. Members of the House of Commons were present.

■ USA: Armed Forces**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[61402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK military personnel are on exchange tours with United States Global Strike Command.

Mark Lancaster:

The RAF has one Exchange Officer employed within United States Air Force Global Strike Command.

■ Wellington Barracks**Wes Streeting:**[\[61961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the time needed (a) to repair the boiler at Wellington Barracks and (b) for wider facilities upgrades at that barracks.

Mark Lancaster:

The fault with the boiler at Wellington Barracks was identified on 23 January and fixed on 26 January. Temporary portable heaters were provided on 24 January to affected areas.

No major facilities upgrades are planned at this time. A continuous maintenance programme at Wellington Barracks ensures the site is statutory and mandatory compliant.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices

Steve McCabe:

[61390]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 16 December 2016 to Question 56579, what the 27 per cent most deprived areas are in order of deprivation.

Robert Halfon:

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG); it measures relative levels of deprivation in small areas or neighbourhoods, called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). The 27 per cent most deprived areas as referred to in the question are the most deprived 27% of LSOAs (LSOAs ranking between 1-8867 on the IMD constitute the 27% most deprived).

Information and data on the Indices of Deprivation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

Gordon Marsden:

[61753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will guarantee apprenticeship funding for non-levy paying employers in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

Robert Halfon:

We have confirmed a minimum of £440m funding available for non-levy paying employers for 2017-18 and we are committed to funding high quality apprenticeships over the Parliament. Decisions on future years' funding will be made on the basis of ongoing monitoring of employer demand, performance and budgets.

■ Apprentices: Taxation

James Cartlidge:

[59185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the potential cost of the apprenticeship levy to small primary schools in England in the first year of its operation.

Robert Halfon:

Small primary schools will be liable for the apprenticeship levy, at 0.5% of their pay bill, if their staff are employed by a body whose total pay bill is over £3m. That will apply to community and voluntary controlled schools, where staff are employed by the local authority, and to many multi academy trusts.

The apprenticeship levy will support schools to train up and develop existing as well as new staff, an integral part of this government's wider plans to improve productivity and provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds and all ages to enter the workplace. We encourage all schools to employ or designate apprentices, whether or not they pay the apprenticeship levy. Where schools do not pay the levy, or have exhausted the funds in their levy pot, they can put in 10% of the costs of apprentices' training, and the government will provide the remaining 90%.

James Cartlidge:

[59186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with representatives of governors and head-teachers of small primary schools in England on potential mitigation of the effect on their schools of the apprenticeship levy.

Robert Halfon:

We have engaged thousands of employers and training providers throughout the development of the apprenticeship funding reforms and continue to do so. This engagement helped to shape the funding policy proposals for England from May 2017, published on 25 October. We are continuing to work with stakeholders across the education sector to support schools in getting the full benefit of our apprenticeship funding reforms.

Our ongoing engagement includes with local authorities, whose levy contributions will cover the schools they maintain, where they employ the staff. We are clear that local authorities are responsible for working closely with these schools, to agree how the cost of the levy will be fairly spread and to ensure schools contributing to the levy can access the funding for apprenticeship training. My officials continue to support them in doing this.

We have published estimates of levy payments by sector, and previous apprenticeship spending by sector:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/545145/Apprenticeships_-expected_levy_and_total_spend_-_Aug_2016.pdf.

Andrew Selous:

[60210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy not to impose the apprenticeship levy on small schools; and for what reasons large academies are not required to pay that levy.

Robert Halfon:

The levy is being introduced to fund a step change in apprenticeship numbers and quality. All employers in England, including schools, can use the funds raised by the levy for apprenticeship training and assessment, getting valuable skills for their organisations. Levying all employer paybills over £3m, including those in the education sector, is considered to be the simplest, fairest and most objective way of doing this.

For academies, the trust is the employer and single academies or multi-academy trusts with a paybill of over £3m will pay the apprenticeship levy. For foundation and

voluntary aided schools, the governing body is the employer. For community and voluntary controlled schools, the local authority is the employer.

This means that, for community and voluntary controlled schools, the local authority will pay the levy, rather than the school. The local authority may pass these costs on to the school but they will also be able to pass on the benefits - giving the school access to digital funds to pay for apprenticeship training.

■ **Careers and Enterprise Company**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[59741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the progress being made by the Careers and Enterprise Company to help young people into work in the opportunity areas identified by the Government.

Robert Halfon:

Helping all young people to get the careers education and guidance they need to climb the ladder of opportunity is crucial to delivering real social justice. We are investing £90m over this Parliament to ensure that every young person has equal access to the life-changing advice and inspiration that they need to fulfil their potential and succeed in life. This includes further funding for The Careers & Enterprise Company to continue the excellent work it has started. The Company is targeting careers 'cold spots' and is making good progress to support young people in Opportunity Areas.

The Company has been working with employer representative bodies and local partners to align efforts to support the specific commitments that businesses could make to schools and colleges in these areas. The Company has also launched the second round of its Careers and Enterprise Fund, £1 million of which will specifically support young people in the six Opportunity Areas announced last year. This will ensure that young people get the right experiences with employers, to better prepare them for the world of work.

■ **Children: Carers**

Stephen Timms:

[\[61901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2017 to Question 60977, if her Department will gather data on the number of young carers registered in schools.

Edward Timpson:

Later this year we will publish a new cross government carer's strategy. In this strategy we will set out what more can be done to support young carers so they are able to live a full life beyond their caring responsibilities. As part of this we will consider what additional data on young carers we might need to collect.

Although not collected through schools, The Department for Education now collects information on young carers through the annual children in need census. When a child is assessed following a referral to children's social services, local authorities are

asked to report factors identified at the end of this assessment. One of these potential factors is whether there are concerns that services may be required or the child's health or development may be impaired due to their caring responsibilities. Figures for this for the year ending 31 March 2016 can be found in table C3 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2015-to-2016>

■ **Children: Day Care**

Dr Andrew Murrison: [61732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department plans to take to determine the efficiency of the provision of free childcare funding.

Dr Andrew Murrison: [61733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to involve private sector childcare providers in assessing the efficacy of free childcare funding.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Department is developing plans to monitor the implementation of 30 hours of free childcare. We have been clear that getting the funding right is critical to successful delivery of this new entitlement and this is why we are introducing an early years national funding formula and maximising the funding that goes to providers.

We will continue to use census data collections and market surveys to monitor and evaluate the childcare market, conduct longitudinal research through the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED), and undertake our long-standing, nationally representative surveys of providers and parents. We will use these to assess the impact of the free entitlement from both providers' and parents' perspectives.

We will also keep under review the data underpinning the early years national funding formula.

■ **Classroom Assistants: Pay**

Anna Turley: [61868]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to ensure that teaching assistants receive full remuneration for the responsibilities they undertake.

Nick Gibb:

The Government believes that all decisions on the use, deployment and pay of teaching assistants are best made at a local level, in a way that reflects the specific needs of schools in that area.

■ Department for Education: Recruitment**Helen Goodman:** [\[61420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times the selection exemptions of the Civil Service Commissioner's recruitment principles were used by her Department in each year since 2010; and at what grades each such appointment was made.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Civil Service Commissioners' recruitment principles do not include selection exemptions.

■ Further Education: Disadvantaged**Gordon Marsden:** [\[61752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills of 9 January 2017, Official Report, column 114, how much of the £550 million disadvantage funding for post-16 places will be spent on subsidising college buses in 2016-17.

Robert Halfon:

Schools and colleges receive disadvantage funding as part of their general 16-19 funding to help them support disadvantaged young people. In 2016/17 this funding totalled just under £550 million. Disadvantage funding is not ring fenced. This means institutions are free to use this element of the funding to choose the best way to attract, retain and support disadvantaged students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Providers also receive a 16-19 bursary fund allocation to provide discretionary bursaries for financially disadvantaged young people who need additional support to help them with costs, such as transport. Schools and colleges were allocated £132 million of bursary funding in 2016/17. Additionally, students in defined vulnerable groups are eligible for yearly bursaries of £1,200 (pro-rata for part-timers).

The Department does not collect detailed information on how the disadvantage funding and bursary fund allocation is used, nor does it dictate exactly how the money should be spent. Post-16 institutions have a good deal of flexibility in how they can use their overall resources to support students. Some colleges support bus transport. However, the Department does not collect data on the amount of money spent on this.

■ Institute for Apprenticeships**Gordon Marsden:** [\[61757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Institute for Apprenticeships route panels will be fully operational.

Robert Halfon:

The recruitment for the 15 Route Panel chairs and members is underway with a view to have them in place before the Institute for Apprenticeships goes live in April 2017.

■ Nurseries

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[61731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with Ofsted on (a) recent closures of nurseries due to safety concerns and (b) the effectiveness of (i) pre-scheduled and unscheduled site inspections.

Caroline Dineneage:

I recently met Ofsted's Deputy Director for Early Years to discuss a range of issues on the regulation of childcare, including inspection arrangements and the quality standards of childcare providers. Departmental officials have regular business meetings with the Ofsted early years team and brief me on all developments as appropriate.

Departmental Ministers discussed and agreed the new system of inspections with Ofsted prior to Ofsted launching the Common Inspection Framework in September 2015. The framework covers the arrangements for both scheduled inspections and unscheduled inspections based on an assessment of risk. The framework and inspection guidance can be viewed on Ofsted's website from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015>

■ Pupils: Nationality

Steve McCabe:

[61684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 10 January 2017 to Question 56640, on pupils: nationality, whether her Department provides National Pupil Database data to named bodies and third parties free of charge.

Nick Gibb:

NPD extracts are only provided once third parties have satisfied the NPD strict terms and conditions covering the appropriateness of use, confidentiality and handling of data, security arrangements, and commitment to subsequently destruct the data at the end of the license period.

The data extracts are provided free of charge.

■ Schools

Christian Matheson:

[61415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of schools were (a) local authority, (b) church and (c) academy and free schools on 31 December 2016.

Nick Gibb:

On 31 December 2016 there were 21,925 state funded schools. 71.1 per cent (15,588) were local authority maintained and 28.9 per cent (6,337) were academies and free schools. In addition, 31.2 per cent (6,839) of state funded schools had either a designated religious character or religious ethos.

Schools: Honours

Christian Matheson: [\[61169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the total number of awards made to state schools in the New Year Honours List 2017 were to governors or employees of (a) local authority, (b) church and (c) academy and free schools.

Caroline Dinenage:

41 governors and employees of state schools were recognised in the New Year Honours List 2017: 17 were employees or governors of local authority maintained schools, 6 were employees or governors of church schools and 18 were employees or governors of academies and free schools.

Schools: Inspections

Kate Hoey: [\[61711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Ofsted inspections deployed in excess of 10 inspectors to one school in one inspection (a) 2010, (b) 2011, (c) 2012, (d) 2013, (e) 2014, (f) 2015 and (g) 2016.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you and a copy of her reply will be placed in the libraries of the House.

Schools: Operating Costs

Lilian Greenwood: [\[61904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee of 23 January 2017, Question 46, when the research commissioned by her Department into the running costs of schools will be published.

Nick Gibb:

As set out in the Public Accounts Committee hearing, the analysis is close to being completed and we expect to publish it soon.

Skills Funding Agency: Recruitment

Helen Goodman: [\[61421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times the selection exemptions of the Civil Service Commissioner's recruitment principles were used by the Skills Funding Agency in each year since 2010; and at what grades each such appointment was made.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Civil Service Commissioners' recruitment principles do not include selection exemptions.

■ Technical and Further Education Bill

Gordon Marsden:

[\[61755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many statutory instruments she plans to lay for the Technical and Further Education Bill.

Robert Halfon:

No decision has been made so far on the number of statutory instruments that will be needed; the Technical and Further Education Bill is still making its passage through the Houses of Parliament.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Welfare: Circuses

Rachael Maskell:

[\[61557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (a) how many wild animals and (b) of which species are licensed in circuses.

George Eustice:

There are currently 16 wild animals licensed by Defra for use by travelling circuses in England. The 16 wild animals are 6 Reindeer; 3 Camels; 3 Zebra; 1 Fox; 1 Macaw; 1 Raccoon and 1 Zebu.

■ Furs

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[61209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of (a) extending the ban on the sale of cat, dog and seal fur to other species and (b) improving guidance on fur labelling for consumer products; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Some skin and fur products may never be legally imported into the UK for commercial use. These include seal skins and products and cat and dog fur and products.

If the fur is from an endangered species protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), its import and trade will be subject to CITES controls, as will any body part of that species also being imported or traded. These controls are implemented by the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations. The Government has no plans to remove these controls.

Labelling of fur products for consumers is already covered by The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

■ Oilseed Rape**Dr Andrew Murrison:**[\[61734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on what dates she has met representatives of the (a) agricultural and (b) retail sectors to discuss the decline in oilseed rape harvests; and what steps she has taken as a result of those meetings.

George Eustice:

There is no record of discussions with representatives of the agricultural or retail sectors to discuss the decline in oilseed rape harvests specifically. Defra continues to support the improvement of oilseed rape through its Oilseed Rape Genetic Improvement Network (OREGIN). This network is dedicated to the development of new pre-breeding material with key resilience traits such as resistance to fungal pathogens, improved nutrient uptake efficiency, rooting and establishment as well as improved quality traits

■ Water Treatment: EU Law**Angela Smith:**[\[61729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is her policy that the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive will be incorporated in full into UK law when the UK leaves the EU.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Prime Minister announced last year our plans for a Repeal Bill that will convert current EU law into domestic British law. Our intention is to ensure a smooth and orderly transition via the Repeal Bill. Without pre-judging what our future relationship with the EU will be or future decisions Parliament may make, this will provide as much certainty as possible by maintaining the existing laws; and this will include laws transposing the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.

■ Wines: Manufacturing Industries**Andy Slaughter:**[\[908484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect of the UK's decision to leave the EU on the UK wine industry.

George Eustice:

Defra officials have been undertaking a thorough analysis of the agri-food industry, including the wine industry. We have also been speaking directly to wine producers and trade organisations, to understand what they need from us so they can continue to thrive after we leave the EU.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Business: North of England****Louise Haigh:**[\[61556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, on how many occasions he has met with businesses based in (a) Sheffield, (b) Leeds, (c) Manchester, (d) Newcastle, (e) Bradford, (f) Hull, (g) Liverpool and (h) Sunderland since 13 July 2016.

Mr David Jones:

Ministers and officials across Government are engaging UK and EU business from every sector of the economy - this is a central element of our plan to get the right deal for Britain. We are listening and talking to a broad range of organisations, companies and institutions both in the UK, and abroad. Details of Ministerial meetings will be published in the Department's Quarterly Transparency Returns, which will be made publicly available on GOV.UK.

■ EU Law**Stephen Timms:**[\[61974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he plans that the Great Repeal Bill will include measures already agreed by the EU but not yet implemented in the UK.

Mr David Jones:

Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force.

The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and ensure a functioning statute book on the day we leave.

This Great Repeal Bill will preserve EU law as it applies on the day we leave, allowing Parliament to make changes to account for the outcome of the exit negotiations.

■ Northern Ireland: Republic of Ireland**Catherine West:**[\[60960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with (a) members of the Northern Ireland Executive and (b) members of the Northern Ireland Assembly on the future of the Ireland-UK border after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

As the Prime Minister said in her speech on 17 January 2017, nobody wants to return to the borders of the past. As we approach the negotiations, we will carry on working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, together with the Scottish and Welsh Governments, as work continues to ensure that we get the best possible deal for all parts of the United Kingdom.

To this end, the Prime Minister chaired Joint Ministerial Committee meetings with leaders of the Devolved Administrations on 30 January in Cardiff and on 24 October 2016 in London.

We have set up a new Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations, which brings together constituent parts of the United Kingdom 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. The Committee met for the third time on 19 January.

Ministers from the Department for Exiting the EU and the Northern Ireland Office have met with members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to discuss EU Exit.

Catherine West: [\[60961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he has met his Irish counterpart to discuss the future of the Ireland-UK border after the UK leaves the EU.

Catherine West: [\[60962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with (a) the Prime Minister and (b) the Foreign Secretary on the future of the Ireland-UK border after the UK leaves the EU.

Catherine West: [\[61021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with the Irish government on the future of the Ireland-UK border after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government remains committed to working with the Irish Government. As the Prime Minister said in her speech on 17 January 2017, we place huge value on maintaining the UK's unique arrangements with Ireland and the friendly, cooperative relationship we've built in recent years. Maintaining the Common Travel Area with Ireland will be an important priority in the UK's EU Exit talks ahead. It was formed before either the UK or Ireland was a member of the European Union. The family ties and bonds of affection that unite our two countries mean that there will always be a special relationship between us.

The Prime Minister met the Taoiseach in Dublin on 30 January and in London on 26 July 2016. In addition, the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU met with Irish Ministers, including the Taoiseach, Tanaiste, Foreign and Europe Ministers, in Dublin on 8 September. Most recently, the Chancellor the Exchequer had meetings in Dublin on 9 January.

During these meetings a range of issues were discussed, including the future of the UK-Ireland border after the UK leaves the EU. The open border for people and businesses has served us well. There is a very strong commitment from the Irish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive as well as ourselves to find a practical

solution that recognises the unique circumstances on the land border between Northern Ireland and Ireland and the social, political and economic implications.

In addition, four UK Government Ministers, including the Secretaries of State for both Northern Ireland and Wales, attended the British-Irish Council on 25 November.

■ UK Membership of EU

Helen Goodman:

[\[61647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he has compiled a list of all UK rights and obligations arising from membership of EU agencies and institutions.

Helen Goodman:

[\[61648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he has compiled a list of all UK rights and obligations arising from third party agreements made by the EU to which the UK is a signatory.

Mr David Jones:

We are doing all necessary preparatory work to make sure that we get the best deal for Britain, but as we have said before we will not provide a running commentary.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ British Nationals Abroad: Honour Based Violence

Nusrat Ghani:

[\[61095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with international counterparts on permission for incidents of honour-based violence committed against British nationals abroad to be investigated and prosecuted by British authorities.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

There is no 'honour' in so called 'honour-based' violence, and we will not allow political or cultural sensitivities to get in the way of tackling these crimes.

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Reading (Mr Sharma) met political and non-Governmental organisation representatives from the British-Pakistani community on 4-5 January to discuss challenges of looking after the interests of British citizens who spend time and have family ties in Pakistan, including on the subject of forced marriage.

■ Libya: Terrorism

Danny Kinahan:

[\[61207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with Libyan Deputy Prime Minister, Ahmed Maiteeq, on the case of victims of IRA terrorism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have made clear to the Libyan authorities that resolution of legacy issues remains a priority for us. I raised the issue of compensation during respective meetings with Prime Minister Serraj and Deputy Prime Minister Maiteq during the London Ministerial on 31 October 2016. We will continue to encourage the Libyan authorities to engage with UK victims, and their legal representatives, seeking redress, including those seeking compensation. Deputy Prime Minister Maiteq is expected to attend the Libya Reconstruction and Investment Forum in London on Thursday 26 January. We hope to have the opportunity to discuss legacy issues in the margins of this event.

Danny Kinahan:[\[61215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of the Libyan Government of National Accord on compensation for UK victims of Gaddafi-sponsored IRA terrorism.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have made clear to the Libyan authorities that resolution of legacy issues remains a priority for us. I raised the issue of compensation during respective meetings with Prime Minister Serraj and Deputy Prime Minister Maiteq during the London Ministerial on 31 October 2016. We will continue to encourage the Libyan authorities to engage with UK victims, and their legal representatives, seeking redress, including those seeking compensation. Deputy Prime Minister Maiteq is expected to attend the Libya Reconstruction and Investment Forum in London on Thursday 26 January. We hope to have the opportunity to discuss legacy issues in the margins of this event.

■ Nathan Law**Catherine West:**[\[61221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has discussed the attack on Nathan Law, Hong Kong Legislative Council Member, with the (a) Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, (b) Chinese Foreign Minister, (c) Chinese Ambassador to the UK and (d) UK Ambassador to China.

Alok Sharma:

The UK has not raised this issue with the Chinese and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Governments. I have not discussed the case with the British Ambassador to China, although the British Embassy in Beijing and British Consulate General in Hong Kong continue to monitor developments in respect of this case closely. Under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, law enforcement is a matter for the Hong Kong authorities. We understand that the Hong Kong police have made a number of arrests in connection with this incident.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Tom Brake:

[\[61083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Iran on the outcome of the appeal against conviction by Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We were disappointed to hear the outcome of Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's appeal and understand how distressing this must be for her family. I have since spoken to the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ravanchi to express our concerns. I also raised the case during my recent visit to Iran. I have met Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's family both in the UK and in Iran and we will continue to support them during this difficult period. My officials remain in regular contact with them.

■ Qatar: British Nationals Abroad

Catherine West:

[\[61218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has contacted (a) his Qatari counterpart, (b) the Qatari Ambassador to the UK and (c) the UK Ambassador to Qatar to discuss the death of a British citizen who died while working on the World Cup stadium.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I am aware of the tragic death of a British national in Qatar and my sympathies are with his family at this difficult time.

We are in touch with his family and are providing support and advice on local arrangements. I welcome the swift investigation into his death and await the outcome of this. We are in touch with local authorities to press for progress with the case.

HEALTH

■ Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Rosie Cooper:

[\[61845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how long it took between the Care Quality Commission's inspection of Bridgewater NHS Trust and the production of the report on that inspection.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[61846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what reasons are for the time taken in the production of the Care Quality Commission's report on its inspection of Bridgewater NHS Trust.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care. The CQC has provided the following information.

The CQC inspected Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust between May and June 2016.

The Trust is made up of particular size and complexity and as a result of this the post inspection and pre-publication processes took longer than the usual set timescale and were not completed until October 2016.

The quality checking element of the nine separate inspection reports that were completed were presented at four separate National Quality Assurance Group (NQAG) panels rather than the usual one. Although this part of the process could have been completed in a shorter timeframe, it was considered important to maintain consistency within the NQAG panel and so additional time was added to the process.

The draft inspection report was sent to the Trust on 2 November 2016 for factual accuracy checks and was returned to the CQC on 2 December with factual accuracy comments and a request from the Trust for CQC to consider further information. The further information was scheduled to be considered at a further NQAG panel in line with CQC pre-publication processes.

The NQAG panel was set up for 9 December 2016 but this was cancelled due to the panel Chair being called away on urgent business. The panel was rescheduled for 21 December 2016.

On 20 December 2016 the Trust forwarded an additional set of further information for the CQC to consider the day before the NQAG panel was due to take place. The panel Chair felt more time was needed to consider this additional further information and as a result the NQAG panel was rescheduled to 11 January 2017.

After the NQAG panel took place the CQC prepared the inspection report for final publication and contacted the Trust on 18 January 2017 to inform them that the report would be published on 23 January 2017.

On that same day, 18 January, the Trust contacted the CQC with a request to delay publication as their Chief Executive Officer was on leave as from 20 January 2017 and wished to be available when the inspection report was published to support his staff and team. The CQC agreed to this request.

The report is currently scheduled to be published in February 2017.

■ Cerebral Palsy: Screening

Mark Durkan:

[61145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the benefits to the health and well-being of children of the early identification of cerebral palsy.

David Mowat:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published on 25 January 2017 the clinical guideline *Cerebral palsy in under 25s: assessment and management NICE guideline* (NG62).

This provides recommendations for clinicians on the importance of enhanced clinical and developmental follow-up for children up to two years of age who are at increased risk of developing cerebral palsy, and the need for referral for an urgent assessment following the early recognition of possible signs of cerebral palsy.

■ **Cervical Cancer: Screening**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[61090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 11 February 2016 to Question 25563, what steps his Department is taking to improve cervical screening rates among black and minority ethnic women.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[61091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 1 July 2016 to Question 40774, what steps his Department is taking to improve cervical screening rates among women with a learning disability.

David Mowat:

The National Cervical Screening programme does not collect data on ethnicity however recognises that through the introduction of the human papillomavirus immunisation, all sections of society should be able to benefit from the positive impact of immunisation.

Public Health England (PHE) and its partners are carrying out a range of activities which will promote a clearer understanding of why uptake is different amongst various groups and also hopefully improve uptake. These activities include:

- Gathering, synthesising and producing more evidence to inform and change practice;
- Data and information – access to data, cleansing, benchmarking for providers, timely and useful information for commissioners;
- Behavioural insight – communication with commissioners, providers, patients and public;
- Commissioning levers – commissioning contracts in public health (S7a) and primary care, inclusion of work to increase uptake and decrease inequalities in Section 7a specifications;
- Partnership work – relationships with commissioners and providers, working with the charities to understand and improve access and awareness; and
- Sharing best practice – what works well, evaluation and how to embed quality improvement.

PHE continues to support providers to help meet the Accessible Information Standard through the provision of high quality information for people with learning disabilities or sensory loss. Publication of the easy read leaflets for cervical screening is available at the gov.uk website.

■ Coeliac Disease

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many clinical commissioning groups have stopped access to staple gluten-free substitute foods without public consultation in the last two years.

David Mowat:

This information is not collected centrally.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria are used to determine the price of gluten-free products accepted by the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances recommended list which forms Part XV of the Drug Tariff.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria determine the inclusion of gluten-free products on the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances recommended list which forms Part XV of the Drug Tariff.

Nicola Blackwood:

As with all borderline substances, any application for a gluten-free food product to be included in Part XV of the Drug Tariff must include a statement of the total price of the product to the National Health Service. Applicants must confirm that the total price of the product is inclusive of all distribution costs and indicate where they see their product being positioned within the current list of Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS)-approved products. As part of its overall consideration, the Committee will benchmark the proposed price submitted by the applicant against similar products already included within Part XV.

The ACBS will only consider gluten-free food products based on white, brown or wholemeal grains that are considered to be “dietary staples”, including:

- plain breakfast cereals containing no added sugar;
- breads and rolls;
- crackers and crispbreads;
- flours and bread mixes;
- Pastas;
- pizza bases; and
- xanthan gum.

■ Dental Services

Karen Lumley: [\[61088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to improve access to affordable dentistry services.

David Mowat:

Overall access to National Health Service dentistry continues to increase. 22 million adults were seen by dentist in the 24 month period ending 30 September 2016 and 6.7 million children were seen by a dentist in the 12 month period ending 30 September 2015, this represents 51.3% of the adult population and 57.9% of the child population. The latest GP patient survey (January - March 2016) also showed that nationally 93% of patients who had tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last 24 months were successful.

New ways of providing care are being trialled to further improve oral health and increase access, by preventing as well as treating disease, so freeing up resource. Alongside this a new programme, the Starting Well Programme, is being developed to work in 13 high needs areas to improve access to dental services for children known to be at greater risk of dental disease.

NHS dental treatment remains affordable. All children receive free NHS treatment. Charges for NHS treatment for adults remain heavily subsidised and there is also partial help with charges for those on low incomes.

Steve McCabe:[\[61970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 16 December 2016 to Question 57501, what proportion of the population is registered with a dentist.

David Mowat:

Information is not held in the form requested.

Disability: Health Services**Jim McMahon:**[\[R\] \[61195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he plans to include in the Integration and Better Care Fund Framework 2017-19 how local authorities should take account of the needs of working age disabled people when planning integration.

David Mowat:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the Rt. hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) to Question [58219](#) on 9 January 2017.

Doctors: Migrant Workers**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[61897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (a) how many applications to work have been refused and (b) for what reasons by the General Medical Council in each of the last four years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department does not hold information requested.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of doctors in the United Kingdom and is responsible for doctor registration.

The GMC provided the following table which breaks down application refusals, and the reason for refusal, into the last four years:

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Concerns relating to conduct and/or competence	65	65	54	62
Concerns relating to health	0	1	2	0
Multiple concerns	22	22	12	11
European Community (EC) rights *	21	15	0	0
Total	108	103	68	73

* applications incorrectly made under rights conferred by EC legislation.

■ Doctors: Training

Karen Lumley:

[\[61103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to promote enrolment in mental health training of training medical practitioners.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Health Education England is working in partnership with the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, to ensure that all foundation programme trainee doctors have up to date Mental Capacity Act training as part of the Foundation Programme Curriculum.

HEE will publish a workforce strategy shortly laying out how to implement the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health and *Future in Mind*.

■ General Practitioners: Retirement

Norman Lamb:

[\[61849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of how many GPs working in the NHS will retire by 2020.

David Mowat:

General Practitioners (GPs) do not have a mandatory retirement age. Any member of the National Health Service Pensions scheme can retire earlier or later than their normal pension age (minimum age is 55, maximum age is 75). It is a matter of individual choice.

Health Education England (HEE) produce local and national forecasts of workforce supply covering the next five years. HEE and NHS England are using these forecasts

to develop a programme to improve retention among doctors of all ages in general practice. This includes the Retained Doctor Scheme, which is a support package that includes development support and financial incentives to help GPs who might otherwise leave the profession to remain in clinical general practice.

■ General Practitioners: Training

Norman Lamb:

[\[61850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of how many new GPs will be trained and employed in the NHS by 2020.

David Mowat:

The Government has a commitment to provide an additional 5,000 doctors working in general practice by 2020. In order to achieve this, there will be increasing general practitioner (GP) training recruitment, a major national and international recruitment campaign, bursaries and post-certificate of completion of training fellowships in hard to recruit areas, and GPs will be encouraged to return to general practice.

Health Education England recruited 3,019 new starters to training posts in 2016 - the highest number of GP trainees ever.

■ Homeopathy

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[61848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2017 to Question 60306, if he will amend the definition of the philosophy of homeopathy in the guidance to better reflect the scientific evidence on that treatment.

Nicola Blackwood:

The description of the philosophy of homeopathy stated in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) online guidance has been amended by the MHRA to better reflect the available evidentiary basis relating to the philosophy of homeopathy.

■ Hospital Beds

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[61896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients over the age of 80 were discharged from NHS hospitals during the night in each month in (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2015-16.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ London Ambulance Service: ICT

Catherine West: [\[61173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2017 to Question 60324, what discussions he has had with the Chief Executive of the London Ambulance Service on the efficacy of the Command Point system.

Mr Philip Dunne:

There have been no discussions between my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the Chief Executive of the London Ambulance Service (LAS) regarding the Command Point system.

LAS suffered a failure of their Command Point system in the early hours of 1 January 2017. An external review of the incident is currently underway.

■ Mental Illness: Children

Luciana Berger: [\[61890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many finished admission episodes there were with a primary diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorder for patients aged 0 to 18 in 2015-16.

Nicola Blackwood:

There were 12,265 finished admission episodes with a primary diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorder for patients aged 0-18 years in 2015-16.

■ NHS: Compensation

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[61899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the total cost of compensation payments made by NHS trusts and foundation trusts is in 2016-17 to date; and what such payments were in each of the previous three years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The following table shows the total cost of compensation payments made by National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts for the last three years. The most recent published accounts are for 2015-16.

YEAR	NHS TRUSTS AND FOUNDATION TRUSTS
2015-16	£1,442,815,487
2014-15	£1,116,026,687
2013-14	£1,130,619,267
Total	£3,689,461,441

Source: NHS Litigation Authority (NHS LA) January 2017

The information is also available at the website below:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/Publications.aspx?library=currentactivity%7cfactsheets%7cfactsheet5trustandhealthauthorityclaimsdata>

The number of claims/potential claims notified to the NHS LA in a given year and the amounts paid out in that year do not necessarily relate to the same cohort of claims. Payments made in one year may relate to claims notified in earlier financial years, particularly where claims are large or complex. Similarly, claims and potential claims notified to the NHS LA in that given year may not be settled in that year.

■ NHS: Crimes of Violence

Ruth Cadbury:

[61204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to protect NHS staff from verbal and physical abuse in the workplace.

Mr Philip Dunne:

National Health Service staff work very hard in a high pressure environment. Any abuse of staff is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

Employers in the NHS are responsible for assessing risks to staff and addressing those risks. Detailed guidance to the NHS on this is available within the NHS Security Management Manual. Guidance includes advice on joint working between the NHS, the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service on responses to incidents of abuse or violence when these occur and on taking forward appropriate cases for prosecution.

Powers under the Criminal Justice and immigration Act 2008 provide for removal from hospitals of people causing nuisance or disturbance, before escalation of such behaviour.

■ NHS: Inspections

Rosie Cooper:

[61844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the (a) average, (b) shortest and (c) longest length of time has been between the Care Quality Commission's inspections of NHS Trusts and the publication of report on those inspections.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

Length of time between CQC inspection of National Health Service trusts and publication of inspection reports:

SHORTEST LENGTH OF TIME	18 WORKING DAYS
Longest length of time	176 working days
Average (Mean) length of time	75 working days

The time taken between the conclusion of an inspection and the publication of an inspection report can vary for wide number of reasons. These include variations in the size of the trust being inspected, the complexity of the services they deliver, the scale and scope of the CQC reports and also whether it is a first rating or a subsequent inspection.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[61895]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many full inspections of NHS trusts and foundation trusts the Care Quality Commission undertook in 2016-17, and in each of the previous three financial years; and how many inspections in each year were (a) outstanding, (b) good, (c) requires improvement and (d) inadequate.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and Adult Social Care in England. The CQC has provided the following information:

Number of CQC comprehensive inspections and ratings of NHS trusts and foundation trusts

COMPREHENSIVE INSPECTIONS	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Number of comprehensive inspections	68	105	93	44
Total number of Outstanding	5	3	1	0
Total number of Good	7	35	22	6
Total number of Requires Improvement	19	61	57	13
Total number of Inadequate	4	6	6	3
Awaiting rating	33	N/A	N/A	N/A
Not formally rated	N/A	0	7	22

Notes:

The numbers above include all CQC ratings that have been awarded which covers first ratings and subsequent ratings issued which may have changed in some cases.

It also includes inspections that were carried out when the new inspection methodology was being implemented and as such formal ratings were not awarded.

The 33 'awaiting rating' for 2016/17 means that these trusts have been inspected, but their rating is still being assessed and agreed.

The CQC completed its comprehensive inspection programme of all acute NHS trusts in England in March 2016 so any acute trusts that are awaiting rating will have been the subject of re-inspection.

■ Nurses: Migrant Workers

Jonathan Ashworth:

[61898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (a) how many applications to work have been refused and (b) for what reasons by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in each of the last four years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council is the independent regulator of nurses and midwives in the United Kingdom and is responsible for nurse and midwife registration.

■ Older People: Health Education

Jim Shannon:

[61270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps his Department has taken to issue guidance on how people aged 50 years and older might reduce the risk of their suffering strokes and heart attacks.

David Mowat:

The Department does not plan to issue any guidance on this matter.

A significant amount of work is being taken across NHS England and Public Health England (PHE) in relation to reducing risk of heart attack and stroke, including:

- PHE's role in addressing cardiovascular disease (CVD) is set out in *Action on cardiovascular disease: getting serious about prevention* on which is available at the following link and includes guidance in the form of resources and support that PHE provides to help tackle CVD prevention:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cardiovascular-disease-getting-serious-about-prevention>

- PHE and partners have published an updated version of the Heart Age Tool, which is designed to help people understand their heart health and cardiovascular risk factors;

- PHE supports local authorities with delivering the NHS Health Check programme, tackling the leading risk factors that contribute to preventable death and disability with

the potential reach of 15 million eligible people in England, and issues regularly updated best practice guidance to help aid the implementation of the programme;

- Rolling out the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme across England, offering intensive behaviour change support to individuals identified as at high risk of diabetes
- a major cause of heart attack and stroke; and
- PHE also manages campaigns specifically targeting the over 50s including the Be Clear on Cancer campaign to raise awareness of respiratory symptoms, including breathlessness, which can be a symptom of heart disease and the Act FAST campaign to raise awareness of the signs of a stroke and encourage people to call 999 immediately, so that those experiencing a stroke get to hospital as soon as possible.

■ Prisons: Mental Health Services

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[61978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the total spend on mental health programmes for prisoners in England and Wales in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

Information on mental health spending in prisons in England is not collected centrally. NHS England has commissioned all prison health services in publically run prisons in England since 2013 and allocates an overall sum annually for all health and justice commissioning but the data do not identify spending on individual conditions. Information about spending on prisoners in Wales is a matter for the Welsh Government.

■ Radiotherapy: Finance

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[61217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many funding requests for Selective Internal Radiation Therapy have been (a) received and (b) approved by NHS England since April 2013.

David Mowat:

NHS England does not currently routinely fund Selective Internal Radiation Therapy (SIRT), due to the limited evidence for its clinical effectiveness.

However, since November 2013, NHS England has been running a Commissioning through Evaluation (CtE) for Selective Internal Radiotherapy programme. It aims to evaluate SIRT in the management of two conditions: metastatic colorectal cancer and intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma. In total it is expected that over 500 patients will have been treated as part of the CtE programme by 31 March 2017.

In addition, since April 2013 there have been 55 Individual Funding Requests to fund SIRT, of which fewer than 10 requests have been approved. Where fewer than 10

requests have been approved, NHS England does not publish the number of approvals, as this would be patient identifiable data.

■ **Royal Brompton Hospital**

Tom Brake:

[\[61214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the level of investment in facilities and staff that will be required to expand capacity at each unit to which patients will be transferred as a result of the closure of congenital heart disease services at Royal Brompton Hospital in order to meet the increase in demand as a result of those transfers.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No decision has been made to close the congenital heart disease service at the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust. NHS England will make a decision on its proposals for changes to adult and children's congenital heart services in England following a consultation. It has worked, and will continue to work, with providers and other stakeholders to assess the impact of these proposals. NHS England intends to publish an impact assessment and other relevant information in due course.

■ **Russells Hall Hospital: Private Finance Initiative**

Rob Marris:

[\[61958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the amounts were of (a) interest charges, (b) repayments of finance lease liabilities, (c) service elements, (d) capital lifecycle maintenance, (e) contingent rents and (f) other related private finance initiative (PFI) amounts payable for each of the financial years (i) 2005-06, (ii) 2006-07, (iii) 2007-08, (iv) 2008-09, (v) 2009-10, (vi) 2010-11, (vii) 2011-12, (viii) 2012-13, (ix) 2013-14, (x) 2014-15 and (xi) 2015-16 for all PFI schemes at Russells Hall Acute Hospital.

Rob Marris:

[\[61959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his estimates are of the amounts of (a) interest charges, (b) repayments of finance lease liabilities, (c) service elements, (d) capital lifecycle maintenance, (e) contingent rents and (f) other related private finance initiative (PFI) amounts payable for (i) 2016-17, (ii) 2017-18, (iii) 2018-19, (iv) 2019-20, (v) 2020-21, (vi) 2021-22, (vii) 2022-23, (viii) 2023-24, (ix) 2024-25, (x) 2025-26, (xi) 2026-27, (xii) 2027-28, (xiii) 2028-29, (xiv) 2029-30, (xv) 2030-31, (xvi) 2031-32, (xvii) 2032-33, (xviii) 2033-34, (xix) 2034-35, (xx) 2035-36, (xxi) 2036-37, (xxii) 2037-38, (xxiii) 2038-39, (xxiv) 2039-40, (xxv) 2040-41 and (xxvi) 2041-42 for all PFI schemes at Russells Hall Acute Hospital.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information requested is not available centrally. It may be obtained from Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust. We have written to Jennifer Ord, Chair of the Trust, informing her of the hon. Member's enquiry. She will reply shortly and a copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

■ Self-harm

Luciana Berger: [\[61893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many attendances at emergency departments for self-harm per 100,000 people there were in 2015-16; and how many such people received a psychological assessment.

Nicola Blackwood:

Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES) show there were 208 attendances at emergency departments per 100,000 of the population for 'Deliberate Self Harm' in 2015/16 in England (and a total of 113, 873 attendances in the same period).

HES data is a count of hospital attendances, not individual patients, as the same person may have attended hospital on more than one occasion.

We do not hold information on the number of people who received a psychosocial assessment following self-harm.

■ Sexual Assault Referral Centres: Children

Luciana Berger: [\[61892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many children aged under 18 have been referred to Sexual Assault Referral Centres since mandatory reporting of age was introduced in each month since April 2016.

Nicola Blackwood:

Demographic information on the ages of people referred to Sexual Assault Referral Centres is collected at a local level only but is not available centrally.

■ Smoking

Neil Coyle: [\[61855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the new Tobacco Control Plan will include funding for media campaigning to promote the reduction of smoking rates.

Neil Coyle: [\[61856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the new Tobacco Control Plan will include targets for reducing smoking rates.

Nicola Blackwood:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer during the Westminster Hall debate on the Tobacco Control Plan on 13 October 2016, *Official Report*, columns 165WH-197WH. The Plan, which will be published shortly, will build on our success so far and will include renewed national ambitions. The Government remains committed to funding a programme of evidence-based marketing campaigns.

■ Social Services

Jim McMahon:

[\[61222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what consultation his Department has conducted with disabled people as part of its review of social care.

David Mowat:

The Department engages regularly with people with disabilities for example through its strategic partners programme. Last summer, the Department commissioned Think Local Act Personal to survey the views of those using social care, including disabled people, through their partner organisations as part of an ongoing evaluation of the Care Act 2014's implementation. Think Local Act Personal are currently analysing the results of the survey for publication.

The Department of Health is working closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Treasury, and the Cabinet Office on adult social care. Departments frequently work together on issues which affect multiple Departments and it is usual for the Cabinet Office to coordinate such work.

■ Strokes: Health Services

Karen Lumley:

[\[61084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average length of hospital waiting time was in 2016 for those who suffered a stroke.

David Mowat:

The information requested is not available centrally.

The vast majority of admissions following a stroke are emergency admissions rather than elective admissions. Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data for elective waiting times from decision to admit to admission is not available for stroke patients. HES publishes waiting times data for a first diagnosis in accident and emergency, however, stroke data is not available.

■ Strokes: Speech Therapy

Karen Lumley:

[\[61089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many stroke patients were offered speech therapy (a) nationally and (b) in Worcestershire in 2016.

David Mowat:

The Stroke Sentinel Audit Programme (SSNAP) collects data on the rehabilitation that patients get in hospital and when they are discharged in to the community, including on speech and language therapy (SALT).

The following data is taken from SSNAP.

Nationally, during the 11 months from January 2016 to November 2016, 74,488 patients were hospitalised with stroke; of these 37,207 received input from SALT (49.9%).

For South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), 310 patients were admitted with 105 receiving SALT (34%). For Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG, 171 patients were admitted with 58 receiving SALT (34%). For Wyre Forest CCG, 122 patients were admitted with 45 receiving SALT (37%).

This data is available on the SSNAP website at:

www.strokeaudit.org

HOME OFFICE

■ **Dungavel House Immigration Removal Centre**

Alan Brown:

[\[61888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Dungavel IRC is in public ownership or privately owned.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The site of the Dungavel IRC is owned by the Crown.

■ **Hate Crime: Religion**

Martyn Day:

[\[61287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's Action Against Hate plan, published in July 2016, what steps she is taking to improve the (a) awareness of and (b) data collected on hate crimes motivated by anti-apostasy.

Sarah Newton:

The Government takes all hate crime very seriously. Those who commit hate crimes attack the fundamental values that underpin our diverse society, values of acceptance and respect for others. The cross Government hate crime action plan covers all five monitored strands of hate crime, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender status. Religion in this context includes people defined by reference to their religious belief or lack of religious belief.

This includes Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, and different sects within a religion. It also includes people who have changed faith and people who do not hold any religious beliefs. We are working in partnership with a number of organisations including Streetwise and the Anne Frank Trust to raise awareness of hate crimes including religiously motivated hate crimes and the importance of reporting incidents. The Government does not currently collect data on crimes motivated by anti-apostasy.

■ **Homicide: Females**

Diana Johnson:

[\[61171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will provide regular funding to Women's Aid for a femicide census report in England and Wales.

Sarah Newton:

The Government is committed to improving its understanding of domestic homicides in order to prevent these tragedies from happening in the first place. That is why last month we published the findings from a study of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), updated the statutory guidance for the conduct of DHRs and the Office for National Statistics published a new statistical bulletin which brings together comprehensive data on domestic abuse, including domestic homicides, at a local level.

While the Government has no current plans to directly fund the femicide census report, we are committed to working with Women's Aid and other organisations and local areas who have conducted analyses of domestic homicides to embed the learning from these reviews and improve all agencies' response to domestic abuse.

■ Honour Based Violence: British Nationals Abroad**Nusrat Ghani:**[\[61029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on British authorities investigating incidents of honour-based violence committed against British Nationals abroad.

Sarah Newton:

There is no 'honour' in so called 'honour-based' violence (HBV), and we will not allow political or cultural sensitivities to get in the way of tackling these crimes. The Minister for Asia and the Pacific met political and non-Governmental organisation representatives from the British-Pakistani community on 4 January 2017 to discuss challenges of looking after the interests of British citizens who spend time and have family ties in Pakistan, including on the subject of forced marriage. The Home Office regularly engages with the FCO on this issue, including as part of the work of the joint Home Office-FCO Forced Marriage Unit.

■ Members: Correspondence**Rob Marris:**[\[61956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Wolverhampton South West of 30 November 2016 on non-EU students, reference ZA5879.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Minister of State for Immigration will respond week beginning 30 January 2017.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Private Rented Housing**Stuart C. McDonald:**[\[57104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has received from payment of civil penalties under right to rent schemes.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many civil penalty notices issued under the right to rent legislation were (a) first-time penalties for the landlord concerned and (b) second or at subsequent penalty for a landlord.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many civil penalty notices issued under right to rent legislation have related to (a) lodgers and (b) tenants.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appeals against a civil penalty notice under the right to rent provisions (a) have been successful, (b) have been unsuccessful and (c) are ongoing.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many civil penalty notices issued under right to rent provisions have been appealed by landlords or agents from (a) 1 December 2014 to 31 January 2016 and (b) since 1 February 2016.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many landlords and agents have been issued with a civil penalty as a result of renting a property to someone who does not have a right to rent from (a) 1 December 2014 to 31 January 2016 and (b) since 1 February 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Phase 1 of the Right to Rent scheme ran in the West Midlands from 1 December 2014 to 31 January 2016. Phase 2 of the scheme started across England from 1 February 2016.

During phase 1 of the scheme, 15 landlords were issued with a civil penalty. Since the start of phase 2 of the scheme, 91 landlords have been issued with a civil penalty. All were first time penalties. 55 related to lodgers in a private household and 51 related to occupiers in rented accommodation.

There have been no appeals under the scheme. The total amount collected from the scheme up to 13 December 2016 is £29,575.31.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[57111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times enforcement action has been instigated against an undocumented migrant as a result of information provided through the right to rent online checking tool.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

As with right to work checks, the Right to Rent scheme is predicated on checks being carried out by third parties (in this case landlords and lettings agents). This means that the majority of illegal migrant prospective tenants will be denied access to the private rented sector as a result of these checks with no intervention by enforcement

officers or reference to the Home Office. The sanctions set out in the Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016 in relation to the Right to Rent scheme are there to address circumstances where the scheme is not adhered to by landlords and agents.

The Home Office will always investigate information it receives about illegal migrants and take appropriate enforcement action according to the information available and the circumstances of the case. It is not always possible to attribute a return or other enforcement activity to the application of a sanction earlier in the case or to the route through which a particular individual was brought to the attention of the Home Office.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[57112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many undocumented migrants have come to the attention of her Department as a result of information provided specifically through the right to rent landlord's online checking tool from (a) 1 December 2014 to 31 January 2016 and (b) 1 February 2016 to present.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested is not routinely collated in the format sought. Home Office records show that in response to landlords making enquiries through the Landlords Checking Service, the Home Office has issued 503 responses during phase 1 of the scheme and 5,446 during phase 2. Of these, 62 responses during phase 1 and 605 responses during phase 2 were in respect of those without the right to rent.

As with right to work checks, the Right to Rent scheme is predicated on checks being carried out by third parties (in this case landlords and lettings agents). This means that the majority of illegal migrant prospective tenants will be denied access to the private rented sector as a result of these checks with no intervention by enforcement officers or reference to the Home Office. The sanctions set out in the Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016 in relation to the Right to Rent scheme are there to address circumstances where the scheme is not adhered to by landlords and agents.

The Home Office will always investigate information it receives about illegal migrants and take appropriate enforcement action according to the information available and the circumstances of the case.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[57151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many undocumented migrants identified through the right to rent scheme have since been (a) granted discretionary leave to remain, (b) granted refugee status, (c) granted humanitarian protection and (d) recognised as a victim of trafficking or modern day slavery.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested is not routinely collated in the format sought by the hon. Member. At the time of the Evaluation of Phase 1 of the scheme, volumes of data were low enough to allow manual analysis of individual cases. Volumes of data are now at a level which makes conducting such an exercise cost prohibitive.

Vetting**Diana Johnson:**[\[60821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were employed in regulated activity sectors of the workforce in each employment sector in the Disclosure and Barring Service's database in each financial year since 2009-10.

Sarah Newton:

The Secretary of State for the Home Department does not hold this information. The Disclosure and Barring Service does not collect this information.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Developing Countries: Children****Steve McCabe:**[\[61410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what information her Department collects on the children supported by UK aid funding.

James Wharton:

DFID measures progress against its targets annually, including those related to children. For example, in 2015 DFID immunised approximately 20 million children, saving 250,000 lives, and in 2015/16 helped over 3.1 million children gain a decent education.

Iraq: Internally Displaced People**Mr Pat McFadden:**[\[61455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to ensure that internally displaced persons in Iraq who have fled from Mosul are not forcibly returned to Mosul following the recapture of that city; and when she last discussed that matter with her counterparts in (a) the US and (b) Germany.

Rory Stewart:

The UK remains closely engaged with the United Nations which is establishing a returns working group to support coordinated, safe returns in Mosul.

DFID officials regularly meet with donor colleagues, including the US and Germany, in Baghdad, Erbil, and other donor forums to discuss issues including safe returns. DFID officials also raised the issue of safe returns with the Kurdistan Regional Government who gave assurances that returns will be voluntary and dignified. The Minister of State discussed stabilisation with Iraqi and US officials during his visit in November 2016.

■ Iraq: Overseas Aid

Mr Pat McFadden:

[\[61456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on the issuing of UK aid in the form of international development in (a) Mosul and (b) the rest of Iraq.

Rory Stewart:

DFID's policy in Mosul and Iraq, as part of the wider UK effort, is to help to meet the urgent needs of people affected by conflict and the impact of Daesh, whilst supporting the Government of Iraq's efforts to stabilise the country.

UK aid is delivering life-saving assistance such as clean water, food, healthcare, and protection for vulnerable people. We are also supporting the stabilisation of areas recently liberated from Daesh control, including Mosul, so displaced Iraqis can return to their homes. This assistance focuses on the restoration of basic services such as health and water, clearing Daesh explosives and increasing security, and getting local government back on its feet. The UK has also provided a substantial loan guarantee, through the World Bank, to support economic stability.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Small Businesses: Exports

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[908482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to encourage SMEs to export goods and services to non-EU countries.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade is targeting high potential small and medium-sized enterprises through several initiatives including encouraging them to visit great.gov.uk and a comprehensive marketing campaign. Since going live, over a quarter of a million users have visited great.gov.uk and over 1,400 businesses have joined our new 'Find a Buyer' service, allowing global buyers to contact UK suppliers directly. We offer live export opportunities for businesses and have had over 63,000 export opportunity enquiries, with 48,000 of these for non-EU countries, since November 2015.

JUSTICE

■ Courts

Sue Hayman:

[\[61962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse has been of the (a) Royal Courts of Justice and (b) Supreme Court in each of the last five years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The cost of the Royal Courts of Justice and UK Supreme Court for the last 5 years are detailed in the table below:

YEAR	ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE
2011-12	£24,336,600
2012-13	£34,548,300
2013-14	£15,900,200
2014-15	£55,811,700
2015-16	£43,288,500

Costs of the Royal Courts of Justice in years prior to 2014-15 do not include costs of higher judiciary paid out of the consolidated fund, which have been included for 2014-15 and 2015-16 and are, therefore, not on a like-for-like basis.

YEAR	UK SUPREME COURT
2011-12	£12,039,000
2012-13	£12,355,000
2013-14	£11,956,000
2014-15	£11,424,000
2015-16	£11,604,000

■ Courts and Tribunals: Buildings

Christina Rees:[\[61539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans she has for the future of the courts and tribunals estate in England and Wales; and if she will make a statement.

Sir Oliver Heald:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service keeps its operational estate under review to make sure that it aligns with the delivery of reformed court and tribunal services. Any new proposals to close courts will be subject to public consultation.

We are building a justice system which is simpler, swifter and more efficient. Our estate is a major asset, and in an increasingly digital world, we are looking at how we use our buildings to deliver the best possible service to our users now and in the future.

■ Funerals

Mr Mark Hendrick:

[\[61039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many funerals were conducted by each unitary and district council in England under section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 in 2016; and what the cost to each local authority was for conducting such funerals.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice has not led on operational policy relating to burial and cremation and, therefore, we have not collected information on this issue to date.

■ Magistrates

Dr Poulter:

[\[58084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans her Department has to increase social diversity among magistrates.

Sir Oliver Heald:

This Government is committed to improving social mobility and extending opportunity so that everyone has the chance to realise their full potential.

We want to build a legal system which draws from all talents and represents the great vitality and diversity of modern Britain.

Magistrates are statistically the most diverse group within the judiciary. More than half of all magistrates are women and 10% are from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

I recognise, however, that more needs to be done to improve diversity including social diversity. As stated in the Government's response to the Justice Committee's report into the role of the magistracy, the time is right to carefully consider our approach to recruitment of magistrates, with a particular focus on the Lord Chancellor's stated aim to increase judicial diversity, so that the magistracy better reflects the society it serves.

■ Marriage: Humanism

Naz Shah:

[\[58588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to section 14 of the Marriage (Same Sex) Couples Act 2013, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of legalising humanist marriages; and whether the Government has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to legalise such marriages.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Assessments of the likely equality impacts and of the potential economic costs and benefits of provision for marriages by non-religious belief organisations, including humanist marriages, were published on gov.uk in June 2014 in the consultation paper on such provision.

The Law Commission has published its report on initial scoping work to identify the issues for potential reform of the law concerning how and where people can get married in England and Wales. The Government is carefully considering the report and will respond in due course.

■ **Missing Persons: Guardianship**

Caroline Lucas: [\[58121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, by what date she plans to introduce a new power of guardianship for the families of missing persons.

Sir Oliver Heald:

I refer to the reply I gave to the Hon. Member for Coventry South to PQ56741 on 19 December 2016.

■ **Offences against Children**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[61208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Government plans to bring section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 into law.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Government is committed to commencing section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and will do so as soon as possible.

■ **Personal Injury: Compensation**

Christina Rees: [\[61433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will assess the potential merits of banning claims management companies from making cold calls for personal injury claims.

Christina Rees: [\[61434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what representations she has received on the banning of claims management companies from making cold calls for personal injury claims.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Claims management companies (CMCs) are already banned from introducing claims, or details of potential claims to solicitors if these have been obtained by an unsolicited approach by telephone or in person. The majority of unsolicited calls for personal injury claims are made by illegal unregulated businesses. Regulators are working together to tackle illegal activity where identified.

The government recently consulted on measures to reform the whiplash claims process, and sought feedback on whether any specific measures should be put in place in relation to CMCs operating in the personal injury sector. This important consultation closed on 6 January 2017. The Government has undertaken to publish its response to the consultation by 7 April.

Christina Rees:

[\[61880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make an assessment of the implications for the effectiveness of her Department's impact assessment which accompanied the consultation on Reforming the Soft Tissue Injury (whiplash) Claims Process, published in November 2016, of its lacking relevant data on seven protected characteristics.

Christina Rees:

[\[61881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the evidential basis was for the potential effect of the proposals in her Department's consultation on Reforming the Soft Tissue Injury (whiplash) Claims Process, published in November 2016, on people with protected characteristics.

Christina Rees:

[\[61882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the implications of her policies of research published by (a) Thompson Solicitors in August 2016 and (b) Which? magazine in September 2016 on alleged discrimination in car insurance premium costs on the grounds of race; how her response to her Department's consultation on Reforming the Soft Tissue Injury (whiplash) Claims Process, published in November 2016, will take account of that evidence; and if she will make a statement.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The impact assessment published at the same time as the consultation document, on 17 November, sets out the evidence used to assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics. The consultation document sought further information on the potential impact of the proposed reforms, including impacts on those with protected characteristics. The Government is currently analysing the information submitted during the consultation period and will publish a revised impact assessment in due course.

■ Prisoners' Release

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[61977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been recalled to prison after being released on licence in each of the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We are committed to protecting the public, reforming offenders and to reducing reoffending. The licence part of a custodial sentence is designed to rehabilitate offenders – by supervising them in the community and requiring them to comply with conditions. If offenders breach their licence conditions they can be recalled to custody.

The number of offenders recalled to prison after being released on licence in each of the last 12 months is as follows:

OCT-15	2,073
Nov-15	1,833
Dec-15	1,907
Jan-16	1,768
Feb-16	1,688
Mar-16	1,729
Apr-16	1,842
May-16	1,770
Jun-16	1,900
Jul-16	1,759
Aug-16	1,719
Sep-16	2,106

■ Prisoners: Suicide

Paul Flynn: [\[61806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners who died by suicide in England and Wales in 2016 were known drug users.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) records a range of information about each self-inflicted death in prison, but whether or not the deceased was a drug user is not included within the information that is centrally recorded.

Where a prisoner's drug use played a part in his or her death this is identified in the investigation by the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman and by the Coroner at the inquest, and NOMS considers and acts on any recommendations that may result.

Paul Flynn: [\[61807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many self-inflicted deaths in prisons in England and Wales in 2016 were as a consequence of drug use.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government publishes statistics on deaths in custody quarterly, and updated detailed tables, including the method used in self-inflicted deaths, annually. The most recent figures, covering the whole of 2016, were published on 26 January 2017 and are available on GOV.uk.

Paul Flynn:

[61808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of levels of suicides in English and Welsh prisons in 2016.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government believes that prisons should be places of safety and reform. The number of self-inflicted deaths is extremely concerning and we are committed to reducing it. Our recent White Paper set out specific steps that we are taking to improve safety. They include investing over £100m to recruit an additional 2,500 staff across the estate by the end of 2018.

We have also provided an additional £10m of new annual funding for prison safety, supplemented by £2.9m from existing budgets. This has given a significant number of governors the opportunity to improve safety levels in their establishments.

The National Offender Management Service is undertaking a suicide and self-harm reduction project, led by an experienced prison governor, which is driving work in this area. The work includes implementing the recommendations of a review of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process, the multi-disciplinary case management process that is the main tool for managing prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm. This includes the roll out of new training that will help improve staff understanding of suicide and self-harm, including a module designed to raise awareness of mental health issues and to equip staff to respond appropriately to prisoners experiencing mental health problems.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[61969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent representations she has received on the issue of self-inflicted deaths in prisons in England and Wales; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government believes that prisons should be places of safety and reform. The number of self-inflicted deaths is extremely concerning and we are committed to reducing it.

We frequently have the opportunity of discussing these issues with members of this House and in the other place. We actively engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including through the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody, membership of which includes the regulatory bodies, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, as well as voluntary sector groups such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, Inquest and the Prison Reform Trust. Our approach is informed by the work of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody, and we also meet regularly with key partners such as the Samaritans.

■ Prisons: Electronic Equipment**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[61344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) game consoles and (b) televisions in prisons there were at the beginning of 2017; and what the total cost to the public purse was of those items in the last five years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

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

■ Probation: Greater London**Mrs Theresa Villiers:** [\[61143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the HMI Probation report of 15 December 2016 entitled Quality and Impact inspection: the effectiveness of probation work in the north of London, what steps she is taking to tackle the issues raised on probation services in (a) Barnet and (b) north London.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Public protection, including work to reduce re-offending, is our priority and we have taken immediate steps to address the issues raised in the Quality and Impact Inspection report.

We have deployed a specialist taskforce of independent probation experts to make sure London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) is addressing areas of underperformance.

London CRC is implementing an immediate improvement plan to show progress against HM Inspectorate's recommendations. This includes strengthening management oversight, addressing staff capacity and capability issues and reconfiguring how probation services are delivered. The National Probation Service is working closely with the CRC and the contract management teams to support improvements.

We are confident that these urgent measures will address the concerns raised by HM Inspectorate of Probation.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Brexit****Richard Burden:** [\[61181\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether she has received a copy of the Birmingham Students' Brexit Manifesto; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Theresa May:

A reply will be sent in due course.

■ Social Reform Committee

Dan Jarvis:

[\[61817\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, on what date the Social Reform Committee last met; and how many meetings of that committee have taken place since it was established.

Mrs Theresa May:

As was the practice under past Governments, information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet Committees is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

■ Trident Missiles: Testing

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[61465\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when she was made aware of the results of the tests of the UK's nuclear deterrent in June 2016; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Theresa May:

I refer the hon. Member to the Statement made by the Secretary of State for Defence, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr Fallon) on 23 January 2017, Official Report, columns 23-42.

■ USA: Foreign Relations

Catherine West:

[\[61889\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether she raised at her meeting with President Trump on 27 January 2017 the (a) Paris Agreement and international climate change co-operation, (b) treatment of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities in the US, (c) US commitment to NATO, (d) protection of women's rights in the international community and (e) US-UK Trade Policy.

Mrs Theresa May:

I discussed a broad range of issues during my meeting with President Trump. I also refer the hon. Member to the joint press conference following our meeting, a transcript of which can be found on gov.uk website. The United Kingdom will continue to have a close and enduring partnership with the United States based on the shared values of freedom, democracy and enterprise.

TRANSPORT

■ Merchant Shipping: Conditions of Employment

Richard Burden:

[\[61179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which internationally registered vessels were detained by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for infringement of the (a) Maritime Labour, (b) Safety of Life at Sea and (c) Standards in Training, Certification and Watchkeeping conventions in (i) 2015 and (ii) 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

The number of vessels detained for infringement of one or more of the three Conventions listed above was (i) 43 in 2015 and (ii) 50 in 2016. The attached table lists those vessels and their IMO number.

Attachments:

1. UIN 61179 - Table of vessels detained 2015 & 2016 [061179 - Table Vessels detained in 2015 and 2016.docx]

Motorways**Mark Menzies:**[\[61368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of average journey times on smart motorways compared with the same journey prior to the introduction of smart motorway technology.

Mr John Hayes:

Highways England's monitoring of the first two 'all lane running' smart motorways - on the M25 between junctions 5 to 7 and 23 to 27 - over their first 12 months of operation has shown that traffic flows have increased, users at peak periods are on average saving time and that journey time reliability has improved.

Highways England is closely monitoring the performance of all subsequent smart motorway schemes that have opened, most recently on the M1 and M6, and their initial data is encouraging. All major road schemes are routinely monitored as part of the Post Opening Project Evaluation programme and this is regularly published on Highways England's website.

MV Ievoli Black**Richard Burden:**[\[61471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is the Government's policy that the UK maritime safety regulations are applicable to the operation and crewing of the emergency towing vessel Ievoli Black.

Mr John Hayes:

The Emergency Towing Vessel, IEVOLI BLACK, will operate in designated UK waters and must comply with the relevant UK maritime safety regulations.

Public Transport**Diana Johnson:**[\[61105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department has given to the four British bids to build Hyperloop lines in the UK; and what steps his Department has taken to assess the potential merits of Hyperloop lines.

Paul Maynard:

The Hyperloop One Global Challenge is a privately-run competition, so it would not be appropriate for government to provide support for individual entries. The

Department for Transport's Science Advisory Council will publish a paper on hyperloop shortly setting out its view of the technical credibility of the concept and the opportunities it offers to UK industry.

■ Railways: Industrial Disputes

Andy McDonald:

[\[61883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2016 to Question 57840, on railways: industrial disputes, if he will list the payments made from the public purse to each train operating company in respect of each agreed claim for force majeure; and what the total was of those such payments.

Paul Maynard:

The approval of such claims provides train operators with contractual relief against the performance benchmark targets in their franchise agreements; this may in some cases ultimately have an effect on the contractual payments due between the franchisee and the Department, but it does not of itself trigger payments from the Department to the operator.

Andy McDonald:

[\[61884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2016 to Question 57840, on railways: industrial disputes, if he will list the train operating companies that submitted each force majeure claim.

Paul Maynard:

The train operating companies which have had force majeure claims agreed by the Department since 2005 in respect of industrial disputes on the railway are set out in the table below:

TOC	NUMBER OF FORCE MAJEURE EVENTS AGREED IN RESPECT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
Chiltern	1
First Capital Connect (franchise ended 2014)	3
Northern	1
Virgin West Coast Trains	1
Great Western Railway	4
TransPennine Express	3
East Midlands Trains	3
Total	16

Andy McDonald: [\[61885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2016 to Question 57840, on railways: industrial disputes, on what dates the force majeure claims were agreed by his Department.

Paul Maynard:

The dates on which force majeure claims are concluded are not held centrally within the Department and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

Andy McDonald: [\[61886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2016 to Question 57840, on railways: industrial disputes, how many hours staff in his Department spent processing the 16 force majeure claims.

Paul Maynard:

The amount of staff hours spent on such claims is not recorded.

Andy McDonald: [\[61887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2016 to Question 57840, on railways: industrial disputes, what the average time was for his Department to complete the 16 force majeure claims.

Paul Maynard:

This information is not available, as the dates of submission and conclusion of force majeure claims are not centrally recorded.

■ Road Traffic Control

Andrew Rosindell: [\[61341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce road congestion.

Mr John Hayes:

The First Road Investment Strategy (2015-2020) committed £7.7Bn to capital improvement across England's motorway and Major trunk roads, most of which will reduce congestion. Similarly, the Government is already allocating £6Bn to councils in England up to 2021 to help improve the local road network.

In addition, new funding of £1.3Bn was announced in the Autumn Statement to help support infrastructure projects; £1.1Bn for local roads and £220M to relieve congestion on Strategic routes. Congestion on roads outside of England is a matter for the respective devolved administrations.

■ Southern: Standards

Nusrat Ghani: [\[61860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Southern since 24 January 2017 on its performance against contract standards on punctuality, delays and cancellations since that date.

Paul Maynard:

Ministers are in regular contact with the operator regarding performance on this franchise. Officials are also in regular discussions.

Nusrat Ghani:[\[61861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what performance penalties may apply in relation to Southern train services since 24 January 2017.

Paul Maynard:

There is an incentive/penalty regime in place within the Franchise Agreement for the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise, but this is measured against the performance of the franchise in its entirety; we do not disaggregate the franchise down to its core business groups (*i.e.* Southern). Any penalties accrued under this regime are assessed annually, not on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Government Equalities Office: Sick Leave****Luciana Berger:**[\[61202\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many senior civil servants in her Department were on a leave of absence from work due to mental illness in each month of the year since January 2010.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Government Equalities Office has approximately 50 staff members, and therefore a small number of Senior Civil Servants. To avoid the possibility of individuals being identified, we are unable to release the data requested.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Buildings****Anne McLaughlin:**[\[61938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many properties are covered by his Department's Prime contract.

Caroline Nokes:

There are 846 properties covered by the PRIME contract.

Anne McLaughlin:[\[61939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what provision there is for his Department to sublet property covered by its Prime contract.

Caroline Nokes:

Under the PRIME Contract DWP has ability to sublet space that it no longer requires, however DWP always looks first at handing back any surplus space to our

accommodation partner Telereal Trillium (TT) utilising the provisions of the Contract to vacate space and reduce running costs. If this is not possible a sublet can be agreed and TT act as our agents in agreeing and managing the sub-let on DWP's behalf, for which they receive a management fee.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Glasgow**

Alison Thewliss: **[61968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his Department's staff headcount was in each year since 2010 at (a) Portcullis House, Glasgow and (b) Corunna House, Glasgow.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department for Work and Pensions staff headcount in each year since March 2012 in (a) Portcullis House, Glasgow and (b) Corunna House, Glasgow, was

FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING	CORUNNA HOUSE	PORTCULLIS HOUSE
31-Mar-2012	72	215
31-Mar-2013	191	205
31-Mar-2014	187	215
31-Mar-2015	171	213
31-Mar-2016	163	187

We do not hold the equivalent data for 2010 or 2011.

Alison Thewliss: **[61975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what dates leases for (a) Portcullis House, Glasgow and (b) Corunna House, Glasgow are due for renewal.

Caroline Nokes:

(a) DWP occupies Portcullis House, Glasgow under the Civil Estates Occupancy Agreement (CEOA) as it shares occupation with Her Majesty Customs and Revenue (HMRC), this CEOA expires on 31 March 2018.

(b) The lease for Corunna House, Glasgow is in the name of Telereal Trillium (TT) and expires on 31st March 2020, however DWP occupy this site under a PRIME lease from TT and as such DWP would need to agree with TT terms for all sites required beyond March 2018, by the PRIME expiry date 31st March 2018.

Alison Thewliss: **[61976]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, from which landlord his Department leases (a) Portcullis House, Glasgow and (b) Corunna House, Glasgow.

Caroline Nokes:

(a) DWP occupies Portcullis House, Glasgow under the Civil Estates Occupancy Agreement (CEOA) as it shares occupation with Her Majesty Customs and Revenue (HMRC) and they hold the lease for this site and therefore DWP does not have this information.

(b) The lease for Corunna House, Glasgow is in the name of Telereal Trillium.

■ Disclosure of Information**Martyn Day:**[\[61697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will assess the potential merits of allowing government agencies to share information in cases where there are concerns for a claimant's wellbeing as a result on non-contact with that client.

Caroline Nokes:

DWP takes both its duty of confidentiality and its duty of care to citizens very seriously, and while in general it will only share personal data as the law requires or allows, the department has always reserved the right to take any necessary steps to protect the safety and welfare of any individual.

In any case where concerns about a person's welfare exist, departmental policy already actively encourages DWP staff to act quickly in order to help reduce or remove the risk identified, and accommodates an approach to any organisation or agency which it is believed will be able to help in a given case.

■ Jobcentres: Computers**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[61902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Written Statement of 26 January 2017, HCWS439, on welfare delivery, what percentage of claims made online for (a) jobseeker's allowance and (b) universal credit are made using computer equipment at a jobcentre.

Damian Hinds:

Internet devices in Jobcentre Plus offices provide a safe and secure environment for claimants to search for work and access a variety of DWP's services, including making a claim to UC and JSA.

Privacy of claimant's information is our highest priority and Jobcentre Plus staff do not record specific data on use of Internet access devices at a local level.

This information is not centrally captured as an information requirement within the department.

■ Jobcentres: Rutherglen and Hamilton West**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[61467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether any Minister of his Department has visited Cambuslang Jobcentre Plus in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency in the last 30 years.

Damian Hinds:

This information is not available; to obtain the visits made in the last 30 years could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

■ Jobcentres: Staff**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[61903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Written Statement of 26 January 2017, HCWS439, on welfare delivery, how many of the 2,500 work coaches who are expected to be in post by March 2018 will be located in (a) Scotland, (b) England and (c) Wales.

Damian Hinds:

There are currently around 11,000 work coaches across DWP in Wales, Scotland and England. By the end of March 2018 we plan to have around 2,500 more Work Coaches in Jobcentres in every nation and region of Great Britain. However, the final allocation of work coaches will be based on claimant activity and determined by need.

The face to face support our work coaches offer at Jobcentres will continue to be a core part of the service we deliver.

■ Motability**Corri Wilson:** [\[61224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will place in the Library the written correspondence between his Department and Motability from the last three months on possible changes to the Motability scheme.

Penny Mordaunt:

Motability is an independent charitable organisation and it would not be appropriate to publish communications between Motability and the Department that were sent in confidence.

■ Motability: Inverclyde**Ronnie Cowan:** [\[61306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Inverclyde constituency had a motability car in (a) 2014, (b) 2015 and (c) 2016.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 December 2016 to Question [UIN56552](#).

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[61307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Inverclyde constituency had their motability car removed after changes to their benefit entitlement in (a) 2014, (b) 2015 and (c) 2016.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[61776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish the total number of people assessed for personal independence payment (PIP) who have been awarded a total score of zero in the assessment process for the (a) mobility and (b) daily living component part in each year since the introduction of PIP.

Penny Mordaunt:

The table below gives statistics on the number of cases given a total of zero points at assessment for the a) mobility and b) daily living components of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) each year since the introduction of PIP.

Table 1 – number of cases scoring zero points at assessment for PIP

	ZERO MOBILITY, NON-ZERO DAILY LIVING	ZERO DAILY LIVING, NON-ZERO MOBILITY	ZERO MOBILITY AND ZERO DAILY LIVING	TOTAL
Apr 13 - Mar 14	8,600	1,000	4,800	14,400
Apr 14 - Mar 15	77,800	7,500	52,900	138,300
Apr 15 - Mar 16	70,600	6,700	93,400	170,700
Apr 16 - Oct 16 (part year)	46,500	4,400	83,000	133,900

Notes:

- Figures are for Great Britain only.
- PIP data includes normal rules claimants, and is for both new claims and Disability Living Allowance to PIP reassessment claims. Cases assessed under special rules for the terminally ill have been excluded.
- Data has been rounded to the nearest 100.
- Rows may not sum due to rounding.

Tommy Sheppard:[\[61809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of assessments for personal independence payments were (a) paper-based and (b) face-to-face in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016 in (A) the UK and (B) Edinburgh East constituency.

Penny Mordaunt:

Great Britain

PERIOD	FACE-TO-FACE REVIEWS (%)	PAPER BASED REVIEWS (%)
1 Jan to 31 Dec 2014	80%	20%
1 Jan to 31 Dec 2015	81%	19%
1 Jan to 31 Oct 2016	83%	17%

Edinburgh East Constituency

PERIOD	FACE-TO-FACE REVIEWS (%)	PAPER BASED REVIEWS (%)
1 Jan to 31 Dec 2014	81%	19%
1 Jan to 31 Dec 2015	79%	21%
1 Jan to 31 Oct 2016	80%	20%

■ Personal Independence Payment: Motability

Corri Wilson:[\[61226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) other Departments and (b) Motability on extending the Motability scheme to personal independence payment claimants not receiving the highest rate of mobility support; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department continues to work closely with Motability and other Departments to explore ways to better support disabled people, including those PIP claimants who are not in receipt of the enhanced-rate mobility component of PIP. We have had a range of discussions on this issue.

■ Personal Records

Martyn Day:[\[61674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to introduce a one-stop process for claimants who are required to update their personal information with government agencies.

Caroline Nokes:

DWP administers a range of benefits and services, many of which are subject to different entitlement conditions. In the main it is the claimant's responsibility to make the benefit authorities aware of changes pertaining to their benefit award.

We do, however, recognise that changes to some benefits have consequential implications for others. As a safeguard, many of our systems trigger automated prompts. These help to ensure that DWP staff are alerted when a relevant change is processed in a connected benefit, so that further investigation can be initiated and appropriate adjustments made.

In the case of deaths DWP operates a Tell Us Once service for the public sector. Recognising the uniquely sensitive circumstances and wide governmental relevance, Tell Us Once shares death information across a range of government partners. This relies on the consent of the bereaved person/informant.

It is not our current policy to extend this service to other changes, but we are exploring the potential of automated data exchange between authorities so that we can minimise the burden on the citizen and the state.

■ Social Security Benefits**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[61927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many blank (a) employment support allowance claim forms and (b) income support claim forms have been issued in the last year from Jobcentres in (i) Scotland, (ii) England and (iii) Wales.

Damian Hinds:

It should not be necessary for a claimant to visit a Jobcentre to obtain any claim form for Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance.

The preferred method for making a claim for either benefit is by telephone, where the claimant can also request an alternative format. However, there may be individual instances where printing claim forms in the Jobcentre will be helpful and appropriate. Information is not recorded on the number of occasions this has happened.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**Diana Johnson:**[\[61869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department's proposals to end disability benefit re-assessments for people who have severe lifelong conditions will include people who are blind.

Penny Mordaunt:

There is no condition based entitlement to Employment Support Allowance.

We will be working over the coming months with medical professionals and other stakeholders to develop functional criteria that will help us identify those with the most severe health conditions or disabilities, for whom repeat work capability assessments can be stopped.

Rather than a list of specific medical conditions, the criteria will be based on identifying claimants with the most severe health conditions or disabilities where it would be unreasonable to expect the individual to undertake any form or amount of work or work-related activity. This change will only apply to those placed in the Support Group and UC equivalent.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Kate Green:

[\[61082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance is provided to staff of his Department on the application of sanctions to vulnerable claimants.

Damian Hinds:

Guidance to work coaches makes it clear that conditionality requirements must always be reasonable, taking into account individual personal circumstances. There is specific guidance on the internal DWP intranet for Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit covering the consideration, referral and application of a sanction for a vulnerable claimant.

■ State Retirement Pensions

Diana Johnson:

[\[61827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the Pensions Act 2011 on trends in the level of (a) the overall claimant count, (b) the employment support allowance claimant count and (c) unemployment.

Richard Harrington:

The Government does not have sufficient data to make an assessment of the effect of changes in the Pensions Act 2011 on the numbers on ESA, the overall claimant count or the numbers of people unemployed. However, research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) suggests that rises in the State Pension age for women have had a significant, positive impact on employment. Its analysis concluded that women's employment rates at ages 60 to 61 increased by 6.3 percentage points as a result of the SPa increase from age 60 to age 62 between April 2010 and March 2014.

In addition to the impact on employment rates, the findings indicate that the policy change also led to a 4.0 percentage points increase in the proportion of women reporting themselves as sick or disabled and a 1.2 percentage point increase in the fraction of women who were unemployed and actively seeking work, at ages 60 and 61. These observed increases in employment, reported poor health and unemployment were offset by an 11.5 percentage point reduction in the proportion reporting themselves to be retired.

The Government is committed to supporting people aged 50 years and over to remain in and return to work and will be publishing an employer-led Fuller Working Lives strategy in due course which sets out the Government's approach to older workers.

■ Universal Credit

Royston Smith:

[\[61161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what new financial savings products have been introduced by third party companies to support people in receipt of universal credit.

Damian Hinds:

A range of financial support is offered as part of the Universal Support framework which is delivered by jobcentres and local partners, such as Local Authorities, to help claimants manage their claim or award of Universal Credit.

The department also works with the financial industry to develop products to support claimants.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[\[61190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the universal credit regulations require that a claimant with a managed payment to landlord (MPtL) is unable to apply for a discretionary housing payment from their local authority while a MPtL is in place.

Damian Hinds:

DWP does not see any reason why Discretionary Housing Payments cannot be paid to Universal Credit claimants who have Managed Payments to their Landlord in place.

However, if a Local Authority decides not to accept an application for DHP on the grounds that a managed payment to the landlord is in place, guidance is clear that DWP can, in agreement with the claimant, remove that arrangement to allow the application to be made.

■ Universal Credit: Greater London

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[\[61189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants currently have a managed payment to landlord in each London borough.

Damian Hinds:

This information is not currently available.

■ **Universal Credit: Tower Hamlets**

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[61172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants are in receipt of universal credit in Tower Hamlets.

Damian Hinds:

As of December 2016, the number of people claiming Universal Credit in Tower Hamlets, including both those in and not in receipt of a payment, was 2,000

This information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics>.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ December Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Minister of State (George Eustice):

[\[HCWS444\]](#)

I represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, alongside my colleagues Fergus Ewing MSP, Lesley Griffiths AM and Michelle McIlveen MLA, on 12 and 13 December in Brussels.

EU quota negotiations, involving decisions on fishing opportunities for the next year for quota stocks in the North Sea, Atlantic, Channel, Irish and Celtic Seas, were first on the agenda, and were ongoing for the entire duration of the Council. This was the third annual Council at which fishing opportunities were set under the rules of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy, which aims to have all stocks fished at sustainable levels by 2020 at the latest.

The UK secured a number of crucial changes to the Commission's original proposals including, where science supports it, quota increases for fishermen around all parts of the UK. This is due to stocks recovering after years of the UK's insistence on limiting catches with sustainable scientific limits. Quotas secured include:

- North Sea: Cod +16.5%, Whiting +17%, Anglerfish + 20% Saithe +53% Sole +22%
- Irish Sea: Haddock +25% and Nephrops +8.6%
- Western Channel: Haddock +7% and Sole +20%
- North Sea Hake +12% and Western Hake +9%

The quota settlement for 2017 is worth just over £705 million to the UK, around £34 million more than in 2016.

The agreement means that for 2017, 29 stocks of interest to the UK will be fished at or below their maximum sustainable yield rate (MSY), an increase on 2016, out of 45 such stocks for which MSY assessments have been made. At the EU level, 44 stocks are fished at or below MSY, as announced by Commissioner Vella at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/vella/announcements/agrifish-council_en.

Where the latest scientific evidence supported it, the UK Government argued against unnecessary quota cuts proposed by the European Commission, securing the same quota as in 2016 for many species, including Cod and Sole in the Irish Sea, Anglerfish in the Celtic Sea and Whiting in West of Scotland.

There were some challenges especially on stocks like Bass, Cod, and Megrim in the South West and Sole in the Eastern Channel, where action is necessary to cut fishing mortality in order to allow these stocks to recover. However, we worked hard to secure an agreement that strikes the right balance for both our marine environment and coastal communities.

For 2017, sea bass catch limits from vessels using fixed gill nets were set at 250kg per month for unavoidable by-catch – a reduction of around 80% from 2016 - while hook and line commercial fishermen saw their potential catch cut by around 23%. The restrictions on recreational angling will remain the same as in 2016.

Proportionate quota uplifts were agreed for demersal stocks subject to the landing obligation in 2017. As in 2016, the Government will continue to support the English inshore fleet to adapt to the landing obligation, by allocating to them the first 100 tonnes of quota uplift of a species and 10% thereafter. There will be additional quota uplift in 2017 for new species such as North Sea cod and North Western Waters Pollack.

A paper was presented on Climate Change Effort Share Regulation and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF), discussed alongside the 'any other business' item on agroecology. Many Member States, including the United Kingdom, were broadly satisfied with the proposals outlined in the paper. The UK intervened to argue that a methodology should be found to ensure a fairer distribution of credits between Member States.

After this, the Council agreed Conclusions on tackling unfair trading practices in the farming supply chain. The UK managed to secure a wording change that lessens the chance in 2017 of burdensome EU legislation that could hinder our current work in this area, as undertaken by the Groceries Code Adjudicator.

There then followed a political discussion on new regulation for organic produce, which will continue into the upcoming Maltese Presidency.

Several other items were discussed under 'any other business':

- Austria lodged a request to maintain the current level of support for first generation biofuels, supported by other Member States. While noting this remains the responsibility of Commissioner Cañete, Commissioner Hogan informed Council that the reduction of support was very modest, pertaining to a very small part of the biofuel sector.
- France debriefed the Council on a conference of Mediterranean countries that took place in Tirana, Albania, where agricultural and rural development and migrations in the Mediterranean zone was discussed.
- Commissioner Andriukaitis informed the Council about the first meeting of the Food Waste Platform.
- Commissioner Andriukaitis also updated Ministers on the work of the expert group on accelerating sustainable plant protection products. The advisory group recommended speeding up approvals of low-risk active substances, measures to stimulate businesses to apply for authorisations and the identification of low-risk products already on the market.
- Commissioner Andriukaitis announced that the new regulation on plant pests was now in force. The Commission sees this new legislation as allowing a much more proactive approach to the prevention of the entry of new pests into the EU. Malta,

as incoming Presidency, mentioned plans to establish fora to take forward further discussion on identifying further action.

- The Slovak Presidency explained that the Commission had issued a guidance note expressing a preference for the use of the Plant Breeders' Rights framework, rather than the Patent Legislation to register new strains. This was welcomed by a range of other Member States.

On 23 June, the EU referendum took place and the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation. Leaving the EU will present us with opportunities to better manage fisheries in our waters and become global champions for sustainable fishing, while protecting the marine environment.

JUSTICE

■ Update on Courts and Tribunals

The Minister of State for Courts and Justice (Sir Oliver Heald): [\[HCWS445\]](#)

This Government is committed to making sure people from all backgrounds can access justice.

Since fees were introduced, record numbers of working people have sought to resolve employment disputes either through tribunals or conciliation.

In 2015/16 there were more than 92,000 workplace disputes brought forward for resolution – the highest number since ET Fees were introduced.

We believe we can improve on this, so today I am launching a consultation on proposals to extend support available to people on low incomes through the Help with Fees scheme.

Under our proposals, the monthly threshold for a full fee remission would be increased from £1,085 to £1,250 – broadly the equivalent of someone earning the National Living Wage. There are additional allowances for people living as couples and those with children.

We will bring forward further measures to improve legal support in a Green Paper by early 2018 and the Prison and Courts Bill, due to be published shortly, which will enable more people to bring cases on-line, making it simpler and easier to access justice.

Under the extension to Help with Fees scheme, more people would not pay a fee at tribunal and others would contribute less than under current arrangements.

In particular the extended scheme would benefit women, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people and younger people, who all feature disproportionately among low income groups.

These proposals would apply not only to people bringing ET proceedings, but also to those bringing proceedings in the civil and family courts and most other tribunals.

We have also decided to exempt from fees a small number of proceedings related to payments made from the National Insurance Fund. Unlike most proceedings before the ETs, in most cases the applicant is unable to conciliate, and they are unlikely to be able to recover the fee from an employer which in many cases will be insolvent.

We have decided to take this action following the findings of the post implementation review of the introduction of fees in the Employment Tribunals (ETs), which I am also publishing today.

The review has undertaken a very detailed and thorough analysis of the evidence, and we have concluded that fees have been generally successful in meeting the original objectives.

This Government believes it is important that those who can afford to pay for ETs continue to do so. An extra £9million a year is raised through ET fees.

The review concludes that fees have been successful in promoting conciliation as an alternative way to resolve workplace disputes.

The review states “there is no conclusive evidence that ET fees have prevented people from bringing claims” and that higher numbers turning to ACAS is a “positive outcome”.

This indicates the current system is generally working effectively and is operating lawfully.

This does not mean there is no room for improvement and where we have identified issues, we have not been afraid to address them.

In particular there is evidence that some people have found the fees off-putting - even if they were affordable or they may have qualified for fees to be waived.

This has been addressed with a campaign to raise awareness of the scheme and a new on-line application form to make it easier for people to apply.