



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 March 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:15 P.M., 16 March 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Counter-terrorism

Karl McCartney:

[\[909275\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the Government's policy is on which factors to take into account when deciding whether responding to an imminent threat is permitted under international law.

Jeremy Wright:

It is the long-standing position of successive UK Governments that a state may use force in self-defence not only in response to armed attacks but to prevent an armed attack that is imminent. In each exercise of the use of force in self-defence, the UK asks itself questions such as: how certain is it that an attack will come; how soon do we believe an attack could be; what could be the scale of the attack; could this be our last opportunity to take action; and is there anything else we could credibly do to prevent that attack?

■ Work Experience

Justin Madders:

[\[66888\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in the Law Officers' Departments in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Robert Buckland:

GLD has offered the following number of work experience placements in each of the last five. None of them lasted for longer than one month. The placements were unpaid but assistance was provided with travel and subsistence costs. The placements were aimed either at promoting access to the legal profession, or to provide work experience to those from disadvantaged or black or minority ethnic backgrounds.

YEAR	NUMBER OF WORK PLACEMENTS IN GLD
2012	15
2013	28
2014	30
2015	31
2016	31

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) does not undertake unpaid work placements.

The SFO does enable school age students to undertake work experience varying between 1 day and a week. SFO central records indicate that 26 students have completed such a placement over the past five years, as detailed in the following table, but none was for longer than one week.

YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT SFO
2012	6
2013	1
2014	6
2015	8
2016	5

There are no central records held in regard to unpaid work experience at the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and to collect this information would be at a disproportionate cost.

Nobody has undertaken an unpaid work placement at AGO and HMCPSP within this timeframe.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Tobacco: Sales

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[67664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will meet tobacconists and small independent retailers who have been affected by violence, abuse and vandalism from those who refuse to show identification and proof of age when wishing to purchase tobacco and alcohol.

Margot James:

The Government is aware of the challenges faced by small businesses, including small independent retailers, and my department works closely with the Home Office's National Retail Crime Steering Group. I also regularly meet many small businesses, including retailers and their representatives, to explore a wide range of issues affecting them.

■ Coal: Cement

Philip Davies:

[\[66614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much coal the UK cement industry has used in each year from 2005 to the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold coal consumption data at this level of disaggregation.

■ Coal: Iron and Steel

Philip Davies:

[66613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much coal the UK iron and steel industry has used in each year from 2005 to the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The table below shows how much coal the UK iron and steel industry used each year from 2005-2015:

	COAL USED BY UK IRON & STEEL INDUSTRY ⁽¹⁾ (THOUSAND TONNES)
2005	6,609
2006	7,050
2007	7,249
2008	7,114
2009	5,847
2010	6,442
2011	6,329
2012	6,003
2013	6,752
2014	6,544
2015	5,187

(1) Includes coal used in coke manufacture, blast furnaces and final consumption by the iron & steel industry. Excludes imported coke products.

Source: Table DUKES 2.1 Digest of UK Energy Statistics, July 2016, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/solid-fuels-and-derived-gases-chapter-2-digest-of-united-kingdom-energy-statistics-dukes>

■ Electric Vehicles

Graham Stringer: [\[67030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether capacity market auctions take into account future growth projections for electric vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 14 March 2017]: National Grid, as System Operator, is responsible for recommending a target capacity for Capacity Market auctions. This recommendation is based on National Grid's assessment of different scenarios for the level of electricity demand and takes account of projected changes in electricity use. National Grid's recommendation is scrutinised by an independent Panel of Technical Experts before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy decides on the final target.

Graham Stringer: [\[67031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has undertaken to ensure the capacity of the electricity grid to respond to current and future demand for electric vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 14 March 2017]: The Government has set out its ambition for almost all cars and vans to be zero emissions by 2050. By setting a long-term target, the Government is seeking to ensure that there is time to ready the grid for the mass transition towards cleaner, more efficient vehicles. Existing mechanisms, such as the Capacity Market and network operator business planning, can be used to ensure that network and generating capacity will stay in step with growing electric vehicle demand. Through further work to increase the flexibility in electricity demand and supply, including through promoting smart charging, we aim to ensure that electric vehicle demands are managed efficiently.

■ Electricity: Prices

Ian Murray: [\[67239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of excluding onshore wind from the Government's future Contract for Difference procurement strategy on electricity bills.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 14 March 2017]: The Department has not made an assessment of the potential effect on electricity bills of future decisions on the deployment of onshore wind.

It is important that, as the costs of generating technologies fall, we move steadily to an operating model in which competitive markets deliver the energy on which our country depends. The Department has requested stakeholders' views on how we can deploy electricity generation through competitive markets without the requirement for ongoing subsidy as part of our Industrial Strategy consultation.

■ Green Investment Bank

Caroline Lucas:

[\[67661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the £3.8 billion of public funding committed to the UK Green Investment Bank since its establishment in 2012, plus any profits made by the Government on its sale, will be reinvested in the UK low-carbon economy on completion of the sale of that bank.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government remains committed to the UK's Climate Change Act and the transition to clean energy. Climate change remains one of the most serious long-term risks to our economic and national security. We recently committed another £730 million of support for renewables in this Parliament and have reconfirmed the budget of £290m annual support for 15 years for 'Pot 2'/less established technologies including offshore wind.

Any proceeds from a sale of the Green Investment Bank will be returned to the Exchequer.

■ Green Investment Bank: Privatisation

Caroline Lucas:

[\[67585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the Government and the UK Green Investment Bank have spent on external consultants and advisers to date in relation to the privatisation of that bank.

Mr Nick Hurd:

As with any asset sale, Government has engaged external advisors through a competitive process to provide us with access to additional expertise, in line with NAO recommendations on best practice.

The details of the Green Investment Bank transaction are commercially confidential.

■ Post Offices: Rural Areas

Drew Hendry:

[\[67521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what analysis his Department has conducted of the future capacity of the Post Office, to meet its commitment, that 95 per cent of the total rural population is within three miles of a post office outlet.

Margot James:

The Government has committed to secure the future of 3,000 rural post offices in its manifesto and recognises the importance of post offices to communities across the UK, particularly to its more remote customers. That is why Government has invested significantly in modernisation and transformation of that network, helping to ensure its

long-term sustainability. The network of branches is at its most stable in decades, and nearly 99% of the UK rural population lives within three miles of a post office.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alex Cunningham: [67098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) directly employed and (b) contractor employees there were in the offshore wind industry in each year between 2006-07 and 2016-17.

Jesse Norman:

The Department does not collate this data on an annual basis. However, the industry currently supports around 13,700 jobs in the UK (7,900 direct and 5,800 indirect) with GVA* of £1 billion (£600m direct and £400m indirect).

Source: "The size and performance of the UK low-carbon economy", BIS, March 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/low-carbon-economy-size-and-performance>

*Gross Value Added

CABINET OFFICE

■ Average Earnings: East Ham

Stephen Timms: [67674]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average salary of full-time equivalent employees was in East Ham constituency in April of each year since 2010.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ67674 [PQ67674 (1).pdf]

■ Average Earnings: Pendle

Andrew Stephenson: [67231]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average salary of full-time equivalent employees was in Pendle constituency for April of each year since 2010.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ67231 [PQ67231 v.02 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Cabinet Office: Secondment

Susan Elan Jones:

[R] [\[67308\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff in his Department have been seconded from (i) businesses and (ii) charities.

Ben Gummer:

In my Department, at 28th February 2017, (a) eleven full-time staff, and (b) no part-time staff were seconded from (i) business, and (a) no full-time staff, and (b) five or fewer part-time staff were seconded from (ii) charities.

■ Cabinet Office: Staff

Jon Trickett:

[\[66684\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Jon Trickett:

[\[66701\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of Civil Service positions in 10 Downing Street were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in 10 Downing Street has been in each year since 2010.

Ben Gummer:

The Prime Minister's Office is an integral part of the Cabinet Office and is included in this reply.

Information about the proportion of Civil Service positions in my department that were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010 is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The rate of turnover of civil servants in my department in each year since 2010 is as follows:

Year Turnover

2016 35%

2015 33%

2014 29%

2013 22%

2012 22%

2011 25%

2010 20%

The nature of much of the work in the Cabinet Office means that there has been an increasing requirement for short and medium term expertise to be brought in from

other government departments, parts of the public sector and from outside the public sector to work on changing priorities over specific periods of time. Turnover has therefore been historically high in my department. 61% of civil servants who left my department during this period moved elsewhere within the government.

Increasing use of fixed term appointments in recent years and, in the last year the transfer out of a large number of staff to the Department for Exiting the EU, means that turnover has been high. A reduction in fixed-term appointments in recent months mean that we expect turnover to fall back over the course of the next year.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Employment

Andrew Stephenson: [\[67232\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people were employed in the manufacturing sector in (a) Lancashire, (b) the North West and (c) England at the latest date for which figures are available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ67232 [PQ67232 v.02 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Teenage Pregnancy

Conor McGinn: [\[67671\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many teenage pregnancies there have been in (a) St Helens North constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK in each year since 2010.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ [PQ67671 v.02 (1).pdf]

■ Teenage Pregnancy: Nottinghamshire

Gloria De Piero: [\[67621\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the teenage pregnancy rate was for (a) Ashfield constituency, (b) Nottingham and (c) Nottinghamshire in (i) the most recent period for which figures are available and (ii) each of the last five years.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ67621 [PQ67621 v.02 (1).pdf]

■ Voting Behaviour

Mr Graham Allen:

[\[67334\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answers of 2 March 2017 to Questions 65453, 65456 and 65480, what criteria the Government uses to determine which factors to test for their effects on voter turn out.

Chris Skidmore:

In our response to *Securing the Ballot*, the Government agreed with Sir Eric that voter identification measures should be explored further, as a means of addressing some existing vulnerabilities in the electoral system.

The Government's view is that, before any decisions can be taken about the suitability of voter identification to elections in Britain, such measures should first be subject to thorough and rigorous testing in a number of pilot schemes. This will enable us to accurately determine the impact of asking voters to present identification on all aspects of the electoral process, including on such important factors as an elector's likelihood of turning out.

TREASURY

■ Corporation Tax

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[67162\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy not to plan any reductions in the rate of corporation tax further to those he has already announced.

Jane Ellison:

The Government has set an ambition of having the lowest rate of corporation tax in the G20, and by cutting to 17% by 2020 we are delivering this. The Government has no plans to reduce the rate any further but it needs to maintain the flexibility to take the necessary steps to ensure the UK economy remains strong and competitive.

As well as being competitive, taxes must be fair and paid. This Government has led international efforts to address tax avoidance by multinational companies, including through the OECD BEPS Project, and remain committed to tackling this issue.

■ Diesel Vehicles

Sarah Olney:

[\[67058\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of tax incentives and more stringent air quality and other legislation to reduce the number of diesel vehicles on the roads.

Jane Ellison:

The Government is committed to improving air quality, and will consult on a detailed draft plan in the spring which will set out how we will achieve our air quality goals.

Alongside this, at Spring Budget 2017, the Chancellor announced that the Government will continue to explore the appropriate tax treatment for diesel vehicles.

■ Employee Benefit Trusts: Roadchef

Jessica Morden: [\[67453\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on behalf of the Roadchef Employee Benefits Trust; and if he will meet the beneficiaries of that Trust.

Jane Ellison:

The Government receives a wide range of representations on Employee Benefits Trusts. It is not normal practice to release details of representations while particular enquiries are ongoing.

■ Money Laundering: EU Law

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[67616\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made in transposing into UK law the Fourth Money Laundering Directive.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury launched a consultation on the transposition of the Fourth Money Laundering Directive in September 2016, which closed in November 2016. The Government has published its response to the consultation, setting out the policy decisions that have been taken. The response is accompanied by a consultation on draft Money Laundering Regulations, which will be open for four weeks. The Government intends that the new Money Laundering Regulations will come into force by 26 June 2017.

■ Multinational Companies: Tax Havens

Ruth Cadbury: [\[67161\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when and how the Government plans to use its powers to introduce public country-by-country reporting on tax havens; and what steps the Government is taking to obtain support from other countries for multilateral action.

Jane Ellison:

The Government has set out its objective for a comprehensive and effective model of public country-by-country reporting that is agreed on a multilateral basis, to improve transparency over businesses' tax affairs and restore public trust in the tax system.

The UK will continue to work with international partners on that objective. This includes our continued participation in the discussions on the European Commission's proposal.

■ National Insurance Contributions

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[67615]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost would be in the next financial year of raising the threshold at which people begin paying national insurance contributions (NICs) to £11,500; and how many employees would pay no tax or NICs in the event of that threshold being changed.

HM Treasury does not keep this information in the form requested. However, based on HM Revenue and Customs' 'Direct Effects of Illustrative Tax Changes', a published document, the approximate costs to the Exchequer in 2017-18 would be:

- Increasing the primary NICs threshold to £11,500 would cost approximately £15bn a year;
- Increasing the secondary NICs threshold to £11,500 would cost approximately £16bn a year; and
- Increasing the Lower Profits Limit for Class 4 NICs to £11,500 would cost approximately £1bn a year.

The total annual cost to the Exchequer of increasing all three thresholds to £11,500 would on this basis be approximately £32bn. These are approximate estimates, and in any case do not take into account the secondary effects of behavioural changes after an increase to the threshold.

HM Treasury has not made an assessment of how many employees would pay no tax or NICs as a result of this.

■ National Insurance Contributions: Self-employed

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[67530]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people paying Class 4 national insurance contributions in (a) Coventry South constituency and (b) the West Midlands.

Jane Ellison:

Class 4 National Insurance contributions are estimated to be paid by 2,100 people in Coventry South and 170,000 people in the West Midlands.

These figures are based on the 2014-15 Survey of Personal Incomes.

Tim Farron:

[67673]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) women and (b) men paid Class 4 national insurance contributions; and what the average amount paid was in the latest period for which figures are available.

Jane Ellison:

In 2014-15, 550,000 women and 1,855,000 men had profits that were liable for Class 4 National Insurance contributions (NICs).

In 2014-15, the average annual amount paid by women was £1,120, and the average amount paid by men was £1,300. The average annual amount paid overall was £1,260.

This data is based on the Survey of Personal Incomes in 2014-15, the latest period in which figures are available.

■ Pensions: Tax Yields

Mr Gregory Campbell: [67613]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much tax revenue has been generated from people encashing their pension entitlement since 2015.

Jane Ellison:

From April 2015, individuals aged 55 or over have had the option to flexibly access their pension.

The latest estimate of the tax revenue from the introduction of pensions flexibility was set out in the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook in March 2017 ^[1]. This stated, in paragraph A.23, that £1.5 billion of tax revenue was received from pension flexibility in 2015-16, and £1.1 billion is forecast to be received in 2016-17.

[1] <http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/March2017EFO-231.pdf>

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Peterborough

Mr Stewart Jackson: [67529]

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what progress has been made by the Church Commissioners in facilitating new housing and school facilities at (a) Phase 2 Paston Reserve, Peterborough and (b) Norwood, Peterborough; and if she will make a statement.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

Officers from within the Church Commissioners' Property Investment and Parliamentary Affairs departments met most recently with the Rt. Hon. Member for Peterborough on 18th January 2017. The Church Commissioners have an agreement in relation to land at Paston which means that they and their collaborators must jointly agree upon the terms of any sale to a third-party. Those collaborators include Taylor Wimpey Developments Ltd, Bedfordia Developments Ltd and Old Road Securities Plc.

The Church Commissioners continue to actively encourage their partners to conclude the necessary due diligence as soon as possible in order to allow the sale to a third-party house builder to take place. Land for a new primary and secondary school can be released once the land sale to a housebuilder has taken place. Officers of the

Church Commissioners remain available to update the Rt. Hon. Member for Peterborough as to the progress of those negotiations at any stage.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Communities and Local Government: Information Officers

Justin Madders:

[\[65101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many staff in his Department are employed in media relations and communications roles; and how much was spent on the salaries of such staff members in each of the last 10 years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

My Department's central communications function is responsible for media relations and external communications. At 28 February 2017, 26.9 full time equivalent staff were employed in this team. In relation to salaries, the information is not held centrally for the time period requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Council Tax: Dorset

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[67653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2017 to Question 65508, on council tax: Dorset, how the level of council tax will be determined in the absence of enforcement by the local councils concerned.

Mr Marcus Jones:

It is always the case, including in cases of local government restructuring, that the Government will continue to maintain council tax referendum thresholds at a modest level in order to help keep bills down for hardworking people.

■ Department for Communities and Local Government: Uber

Mr Iain Wright:

[\[64369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much his Department has spent on (a) Uber for Business and (b) other Uber transactions since 28 October 2016.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Records show the Department has spent £138.22 on Uber taxi fares in the last six months.

■ Hostels: Domestic Visits

John Healey: [\[66625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the dates of each visit were to a homeless hostel for young people by (a) himself and (b) each Minister in his Department since he came into post.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 9 March 2017]: Ministers at the Department for Communities and Local Government visit a variety of projects, and meet with representatives of local authorities, voluntary and charity sector organisations, policy experts and other partners on a regular basis to discuss a range of issues including youth homelessness.

I also host the annual Youth Homeless Parliament, where over 100 young people from across the country who have experienced homelessness attend to share their views and help shape policy through engagement with politicians and decision-makers.

The Government publishes a list of all ministerial meetings with external bodies on departmental business on a quarterly basis. This is available at www.gov.uk.

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

John Healey: [\[66550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, on which dates (a) he and (b) his predecessors have had discussions with homelessness charities on ending automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 9 March 2017]: Ministers in the Department for Communities and Local Government and other Government Departments have regular discussions with homelessness charities on a range of issues, including youth homelessness.

The Government publishes a list of all Ministerial meetings with external bodies on Departmental business on a quarterly basis. This is available at www.gov.uk.

■ Land Use: Peterborough

Mr Stewart Jackson: [\[67533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what information he holds on when the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will put in place legal agreements to facilitate the transfer of (a) HCA land to Peterborough City Council for the purposes of constructing a new secondary school and (b) adjacent land to developers for the construction of new homes at Paston Reserve, Peterborough; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[\[67551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the reasons are for the time taken to appoint legal representatives to facilitate the transfer of land for new homes and a secondary school in Paston Reserve, Peterborough; and if he will make a statement.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 16 March 2017]: The Homes and Communities Agency is a member of a consortium that owns a proposed urban extension to the east of Peterborough, known as Paston Reserve. The first phase of the development was completed in 2016, providing 87 new homes, 25 of which are affordable homes.

In recognition of Peterborough's need for secondary school provision the consortium has made a further planning application that will provide for a new school within the site, alongside new homes.

The HCA has been working with its partners to agree the terms of disposal for the land to be transferred to the Council, which is expected to take place in the new financial year.

■ Licensed Premises: Non-domestic Rates

Tom Watson:

[\[67410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when consultation to determine eligibility for the £1,000 business rate discount for public houses announced in paragraph 4.5 of the Spring Budget 2017 will conclude.

Tom Watson:

[\[67411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether music venues will be eligible for the £1,000 business rate discount for public houses announced in paragraph 4.5 of the Spring Budget 2017.

Tom Watson:

[\[67412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to music venues whose business rates are increasing from 1 April 2017.

Tom Watson:

[\[67413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will encourage local authorities to use the funds for discretionary relief on business rates to help music venues.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 15 March 2017]: The Government has put in place a £3.6 billion package of transitional relief to help businesses facing an increase in business rates. The Budget on 8 March set out a further package to support businesses that may have difficulty paying business rates, including a £1000 discount for eligible pubs with a rateable value of less than £100,000. My Department will shortly publish a

consultation setting out proposals for the eligibility criteria for this discount. Additionally, £110 million will be available to assist those ratepayers losing small business rates relief or rural rate relief as a result of revaluation.

The Government is also making available a £300 million discretionary relief fund over the next four years to enable local authorities to help individual businesses that are facing increased rates bills. Decisions on how this discretionary fund should be distributed will be for local authorities. A consultation on this scheme is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/598261/Discretionary_Business_Rates_Relief_Scheme_consultation.pdf

All of these schemes can be applied to music venues, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

■ Local Government: Dorset

Mr Christopher Chope: [67654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 66171, on local government: Dorset, by what means interested parties will be able to ascertain what the last date is for further representations to be made; and how much notice will be given to those parties of that date.

Mr Marcus Jones:

In announcing our initial decision on any proposal we have received we will set out the period during which interested parties may submit any further representations and which, as I made clear in my answer of 6 March to Question 66171, will ensure interested parties have a reasonable time in which to do so.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Farmers

Mr Jim Cunningham: [66555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the net financial effect of business rate changes on farmers in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 9 March 2017]: Rateable values are set independently of Ministers by the Valuation Office Agency. Certain properties may be exempt from business rates; this includes agricultural land and buildings. The Government has put in place a £3.6 billion package of transitional relief to support those businesses facing an increase.

Additionally, my Department has been working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to those businesses with the steepest increases. A package of support was subsequently announced at the Budget on 8 March. It includes £110 million to support ratepayers losing small business rates relief and rural rate relief as a result of the 2017 revaluation, as well as a £300 million

discretionary relief fund for local authorities to help individual businesses that are having the greatest difficulties paying increased rates bills.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Hackney

Meg Hillier: [\[65083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the revaluation of business rates on businesses in Hackney.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 27 February 2017]: The effect of the revaluation of business rates on businesses in Hackney will depend on the specific circumstances and location of the relevant property.

We announced further measures to support businesses in last week's Budget.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Rural Areas

Dr Poulter: [\[66909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to mitigate the effect of increases in business rates on rural business in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government has put in place a £3.6 billion package of transitional relief to help businesses facing an increase following revaluation. The Budget on 8 March included a further package to support business. £110 million will be available to assist rate payers, including eligible rural businesses losing rural rate relief as a result of revaluation. In addition, the Government is making available a £300 million discretionary relief fund over the next four years to enable local authorities to help individual businesses that are having difficulties paying increased rates bills.

■ Pre-school Education: Non-domestic Rates

Tulip Siddiq: [\[66388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of business rate revaluations on the financial sustainability of private nursery providers.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Rateable values are set independently of ministers by the Valuation Office Agency. The Government has put in place a £3.6 billion package of transitional relief to support those businesses facing an increase. Additionally, my Department has been working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to those businesses with the steepest increases.

A package of support was subsequently announced at the Budget on 8 March. It includes £110 million to support rate-payers losing small business rates relief and rural rate relief as a result of the 2017 revaluation, as well as a £300 million

discretionary relief fund for local authorities to help individual businesses that are having the greatest difficulties paying increased rates bills.

■ Social Services: Greater London

Stephen Timms: [67649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 5.5 of Spring Budget 2017, how much of the additional £2 billion of social care funding will be allocated to (a) Greater London and (b) the London Borough of Newham.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department published the allocations for the distribution of the additional funding for adult social care announced at the Spring Budget 2017 online on 9 March, together with an Explanatory Note concerning distribution - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-allocations-of-the-additional-funding-for-adult-social-care>.

■ Social Services: West Midlands

Emma Reynolds: [67650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 5.5 of Spring Budget 2017, what estimate his Department has made of how much of the additional £2 billion of social care funding will be allocated to (a) Wolverhampton and (b) the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department published the allocations for the distribution of the additional funding for adult social care announced at the Spring Budget 2017 online on 9 March, together with an Explanatory Note concerning distribution - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-allocations-of-the-additional-funding-for-adult-social-care>.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Meetings

Susan Elan Jones: [R] [67319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of her Department have had with (i) businesses and (ii) registered charities in each of the last five years.

Matt Hancock:

Details of Ministers' and Permanent Secretary meetings with external organisations, including senior media figures, are published routinely on Gov.uk and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministers-transparency-publications>

Information about meetings between officials, businesses and charities are not centrally held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[\[65552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of senior civil servants of her Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Matt Hancock:

Of the 42 members of the SCS in DCMS, the percentage in the categories set out below, as of 1st February 2017, is:

a) Male: 43%

b) Female: 57%

c) Disabled: -*

d) From a working class background: this information is not recorded

e) BAME: -*

* This percentage is suppressed as it represents a group of fewer than 5 employees. Ethnicity and disability data is collected on a self declaratory basis.

■ Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Implementation Taskforce

Tom Watson:

[\[67101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many times the Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Implementation Taskforce has met in the last 12 months.

Matt Hancock:

To protect the integrity of the policy making process, we do not publish details of when Implementation Taskforces have met or what they have discussed.

■ World War I: Anniversaries

Graham Evans:

[\[909298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the centenary of the First World War is commemorated in local communities.

Mr Rob Wilson:

We encourage communities to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding, to discover, learn and commemorate the First World War.

Since April 2010, HLF has awarded over £84 million to more than 1,680 First World War Centenary projects reaching more than 80% of constituencies across the United Kingdom.

Communities can also get involved in our war memorials programme, by attending workshops, applying for listing and carrying out condition surveys. War Memorials Trust have grants available for repair and conservation of local war memorials.

DEFENCE

■ NATO

Mr Philip Hollobone: [\[67672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many main battle tanks are deployable on NATO's eastern flank by (a) NATO and (b) Russia.

Mike Penning:

As part of our commitment to the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, details of the UK's Main Battle Tank numbers, and those of NATO Allies who are also signatories to the Treaty, are published on the UK Government website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/conventional-armed-forces-in-europe-equipment-holdings-statistics-2017x>

I am withholding the information on the deployability of NATO tanks as its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

I cannot comment on the number of Russian tanks deployable to NATO's eastern flank.

■ Type 45 Destroyers

Mrs Flick Drummond: [\[67575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to award contracts for the Power Improvement Project for the Type 45 destroyer class.

Harriett Baldwin:

On current plans, we anticipate that the Ministry of Defence will be able to award the contract for the Power Improvement Project for the Type 45 Destroyer class in early 2018.

■ Yemen: Armed Forces

Alison Thewliss: [\[67271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2017 to Question 66440, how many of those service personnel are involved in operations in Yemen.

Mike Penning:

The UK is not a member of the Saudi-led Coalition and British military personnel are not directly involved in the Saudi-led Coalition's operations in Yemen.

EDUCATION

■ Schools: Hampshire

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[\[66871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the Government will provide more support for Hampshire County Council to cover the building condition liabilities of the Second Consortium of Local Authorities schools in that county.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is investing over £24bn in school buildings from 2016- 2021 to maintain schools, rebuild and replace buildings in the worst condition, and ensure there are enough school places in the system. This includes over £10 billion allocated for maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate from 2016-2021.

Hampshire County Council received £19,367,940 in school condition allocations in 2015-16 and £19,370,943 in 2016-17 which allows them to make localised decisions to address their individual priorities such as maintaining the condition of their school estate. These are indicative of the allocation Hampshire will receive in 2017-18, which will be announced shortly. These figures do not include school condition allocations to multi-academy trusts with schools in Hampshire.

While this funding is not aimed specifically at SCOLA schools, it is allocated using a formula which takes into account data on the condition of school buildings gathered through the Property Data Survey.

The Department is updating its information on the condition of the school estate through the Condition Data Collection, which will provide information on areas of the highest condition need and drive our approach on how we invest in order to target them.

Schools in Hampshire have also received £5,009,333 in devolved formula capital in 2016-17. Fifteen academies in Hampshire also bid successfully for funding through the Condition Improvement Fund last year. We expect to announce successful projects in this year's CIF round by April 2017.

Six schools in Hampshire are included in the £4.4 billion Priority School Building Programme aimed at rebuilding or refurbishing those school buildings in the very worst condition across the country.

■ Students: Loans

Steve McCabe:

[\[66851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 65006, on students: loans, if she will publish details of the in-depth market testing exercise.

Joseph Johnson:

The Government ran a market testing process with a cross-section of potential investors in the student loan book from the end of September into November 2016.

This sought feedback on potential sale structures and key features of the transaction and informed the design of the sale. This was a commercial rather than a public process and was conducted under non-disclosure agreements. We do not intend to publish a report of the details. Protecting the details of the conclusions of market testing will help the ongoing sale process achieve value for money for taxpayers.

■ Teachers: Vacancies

Tom Brake: [\[66593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department expects its work on the website for advertising teacher vacancies to be completed.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to improving the market for advertising teacher vacancies, so that schools can advertise at reduced cost and teachers can use job-boards and be confident they are seeing a holistic view of opportunities available.

We have carried out extensive discovery work to obtain a deeper understanding of the problems and opportunities in this area, and will now take forward a range of measures to make it easier for schools to advertise vacancies. This includes the development and use of common standards to make it easier to share vacancy information between systems. Once they are implemented, we will be able to make a more informed decision about the value of a Department for Education - built vacancy website based on those standards. We expect this work to continue throughout 2017.

■ University Technical Colleges: Closures

Ian Mearns: [\[66849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much has been spent on the opening of university technical colleges that have since been closed.

Nick Gibb:

As last week's Budget demonstrates, the Government is determined to ensure every child has access to a good school place and is given the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The best university technical colleges (UTC) are providing excellent technical and professional education. We are strengthening the UTC programme to make it more sustainable, including partnerships with successful secondary schools, establishing more UTCs as part of multi-academy trusts, and doing more to raise parent and pupil awareness.

Three UTCs have closed after opening whilst a further UTC, Royal Greenwich, ceased to be a UTC and became an 11-18 secondary school in September 2016.

The capital and pre-opening revenue expenditure for each of the closures is as follows:

UTC	CAPITAL COSTS	REVENUE COSTS
Black Country UTC	£2,423,504	£742,070
Hackney University Technical College	£3,292,754	£470,793
Central Bedfordshire UTC	£6,408,488	£363,088

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture

Calum Kerr:

[67552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what consultation her Department has had with the devolved administrations on the 25-year plan for food and farming.

George Eustice:

We will continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations as well as stakeholders in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – seeking to benefit from shared learning in order to achieve our vision of building a world leading food and farming nation.

The views of the devolved nations will play an important part in helping shape our preparations for exit and achieving arrangements that work for all parts of the UK.

■ Air Pollution: EU Law

Stephen Timms:

[67665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in how many years since 2010 (a) Greater London and (b) the UK has been in breach of EU air pollution levels.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra assesses compliance against EU air quality limit values for 43 regional zones and agglomerations across the UK. This monitoring covers five key pollutants: particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), ozone (O₃) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

Monitoring data is available up to 2015. Full compliance details for the UK since 2010 (and as far back as 2003) are available in our online Air Pollution reports. These can be found at: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/>.

Specific compliance details for Greater London, in each year since 2010 that data is available for, is set out in the table below:

ZONE	YEAR NO ₂ HOURLY AND ANNUAL LIMIT VALUES WERE EXCEEDED	YEAR PM ₁₀ DAILY MEAN LIMIT VALUE EXCEEDED	YEAR PM _{2.5} ANNUAL STAGE 2 (2020) LIMIT VALUE EXCEEDED	SO ₂ , PM ₁₀
				ANNUAL MEAN, PM _{2.5} ANNUAL STAGE 1 (2015) AND O ₃ LIMIT VALUES
Greater London	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	2010	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014	No exceedances
UK	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	2010	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014	No exceedances

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Mary Glindon:

[\[67292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information her Department holds on the largest single herds slaughtered due to the detection of bovine TB in each of the last five years.

George Eustice:

In 2016 more than 29,000 cattle were compulsory slaughtered in England due to the discovery of bovine TB following surveillance testing. On average six reactors are found and slaughtered from testing where bovine TB is detected in a herd. As the comprehensive bovine TB testing surveillance regime ensures most bovine TB incidents are detected at an early stage, it is very rare for cattle herds to be fully slaughtered for bovine TB control reasons in England. There have been four such cases in England in the past five years.

YEAR OF INCIDENT	HERD SIZE
2016	60
2015	0
2014	130
2013	0
2012	122 & 25

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Scotland

Calum Kerr:

[\[67535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the role of the Scottish Government is in her Department's EU exit programme workstream on devolution.

George Eustice:

We will seek to agree a UK approach to the negotiations and ensure we get the best possible deal for the whole of the UK. We have committed to carefully considering any proposals the devolved administrations put forward. The Secretary of State visited Edinburgh in February to meet with Ministers from all the Devolved Administrations to give them every opportunity to have their say as we form our negotiating strategy.

Calum Kerr:

[\[67536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she next plans to meet her counterparts in the Scottish Government to discuss the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the rural economy.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Joint Ministerial Committee (EU negotiations) was set up to bring together constituent parts of the United Kingdom to develop a UK-wide approach to our negotiations and to discuss issues stemming from the negotiation process that may impact upon or have consequences for the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government or the Northern Ireland Executive. In addition, Defra has set up a twin track approach of regular meetings at ministerial and senior official level with Devolved Administration (DA) counterparts, supplemented with bilateral meetings on specific issues as they arise. The next DA Ministerial and senior officials meetings are currently being arranged and will take place in April.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff

Calum Kerr:

[\[67534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the need for more staff in her Department to deal with the effects of the UK leaving the EU on farming and fishing.

George Eustice:

Defra is amongst those Government departments whose work is most closely linked to and impacted by EU activity, legal frameworks and funding. In terms of work arising from the UK's vote to leave the EU, some 80% of Defra's work is framed by EU legislation and a quarter of EU laws apply to Defra's sectors. Many roles across the Defra group are now supporting EU exit-related work, either directly or indirectly.

As with all departments, Defra's work programmes and recruitment plans are continually kept under review to ensure we are appropriately staffed to deal with the task at hand. The resourcing of EU Exit work is a key priority of the Department and will be subject to on-going assessment. Staffing resources will be deployed flexibly across the entire Defra agenda, including work on our farming and fisheries policy.

■ Flood Control: Earby

Andrew Stephenson: [\[67228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to increase flood prevention in Earby.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is investing £100,000 on a flood modelling study of Earby Beck to investigate options to reduce flood risk, with its results expected in October 2017.

The Environment Agency is carrying out works to repair and reduce the risk of blockage of the Victoria Clough culvert. Detailed design work is now complete and costs are estimated at £550,000.

The Environment Agency has enhanced flood resilience in Earby by recruiting new flood wardens to support the development of a community flood plan and help coordinate the community response to future flood events. The Environment Agency is also investigating the installation of further rain gauges in the area to provide greater intelligence and accuracy to the flood warning service.

■ Flood Control: Lancashire

Mr Nigel Evans: [\[67702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department estimates will be spent on flood prevention in Lancashire over the next five years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government plans to invest £101.05 million to deliver flood and coastal risk management schemes in Lancashire over the next five years.

The table below indicates the Environment Agency's estimates for planned investments on such schemes in Lancashire for each of the five years. These figures include the Whalley and Billington Surface Water Improvement Scheme.

	GOVERNMENT FLOOD DEFENCE GRANT IN AID (£)	ALL SOURCES OF PARTNERSHIP FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS, EXCLUDING LOCAL LEVY (£)	TOTAL (£)
2016/17	41,461,210	425,000	41,886,210
2017/18	33,804,373	205,000	34,009,373
2018/19	10,325,608	65,000	10,390,608
2019/20	7,129,560	50,000	7,179,560

	GOVERNMENT FLOOD DEFENCE GRANT IN AID (£)	ALL SOURCES OF PARTNERSHIP FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS, EXCLUDING LOCAL LEVY (£)	TOTAL (£)
2020/21	8,333,116	0	8,333,116

The Anchorsholme Coast Protection Scheme is nearing completion and the Rossall Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme, Wyre Dune and Beach Management Scheme, Morecambe Wave Reflection Wall, Fairhaven and Church Scar Coast Protection Scheme have started or will commence construction shortly. The Government will invest around £77 million on these schemes, better protecting 24,700 homes from flooding in Lancashire.

The Environment Agency is currently working with partners in planning a major flood risk management scheme in Preston and South Ribble, which will reduce the risk of flooding from the river Ribble and the sea to at least 2,000 homes. This scheme is expected to start construction in 2020.

■ Flood Control: Ribble Valley

Mr Nigel Evans:

[\[67701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department estimates will be spent on flood prevention in Ribble Valley constituency over the next five years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government plans to invest £642,338 in the Ribble Valley constituency to deliver the Whalley and Billington Surface Water Improvement Scheme over the next five years. The table below summarises planned Government investment for each of the five years.

2016/17	0
2017/18	0
2018/19	£30,000
2019/20	£83,780
2020/21	£528,558

These figures represent all funding that the Environment Agency currently estimates is allocated to the Ribble Valley constituency.

■ Microplastics: Animal Welfare

Andrew Rosindell: [\[67637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2017 to Question 67200, on marine environment: microplastics, if her Department will assess the effect of microplastics entering the environment on animal welfare.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We have no plans to assess the effect of microplastics entering the environment on animal welfare.

■ Microplastics: Cosmetics

Andrew Rosindell: [\[67656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2017 to Question 67199, if her Department will publish the results of her Department's consultation on the proposals to ban microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products and the evidence under review.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We plan to publish the results of our consultation on proposals to ban microbeads in May 2017.

■ Pet Travel Scheme: Dogs

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[65885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2017 to Question 62238, on Pets: Imports, for what reasons the number of dogs reported as entering the UK non-commercially under the Pet Travel Scheme increased between 2015 and 2016.

George Eustice:

There has been a marked increase in popularity of the Pet Travel Scheme in GB. In 2014 APHA issued 80,274 new pet passports to their official veterinarians, 119,704 in 2015 and 95,449 in 2016.

■ Waste Management

Mary Creagh: [\[67234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when her Chief Scientific Adviser plans to publish the report, From Waste to Resource Productivity.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Mark Walport, intends to publish his third Annual Report, "From Waste to Resource Productivity", co-authored by

Professor Ian Boyd, Chief Scientific Adviser at Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in the near future.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Mike Wood:

[67624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what plans the Government has to ensure that the views of (a) the new West Midlands combined authority and (b) other such combined authorities are represented during negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr David Jones:

We have pursued a wide-ranging programme of engagement, including two visits by DExEU Ministers to meet local businesses in the West Midlands, since the Department was created in order to build a national consensus around our negotiating position.

We are speaking to a wide range of organisations, including combined authorities, to establish their priorities and understand their concerns. These discussions will inform our negotiating position.

We will ensure that all views are reflected in the British Government's analysis of the priorities and opportunities for the UK as it exits the European Union.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Bangladesh: Foreign Relations

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[67531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his counterpart in Bangladesh; and what issues were discussed at that meeting.

Alok Sharma:

I last met with Foreign Minister, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali on 3 March during a visit to Dhaka. We discussed a range of bilateral and global issues, including trade and investment opportunities between the United Kingdom and Bangladesh, as well as visa, migration and consular matters, including the disappearance of UK national Yasin Talukder. I emphasised the UK Government's support for Bangladesh's "zero-tolerance" approach towards terrorism and extremism. However, I also emphasised the need for rule of law and international human rights standards in dealing with these matters. We also discussed the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and the importance of all parties working together to encourage a durable solution in Burma.

■ Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Emily Thornberry: [\[67660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2017 to Question 66551, for what reasons the Government has not yet ratified the Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Boris Johnson:

The UK is currently assessing the implications for Government Departments which would result from ratification of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The UK already abides by the spirit of the Protocol and is committed to its humanitarian aims.

■ Diplomatic Service

Keith Vaz: [\[63102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK ambassadors are in post; and how many of those ambassadors are (a) women and (b) black, Asian or minority ethnic.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Of the 193 Heads of Mission, Heads of Post and Governors, 57 are women; 11 are black, Asian or minority ethnic (based on a 98% reporting rate).

■ Sri Lanka: Christianity

Mrs Theresa Villiers: [\[67389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Sri Lankan Government on the (a) rights of Sri Lankan Christians to practise their faith and (b) attack on a prayer centre in Paharaiya in North West Sri Lanka on 5 January 2017.

Alok Sharma:

The freedom to practise, change or share your faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a fundamental human right that all people should enjoy. We condemn all violence against religious minorities, including the attack on a church in North West Sri Lanka in January. The UK regularly raises human rights concerns with the Sri Lankan government. Most recently, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. the Baroness Anelay of St Johns, stressed the importance of Sri Lanka protecting the rights of all its citizens when she met the Sri Lankan Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during her visit to Sri Lanka in November 2016.

■ Sudan: Religious Buildings

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[67612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Sudan on the reported decision by the Sudanese Government to order the demolition of up to 27 places of worship.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We remain concerned at the continued persecution of Christians in Sudan, including the alleged destruction of churches. Officials from our Embassy in Khartoum immediately raised our concerns directly with the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs when these particular allegations surfaced in January 2017. More widely, we continue to urge the Government of Sudan to uphold the commitment to their citizens in the Interim Constitution of 2005, within which religious freedom is enshrined.

■ Yemen: Human Rights

Tom Brake:

[\[67109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation and developments in Yemen by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) plays a vital role in objectively monitoring and reporting human rights to prevent further suffering in Yemen. The UK welcomed the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution adopted in September 2016. The resolution called on the OHCHR to provide additional human rights experts to the Yemen Office, in order to support the Yemeni National Independent Commission of Inquiry in investigating alleged human rights abuses. We await the next OHCHR report in September 2017.

HEALTH

■ Action On Smoking and Health

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[67626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with Action on Smoking and Health on potential grant funding for 2017-18; and whether his Department has received a formal request for such funding from that organisation.

Nicola Blackwood:

Departmental officials have held no discussions with Action on Smoking and Health on potential grant funding for 2017-18. No formal request for such funding has been received.

■ Aerials: Health Hazards

Simon Hoare: [\[67443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department provides guidance to the Department for Communities and Local Government on the potential health effects of mobile telephone masts.

Simon Hoare: [\[67444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment his Department has made of radiation levels from mobile telephone masts and the effect of those masts on health.

Nicola Blackwood:

Government policy is that exposures to electromagnetic fields from mobile phone masts and other radio-transmitting equipment should comply with the guidelines on limiting exposure from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). This policy is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework for England, which contains provisions in respect of ICNIRP compliance.

The former Health Protection Agency published a comprehensive review of the evidence prepared by its independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR) in 2012. The Group's overall conclusion was that although a substantial amount of research has been conducted in this area, there is no convincing evidence that electromagnetic field exposures below guideline levels cause health effects in either adults or children.

Included within the AGNIR report are many measurements that have been published showing that exposures of the general public living near to mobile phone masts are well within the ICNIRP levels. Public Health England (PHE) advises such exposures are not expected to pose a hazard to the public.

PHE has committed to keeping emerging evidence under review and preparing another comprehensive review when sufficient new evidence has accumulated.

Simon Hoare: [\[67620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential link between the location of mobile telephone masts and the increased incidence of (a) cancers and (b) migraines.

Nicola Blackwood:

Government policy is that exposures to electromagnetic fields from mobile phone masts and other radio-transmitting equipment should comply with the guidelines on limiting exposure from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.

The former Health Protection Agency published a comprehensive review of the evidence prepared by its independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR) in 2012. The Group's overall conclusion was that although a substantial amount of research has been conducted in this area, there is no convincing evidence

that electromagnetic field exposures below guideline levels cause health effects in either adults or children.

Included within the AGNIR report are chapters covering the evidence as to whether there is a link between exposures and symptoms such as headaches/migraines (Chapter 6) and cancer (Chapter 8). As implied by AGNIR's overall conclusion above, the evidence does not support the existence of such links. The AGNIR report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radiofrequency-electromagnetic-fields-health-effects>

■ Brain: Injuries

Matthew Pennycook:

[67002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many brain injuries around birth there were in (a) 2011, (b) 2012, (c) 2013, (d) 2014 and (e) 2015.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The following International Classification of Diseases codes classify a birth related brain injury:

- P10 Intracranial laceration and haemorrhage due to birth injury
- P11.0 Cerebral oedema due to birth injury
- P11.1 Other specified brain damage due to birth injury
- P11.2 Unspecified brain damage due to birth injury.

The available information is in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	BIRTH EPISODES
2010-11	539
2011-12	605
2012-13	324
2013-14	155
2014-15	91
2015-16	77

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics

Note:

Changes to the figures over time need to be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage, improvements in coverage of independent sector activity and changes in National Health Service practice.

■ Cervical Cancer

Mr Jim Cunningham: [67550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of treatment provision for people diagnosed with cervical cancer.

David Mowat:

The independent Cancer Taskforce published its report, Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A strategy for England 2015-2020, in July 2015 and it represented the consensus views of the whole cancer community. The Government has accepted all 96 recommendations in the strategy, and implementation is being led by NHS England's National Cancer Transformation Board.

The strategy set out a vision for what cancer patients should expect from the health service including access to the best effective treatments with minimal side effects.

As part of this, on 26 October 2015, NHS England announced a £130 million fund to modernise radiotherapy across England. This will ensure that, over the next two years, older Linac radiotherapy equipment being used by hospitals across the country will be upgraded or replaced, ensuring patients get access to the latest leading edge technology regardless of where they live.

Over the next two years the fund will enable half of the five year modernisation programme recommended by the independent Cancer Taskforce. The investment will pay for over 100 replacements or upgrades of radiotherapy machines in hospitals around England.

In addition, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published a range of guidance on the treatment and screening of cervical cancer and further information is available at:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/conditions-and-diseases/cancer/cervical-cancer

■ Colorectal Cancer: Screening

Stuart C. McDonald: [67382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to reduce the screening age for bowel cancer to 50-years old.

David Mowat:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Helen Hayes MP) on 10 March 2017 to Question [66349](#).

■ Dental Services

Imran Hussain: [67337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, against what criteria the evidence and learning group will assess the success of the dental contract reform prototype scheme.

Imran Hussain: [67339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress his Department has made on replacing current NHS dental contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Imran Hussain: [67341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the dental contract prototype on (a) patient oral health and (b) dentists' salaries and benefits.

Imran Hussain: [67343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2016 to Question 47007, on dental services, which 79 high street practices are continuing to test the prevention-based clinical pathway.

David Mowat:

There are currently 79 high street dental practices in the prototype scheme testing a clinical pathway approach focussed on prevention as part of a possible new model of primary dental care. The scheme launched in 2016 and a list of the current dental prototypes can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543919/Live_Prototype_List.pdf

The scheme is being evaluated under the oversight of an evidence and learning group, including external members and led by Professor Eric Rooney one of the two deputy Chief Dental Officers for England.

The aim of reform is to improve oral health while maintaining access and delivering value for money. The evidence and learning group have identified the following five more detailed criteria against which to assess the success of the dental contract reform prototype scheme: access and accessibility, quality and appropriateness of care, improving oral health, value for money, scalability and potential roll-out. Dentists' remuneration is a key part of assessing scalability and potential for wider roll out and also has its own programme reference group which includes representatives from the profession.

The main evaluation report is due by the end of this year with an initial report expected to be published later this spring.

■ Dental Services: Finance

Imran Hussain: [67340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, for what reasons his Department does not routinely publish details of NHS funding for dental services.

David Mowat:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning dental services to meet local need. The Department does not routinely publish details of National Health Service funding for dental services as NHS England does not have a specified dental budget. There

is no allocation specifically for dentistry, NHS England receives an overall primary care services budget which includes funding for all dental services.

■ Dental Services: West Yorkshire

Imran Hussain: [\[67338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to the public purse was of providing dental services in West Yorkshire in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

We do not hold information on the cost of providing dental services in West Yorkshire.

■ Depressive Illnesses

Norman Lamb: [\[67523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the average cost per person to the NHS of people suffering from (a) anxiety and (b) depression.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Epilepsy: Children

Catherine West: [\[67700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2017 to Question 65608, whether his Department will assess the merits of collecting data on average waiting times for children seeking access to assessment for a ketogenic diet for the treatment of epilepsy.

David Mowat:

Assessment for a ketogenic diet would take place in an outpatient setting where collection of data relating to diagnosis and procedure are not mandated. Furthermore, assessment of a ketogenic diet is not identifiable by the OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures coding, used for recording clinical activity in the National Health Service. Therefore it not possible to collect data on average waiting times for children seeking access to assessment for a ketogenic diet for the treatment of epilepsy, which are a matter for local arrangement.

■ General Practitioners: Females

Mrs Theresa Villiers: [\[67524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will set out whether returnship support announced in the Spring Budget 2017 will include measures to encourage women to return to medical practice as GPs.

David Mowat:

In the Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced £5 million of new funding to support women to return to work following taking time out to have children. In order to identify how best to increase the number of returnships with this funding, the Government will be working with both business groups and public sector organisations.

In addition, NHS England has completed a review of the GP Induction and Refresher Scheme, and is part way through implementing a range of improvements to it to make it easier and quicker for doctors to return to practice, while maintaining necessary safeguards of quality and safety. There are currently over 200 doctors on the scheme; this compares to only 20 doctors completing the scheme in the first year following its launch in 2015.

During March 2017, NHS England will also be launching a “Return to General Practice” marketing campaign, including print and social media adverts aiming to promote the package of financial and practical support now available to returning GPs.

■ Health Insurance: EU Nationals

Hilary Benn:

[\[67619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether EU citizens exercising their treaty rights as a (a) jobseeker, (b) worker, (c) self-employed person, (d) self-sufficient person or (e) student are required to have comprehensive health insurance in order to receive free NHS treatment.

Mr Philip Dunne:

European Union citizens who are ordinary resident in the United Kingdom are entitled to free National Health Service treatment. To be ordinarily resident in the UK they must be living here lawfully and on a properly settled basis for the time being.

Ordinary residence is not dependent on exercising treaty rights or having comprehensive sickness insurance.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[67326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that British citizens who have made plans to retire in the EU after the UK has left the EU will have access to healthcare.

David Mowat:

While the people of the United Kingdom have 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, including the rights associated with medical treatment abroad.

Nothing has yet been decided on the future of British citizens' medical treatment abroad. Government officials are considering the positions and options available to

us with the aim of achieving the best outcome for British citizens in the UK and abroad.

■ Heart Diseases: Consultants

Mr Jim Cunningham: [67532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of cardiologists.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Responsibility for staffing levels rests with individual National Health Service trusts and their boards who are best placed to decide how many staff they need to provide a given service, taking in to account skill mix and efficiency.

Working with local providers, it is Health Education England's responsibility to determine the appropriate numbers of students the NHS needs in training on an annual basis. Its latest Workforce Plan for England covering the period 2016/17 is available at the following link:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Workforce%20Plan%20for%20England%202016-17.pdf>

As at November 2016 there were approximately 1,207 full time equivalent cardiology consultants employed in the NHS.

■ Lyme Disease

Colleen Fletcher: [67553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the timetable is for the publication of the review of the diagnosis, treatment and transmission routes of Lyme disease announced in May 2016.

David Mowat:

The Department has been commissioning three separate systematic reviews on the diagnosis, treatment and transmission of Lyme disease to provide evidence to inform future decision making. These will be put into the public domain on completion, which is expected to be in December 2017.

Colleen Fletcher: [67554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the level of NHS care and support available to people who have been diagnosed with Lyme disease.

David Mowat:

Services for the treatment of Lyme disease are commissioned locally and are the responsibility of clinical commissioning groups. However, central resources and support are available for those providing services. For example Public Health England provide a referral pathway for general practitioners (GPs) to help them ensure difficult cases are referred to an appropriate National Health Service specialist as well as training sessions for GPs.

The advice and guidance available will be enhanced by the work underway on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence clinical guideline on Lyme disease and the three Systematic Reviews on diagnosis and diagnostic tests, treatment and epidemiology/transmission routes. NHS England will be monitoring the conclusions from these pieces of work on Lyme disease as they emerge. This should help them respond promptly to the new guidance.

■ Mental Health Services: Crimes of Violence

Catherine West: [67662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many incidents of violence have been reported by acute adult mental health wards in (a) England and Wales and (b) the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust area in the last 12 months.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Tables of collated numbers of reported physical assaults against National Health Service staff in England are at:

<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/3645.aspx>

Catherine West: [67663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on how many occasions the police have been called to deal with incidents of violence in acute adult mental health wards in (a) England and Wales and (b) the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust area in the last 12 months.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Microplastics: Health Hazards

Andrew Rosindell: [67657]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2017 to Question 67201, if his Department will make an assessment of the implications of micropastics entering the marine environment for human health.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs monitors levels of marine litter, including microplastics, both in the sea and along our coastlines to improve understanding of the levels and impacts of marine litter.

Public Health England are committed to keeping emerging evidence under review but are not currently planning to conduct an assessment of the implications of microplastics entering the marine environment for human health.

■ NHS: Finance

John Healey: [\[67053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 66178, what budget has been allocated to Individual Funding Requests in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

There is no specific budget allocated to Individual Funding Requests (IFRs).
Approved IFRs are funded through the specialised commissioning budget allocation.

■ NHS: Reorganisation

Justin Madders: [\[67286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many sustainability and transformation plan areas have submitted a credible implementation plan.

David Mowat:

Neighbouring National Health Service hospitals, family doctors and local councils in every part of England have come together for the first time to plan around the overall needs of patients. Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are a unique exercise in collaboration that will deliver common-sense improvements in prevention, health and social care by 2021.

STP footprints are currently engaging local communities and stakeholders on their draft plans, and where appropriate acute and commissioning partners are consulting on specific service improvements.

On 27 February the chief executives of NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to STP leaders, setting out their expectation that each STP would submit an STP implementation plan shortly. No plans have yet been completed.

They also stated the upcoming NHS Five Year Forward View Delivery Plan will outline the steps NHS England and NHS Improvement will take to help ensure all areas have developed credible implementation plans.

Justin Madders: [\[67324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to page 26 of Budget 2017, how the £130 million in additional capital to sustainable and transformation plans (STPs) was calculated; and what proportion of the total capital requirement of STPs that represents.

David Mowat:

The additional capital investment budget available to the Department for Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) is £325 million spread equally over the years 2017-18 to 2019-20. The numbers shown in Table 2.1 of the Budget Document include Barnett consequential for the devolved administrations.

The amount of this investment as an overall proportion of the STP capital requirements is not clear as it will be partly covered by existing capital resources available in an STP area and their ability to raise receipts.

■ NHS: Sick Leave

Jonathan Ashworth:

[67454]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the NHS Staff Survey results for 2016, what assessment his Department has made of the risks to patients of NHS staff reporting for work despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The NHS Staff Survey shows a modest improvement, from 59% (2015) to 56% (2016) in the proportion of staff who responded reporting that they attended work in the last three months despite feeling unwell because they felt pressure from their manager, colleagues or themselves.

This improvement emphasises the importance of continued support across the National Health Service for the initiative led by NHS England to improve NHS staff health and wellbeing, details for which can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2015/09/improving-staff-health/>

Recognising that staff ill-health and related absence is linked to an increased risk of unsafe care, worse experiences of care for patients and poorer outcomes the Department continues to commission NHS Employers to help NHS trusts improve staff health and wellbeing through a structured programme of advice, guidance and best practice.

Their programme includes, for example, supporting trusts to reduce staff sickness absence rates; encouraging effective use of occupational health services; promoting good practice on staff engagement; handling presenteeism and improving emotional wellbeing within organisations. Details of the tools and resources to help NHS organisations are available at:

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/retain-and-improve/staff-experience/health-work-and-wellbeing>

■ Nitrous Oxide: Misuse

Mike Wood:

[67526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of treating people who have inhaled nitrous oxide in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Nicola Blackwood:

Data on the costs to the National Health Service of treating people who have inhaled nitrous oxide in the last 12 months is not collected centrally. No assessment of such costs has been made over the last 12 months.

■ Nutrition

Helen Goodman: [67331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the average weekly nutritional intake of households in (a) AB, (b) C1, (c) C2, (d) D and (e) E NRS social gradings.

Nicola Blackwood:

Public Health England has not made a recent assessment of nutrient intake by socio-economic classification. The National Data and Nutrition Survey provides detailed, quantitative information on food consumption, nutrient intakes and nutritional status, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-diet-and-nutrition-survey-results-from-years-1-to-4-combined-of-the-rolling-programme-for-2008-and-2009-to-2011-and-2012>

■ Pharmacy: Disadvantaged

Diana Johnson: [67522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many applications for reviews of eligibility under the Pharmacy Access Scheme have been made by pharmacies in each parliamentary constituency in the UK; and how many applications (a) are being considered, (b) have been accepted and (c) have been rejected in each constituency.

David Mowat:

This data is not yet available. NHS England is still processing applications submitted for reviews of eligibility.

■ Pharmacy: Internet

Kevin Hollinrake: [66981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the study published by Oxford Academic on 17 February 2017 on inappropriate checks undertaken by online pharmacies, if he will discuss with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency means to prevent the online sale of antibiotics and other medicines without appropriate checks.

Nicola Blackwood:

Standards for United Kingdom online pharmacy services are the responsibility of the relevant professional regulatory bodies. These are the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is working with the General Medical Council, the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Care Quality Commission to monitor issues arising from online services. The four regulatory bodies issued a joint statement on 3 March stressing that providers and healthcare professionals working for online services must provide safe and effective care,

including following professional guidelines on this matter. The Department is aware and supportive of this important work.

■ Physician Associates

Stephen McPartland: [\[67164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when his Department plans to publish the consultation on regulation of Physician Associates.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department is currently considering options for a consultation on the regulation of Physician Associates, which will be published in due course.

■ Strokes

Chris Leslie: [\[66988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2016 to Question 53151, if the Government will ensure that the Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme begins to collect data on patient experience and outcomes.

David Mowat:

The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) commissions, develops and manages the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP), on behalf of NHS England, Wales and other devolved administrations. The programme currently consists of over 30 national clinical audits, six clinical outcome review programmes and the National Joint Registry. The Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme is one of the NCAPOP topics.

Patient Reported Experience Measures and Patient Reported Outcome Measures are not routinely commissioned through the NCAPOP.

The design of the clinical audit is a matter for HQIP on behalf of NHS England and the Royal College of Physicians.

■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[67651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the World Health Organisation has requested that his Department provide resources to assist in the implementation of the Framework Consultation on Tobacco Control in countries other than the UK.

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[67652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which countries officials of his Department have visited to assist the World Health Organisation in implementing the Framework Consultation on Tobacco Control in the last 12 months.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[67655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant the Answer of 18 November 2016 to Question 52951, on WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which countries received direct country support funded by his Department in the last 12 months.

Nicola Blackwood:

The World Health Organization (WHO) did not ask the Department to provide resources in relation to implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

Over the past 12 months, Departmental officials attended the FCTC Conference of the Parties in Delhi, India in November 2016 as part of the United Kingdom obligation to support the FCTC, and have attended meetings with the FCTC Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland. No countries have received direct country support from the FCTC project over the past 12 months.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Stuart C. McDonald:

[52829]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 15 April 2016 to Question 34251, how many decisions on international protection her Department made from 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 with further submissions lodged under rule 353 of the Immigration Rules in respect of (a) grants on protection grounds, (b) grants on non-protection grounds, (c) decisions to treat as a fresh claim and then refused, (d) further submissions refused, (e) further submissions rejected as not in correct format or (f) further submissions withdrawn before any decision made.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office releases national statistics on immigration as part of the transparency agenda. Information on asylum claims lodged and the number of outstanding cases forms part of information already released by the Home Office:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2016/asylum>

■ Crime: Taxis

Mrs Theresa Villiers:

[67525]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many crimes have been committed by drivers of private hire vehicles in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not hold the requested information centrally.

The police recorded crime data that the police supply to the Home Office does not include information on whether the offender was the driver of a private-hire vehicle.

■ Female Genital Mutilation

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[67094]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the number of prosecutions related to female genital mutilation in (a) Peterborough, (b) Cambridgeshire and (c) England; and if she will make a statement.

Sarah Newton:

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a crime and it is child abuse. The Government will not tolerate a practice that can cause extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls.

The police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) highlighted that one reason for the lack of investigations and prosecutions is a lack of referrals. In addition, cultural pressures and the age and vulnerability of victims may prevent them coming forward.

In 2015 we significantly changed the law to break down these barriers. We introduced: extended extra-territorial jurisdiction, lifelong anonymity for victims, a new offence of failure to protect a girl from FGM and a mandatory reporting duty. We have also introduced FGM Protection Orders and latest figures show that 79 have been made to protect girls.

In addition, the police and CPS have put in place agreed local protocols in all force areas on the investigation and prosecution of FGM. This includes the requirement that prosecutors work closely with the police at the earliest stage possible in providing early investigative advice and helping to identify evidence which will strengthen the case.

These steps apply to all forces in England and Wales.

■ Forced Marriage

Sarah Champion:

[67628]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2016, published on 9 March 2017, what steps she is taking to prevent children under the age of 16 from becoming victims of forced marriage.

Sarah Champion:

[67629]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2016, published on 9 March 2017, what assessment she has made of the ability of the police to identify men at risk of or male victims of forced marriage.

Sarah Champion:

[67633]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2016, published on 9 March 2017, what steps she is taking to

ensure that police forces in England and Wales can recognise the signs of forced marriage.

Sarah Champion: [\[67634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2016, published on 9 March 2017, what representations the Government has made to the Government of Pakistan on that country's connection with forced marriage in the UK.

Sarah Champion: [\[67635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2016, published on 9 March 2017, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on encouraging other countries to strengthen their laws and policing to prevent forced marriage.

Sarah Champion: [\[67636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2016, published on 9 March 2017, what steps she is taking to prevent people with learning disabilities from becoming victims of forced marriage.

Sarah Newton:

The UK is a world-leader in the fight to stamp out the brutal practice of forced marriage. With our dedicated joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - Home Office led Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) leading efforts to combat it at home and abroad. We know that forced marriage can be a hidden crime, and we want to see more victims coming forward. That is why we have introduced lifelong anonymity for victims through the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that the police and other agencies understand this crime and respond effectively. The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims and professionals, and also carries out a comprehensive outreach programme of over 100 events a year for statutory agencies such as the police, as well as affected communities. In addition, the FMU has published statutory guidance and made available free e-learning which highlights that forced marriage can affect men and boys as well as women and girls, and that those with learning and other disabilities may be particularly vulnerable. In December 2016, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police published their first ever joint forced marriage investigation and prosecution protocol, to highlight the importance of working in partnership.

Cases involving very young children often involve the promise of a future marriage rather than an imminent marriage. Anyone with concerns about a potential victim of any age can contact the FMU for advice.

We know there is more to do and we will continue to work with the police, CPS and College of Policing to drive improvements in the enforcement response, including through the National Oversight Group chaired by the Home Secretary.

The Home Office works closely with the FCO on this issue. The Minister for Asia and the Pacific, Mr Sharma, met political and non-Governmental organisation (NGO) representatives from the British-Pakistani community on 4 January 2017. Their discussion focused on challenges of looking after the interests of British citizens who spend time in and have family ties with Pakistan, and included the subject of forced marriage.

Wider work to tackle forced marriage overseas includes the Department for International Development's £39 million regional programme "Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage", which supports UNICEF/UNFPA in 12 priority countries.

■ Immigration

Stuart C. McDonald:

[67395]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who passed through the National Referral Mechanism as victims of modern slavery or of human trafficking with positive conclusive grounds status were granted discretionary leave to remain in the UK for the periods (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 1 April to 31 December 2016 on the basis of (i) their personal circumstances or (ii) pursuing compensation.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[67396]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who passed through the National Referral Mechanism as victims of modern slavery or of human trafficking with positive conclusive grounds status were granted discretionary leave to remain in the UK for the periods (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 1 April to 31 December 2016 on the basis of (i) their personal circumstances, (ii) pursuing compensation or (iii) cooperating with the police in their enquiries; and how many of those people had discretionary leave granted, respectively, for (A) under 12 and (B) between 12 and 30 months.

Sarah Newton:

The Home Office does not hold the information in the format requested, and to obtain it would mean an individual review of records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

The statistics for the NRM that cover the period mentioned are found here.

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

■ Nitrous Oxide

Mike Wood:

[67625]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to monitor the compliance of internet suppliers of nitrous oxide with their obligations under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985.

Sarah Newton:

The Psychoactive Substances Act (PSA) 2016, which came into force on 26 May 2016, repealed the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985. The PSA makes it an offence to offer to supply psychoactive substances and that includes advertising substances for sale on the internet. Since commencement of the PSA, action has been taken by law enforcement bodies to prevent such substances being sold by UK-based websites.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Glasgow

Alison Thewliss: [67555]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many constituent inquiries lodged with the UK Visas and Immigration office in the Scotland and Northern Ireland Account Management Team originated in Glasgow Central constituency.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Data on numbers of MP letters and emails received is published quarterly as part of UKVI transparency data.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-february-2017>

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Burma: Inter Mediate

Patrick Grady: [67269]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding has been provided to Inter Mediate for work related to Burma in each financial year since 2012-13.

Rory Stewart:

Between 2012 and 2015 DFID provided just over £1.4 million to Inter Mediate for work related to Burma. Following this further funding from the cross-departmental Conflict Stability and Security Fund has been agreed, totally nearly £1.3 million.

■ Department for International Development: Secondment

Susan Elan Jones: [R] [67313]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff in her Department have been seconded from (i) businesses and (ii) charities.

Rory Stewart:

Since 2009, 6 staff have been seconded to DFID from businesses. No staff have been seconded from charities.

■ Occupied Territories: Demolition

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[67285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans are in place to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinians who will be made homeless by demolitions in the near future.

Rory Stewart:

DFID's core contribution to the European Union includes support to emergency humanitarian work in Area C. The UK also supports the Norwegian Refugee Council to provide legal advice and representation to Palestinian communities at risk of losing their homes to demolition or eviction. The UK continues to raise with Israeli authorities at the highest level our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, most recently when the Foreign Secretary met Prime Minister Netanyahu on 8 March 2017.

■ Overseas Aid

Mr Nigel Evans:

[\[67699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that UK international development aid is not spent on the promotion of terrorism.

Rory Stewart:

DFID's development work complements and reinforces the UK's efforts to counter terrorism and extremism. DFID helps to build stronger, stable and more democratic states and societies that are better able to respond to the threat from terrorism. Development programmes can do this by addressing poor governance, corruption, inequality, marginalisation and a lack of economic opportunity which create the enabling environment which extremists exploit. We have enhanced our operational framework and internal guidance to ensure that DFID effectively manages the risk of aid diversion to terrorist groups in line with our obligations under the 2000 Terrorism Act. A dedicated Counter Terrorist Financing Officer has also been appointed. DFID controls include a comprehensive management framework which requires risks to be identified at design stage and reassessed regularly during the project. Further measures include understanding the country context; where terrorist organisations are operating; and the impact of our programmes, to monitor unintended consequences. Every project is subject to an annual performance review and a project completion review, to ensure that the desired objectives have been achieved, and that aid has been delivered to the intended beneficiaries.

■ USA: Family Planning

Kate Osamor:

[\[67611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department plans to take to support the comprehensive sexual and reproductive health rights of those people affected by the US Administration's Mexico City policy.

Priti Patel:

The UK is the second largest bilateral donor in the world for family planning, after the US. We will continue to be a global leader on family planning, women's rights and sexual and reproductive health, including where appropriate access to safe abortion.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Meetings

Susan Elan Jones: [R] [\[67306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had with (i) businesses and (ii) registered charities since his Department was established.

Greg Hands:

Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on GOV.UK. Departmental officials regularly hold meetings with both businesses and registered charities. This information is not held centrally however, and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Department for International Trade: Secondment

Susan Elan Jones: [R] [\[67314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff in his Department have been seconded from (i) businesses and (ii) charities.

Greg Hands:

The number of staff who are currently seconded to the Department for International Trade are shown in the table below.

	FULL TIME	PART TIME
Business	17	-
Charities	-	-

■ Fossil Fuels: Iraq

Andrew Rosindell: [\[67618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to support British oil and gas companies in securing production rights in Iraq.

Greg Hands:

Except in the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI), International Oil Companies (IOCs) operate in Iraq under Technical Service Contracts (TSCs) which are agreed and signed with the Ministry of Oil in Baghdad. In the KRI, IOCs operate under Production-Sharing Agreements (PSAs). The Department for International Trade,

including through our Embassy in Baghdad, will provide advice and support to British companies seeking to work under these agreements when requested and as appropriate.

■ Libya: Oil

Tom Brake: [\[67113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what information he holds on annual receipts and revenue flows accruing to the regimes in Libya from oil exports in each year since 2007.

Greg Hands:

Data on UK trade in oil products with Libya between 2007 and 2016 are given in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. UK trade in oil products with Libya [Table for parliamentary question UIN 67113.docx]

■ World Trade Organisation

Kirsty Blackman: [\[67537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Written Statement of 5 December 2016, HCWS 316, on UK commitments at the World Trade organisation, whether the draft schedules that will be prepared will replicate the EU25, EU27 or EU28 schedules.

Greg Hands:

The UK goods and services schedules will be based on the most recent certified EU schedules, which is EU25 for goods, and EC12 for services. Since the schedules were certified the EU has entered into further WTO obligations, which we will also seek to replicate in our schedules.

JUSTICE

■ Electronic Tagging

Mr Mark Hendrick: [\[64827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2017 to Question 59530, if she will provide a breakdown of the £450,000 cost of procurement activity for the supplier of the new electronic monitoring tags based on satellite tracking technology.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The £450,000 cost to the Electronic Monitoring (EM) programme represents people resources engaged in the procurement of the next generation tags. These resources have been supplied by contractors to provide expert capability and capacity to strengthen accountability and governance during the Procurement exercise. This has helped ensure that the programme remains compliant with EU regulations, meets

legal obligations of fairness, transparency and openness and provides confidence and assurance in the contract award decision.

■ Ministry of Justice: Migrant Workers

Tulip Siddiq: [67467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of people employed by her Department are from other EU countries.

Dr Phillip Lee:

All Government Departments are bound by legal requirements concerning the right to work in the UK and, in addition, the Civil Service Nationality Rules. Evidence of nationality is checked at the point of recruitment into the Civil Service as part of wider pre-employment checks, but there is no requirement on departments to retain this information beyond the point at which it has served its purpose.

■ Offensive Weapons: Sentencing

Johnny Mercer: [67546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what sentencing guidelines have been put in place to deal with people who repeatedly offend in relation to (a) possession of and (b) threatening with a bladed article or offensive weapon.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Sentencing Guidelines are produced by the independent Sentencing Council.

The Council has developed a draft guideline on sentences for knife possession and threat offences, including repeat offences, which they consulted on between 6 October 2016 and 6 January 2017. The draft guideline is available from the Sentencing Council's website: www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk

Following consultation the Council will develop a definitive guideline to be published later this year.

After the introduction of our two strikes legislation, people caught carrying a knife a second time are now more likely than ever before to go to prison.

■ Post-mortems

Dr Sarah Wollaston: [67295]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average waiting time for carrying out post-mortems for (a) children and (b) adults was in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Dr Sarah Wollaston: [67379]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will increase the fee paid to pathologists who conduct post-mortem examinations for coroners.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government keeps statutory fees under review but has no plans at the present time to amend the fees paid for coronial post-mortem examinations.

■ Prisoners: Rehabilitation

Mr David Hanson:

[\[67433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving sentences for imprisonment for public protection whose tariffs have expired (a) did not complete and (b) were waiting for places on offending behaviour courses in each year since 2010; and what those courses are.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost as central records are not kept for all aspects of the management of prisoners sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP).

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Parole Board will continue to work together to improve the progression of IPP prisoners. We have established a new IPP Progression Team, to ensure that the parole process is operating as efficiently as possible. In 2015, we released 512 IPP prisoners – the highest number of annual releases to date. HMPPS will continue to invest in interventions to assist prisoners to both reduce their risk and demonstrate such progression to the Parole Board.

■ Probation: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[67266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff are available in Wales for the community supervision of people sentenced to less than 12 months; and what assessment she has made of the adequacy of provision of buildings and educational opportunities for those people.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

All CRCs are contractually required to ensure that their workforce is competent and efficient and have appropriate and relevant qualifications, training and experience and to employ or engage a sufficient number of staff to deliver the services set out in their contracts.

CRCs are also contractually required to make staff aware of and attend scheduled training with respect to practices and procedures which are relevant to their roles. During the procurement and transformation processes staffing numbers, estates proposals and educational opportunities were assessed and we robustly contract manage each CRC to make sure they fulfil their contractual commitments to maintain service delivery, reduce reoffending and protect the public. We also ensure that all transformation plans including estates from which the services are delivered are implemented appropriately.

We are currently conducting a comprehensive review of the probation system to make sure it is reducing reoffending, protecting the public and reducing future victims. We will set out our plans after the review is concluded in April.

■ Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[66819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people who were supervised by the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales have entered paid employment or education following (a) supervision after completing a sentence of 12 months or less and (b) an interview with education and employment staff in the latest period for which figures are available.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

This information is not collected centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Probation Service Review proposed that probation providers measure outcomes which include Housing, Education and Employment monitoring at specific key points throughout the offenders journey, including commencement and end of supervision periods. The measure is proposed for implementation in due course and guidance has been issued to inform recording practice to capture this data.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ British Irish Council

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[67614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what work the British-Irish Council will undertake during the period before the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland.

Kris Hopkins:

The Council continues to meet regularly in different formats. For example, on Friday 10 March the British-Irish Council Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used (IML) Languages work sector held a Ministerial meeting, hosted by the Scottish Government in Edinburgh. Officials from all BIC member administrations also continue to meet in advance to prepare for the meetings.

■ Political Parties: Northern Ireland

Lady Hermon: [\[67843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he is taking to accelerate the introduction of legislation to provide transparency in relation to donations to all political parties operating in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Lady Hermon:

[\[67844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent assessment he has made of the risks of removing the anonymity of donors to political parties operating in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Kris Hopkins:

The Secretary of State wrote to the Northern Ireland parties in January to seek their views on moving to full transparency. The Government is keen to make progress on this issue following the recent Assembly election.

TRANSPORT

■ Dartford-Thurrock Crossing

Adam Holloway:

[\[67032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54114, how many times per month traffic is stopped at the Dartford River Crossing to allow hazardous and oversized vehicles to use the tunnels for each month since November 2016; what the average duration of each such stoppage has been; and when the future work referred to in his Answer will be undertaken to model the potential reduction in the number of escorted vehicles per day.

Mr John Hayes:

The number of times that traffic has been held at the Northbound Dartford Crossing on a red light in order to escort vehicles are as follows;

Nov-16	DEC-16	JAN-17
2218	2184	2487

This does not count the total number of occasions when escorts occurred. To minimise the number of times necessary to hold traffic to escort vehicles, staff are trained to conduct escorts when traffic is held at red lights by the Traffic Safety System for others reasons e.g. extracting an over height vehicle before it enters the tunnels.

Due to a number of operational activities carried out at the same time as the escort it can be difficult to determine an exact average duration that each escort may take.

However, the majority of escorted dangerous goods vehicles and abnormal loads going through the Dartford tunnels do take less than two minutes on each occasion. A new arrangement is being developed to accurately measure the duration of each crossing and Highways England anticipate making decisions on when new arrangements could become available later this year.

■ Lower Thames Crossing

Adam Holloway: [\[67074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will place the cost-benefit analysis of Option A14 of the Lower Thames Crossing in the Library; and what the data sources and supporting information were for that analysis.

Mr John Hayes:

Option A14 for the Lower Thames Crossing was assessed by Highways England as part of the Options Phase appraisal. The cost-benefit analysis demonstrated that the route would represent poor value for money with a benefit-cost ratio of 0.4.

The appraisal was based on a level of design development and environmental assessment appropriate for the wide range of options considered at this early stage of the project. The cost-benefit analysis uses costs built-up from Highways England's cost database for UK highways projects, the results of traffic forecasting for this option which include greenhouse gases, accidents, vehicle operating costs, noise, reliability and wider economic impacts and have been measured in line with DfT's WebTAG guidance. As requested, the cost-benefit analysis will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses shortly.

Adam Holloway: [\[67097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make a revised estimate of traffic volume forecasts for 2025 and 2041 as published in tables 4.3 and 4.4 of volume 5 of the Lower Thames Crossing Pre-Consultation Scheme Assessment Report, published in January 2016, using information from traffic surveys undertaken since that report was published, including information from ANPR cameras and traffic counters.

Mr John Hayes:

Highways England will produce revised traffic volume forecasts as part of the development phase of the scheme.

These forecasts will be informed by data collected from a number of sources, including ANPR cameras and traffic counters. This revised modelling work is expected to be completed in 2018 at the earliest.

Adam Holloway: [\[67152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will (a) set out the data sources, supporting information and the assumptions used and (b) estimate traffic volumes per (i) day and (ii) peak hour for (A) Option A14 and (B) Option C of the Lower Thames Crossing Option on (1) the existing Dartford Crossing, (2) a new Option A14 crossing, (3) a new Option C crossing, (4) the A282 between junction 30 and junction 2 of the M25, (5) the A2 between the M25 and the A227, (6) the A2 between the A227 and the M2, (7) the A227 between the A2 and the A20, (8) the A228 between the M2 and M20 and (9) the A229 between the M2 and the M20.

Mr John Hayes:

a) The data sources, supporting information and assumptions used in Highways England's traffic modelling have been set out in the Pre-Consultation Scheme Assessment Report which is available on the Lower Thames Crossing public consultation website.

b) The estimate of traffic volumes requested for Option A14 was aggregated in terms of changes in traffic flows across the network, and then compared with other options (including Option C) in terms of overall economic performance. Consequently the breakdown of traffic volumes is not currently held in the form requested. The estimate of traffic volumes for selected links for Option C is reported in the Pre-Consultation Scheme Assessment Report.

■ Railways: South East

Peter Kyle:

[\[67584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study, published on 2 March 2017, what further work his Department has agreed should be undertaken in relation to Network Rail's plans to upgrade the Brighton Main Line through its proposals in the Croydon area; and what estimate he has made of the time that will be taken to carry out that work.

Paul Maynard:

My Department is working closely with Network Rail on the next phase of development of the Brighton Mainline upgrade programme. This involves undertaking further detailed engineering design and planning work, and preparation of an Outline Business Case. Subject to available funding, and confirmation of an agreed programme of activity, we expect this will take around two years.

■ Vauxhall Motors

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[67225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency on issuing a further recall for Vauxhall Zafira cars following reports that some vehicles that have already had both recalls are still having problems with burning and melting to the heater systems.

Andrew Jones:

I have had discussions with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) about the progress of the Vauxhall Zafira safety recalls. DVSA is investigating reports concerning the safety of the Zafira, including reports of thermal incidents in vehicles subject to the recall, and those that have had the second recall. If needed, DVSA will explore the possibility of extending the existing recall, and is keeping this matter under review. DVSA will continue to press Vauxhall to meet its safety obligations under the General Product Safety Regulations and associated legislation.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission: Dismissal

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[67623\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what information she holds on who made the decision at the Equality and Human Rights Commission to dismiss 10 employees at short notice in February 2017; what representations she has received on those dismissals; and whether she has discussed the reasons for the selection of those so dismissed with that Commission.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is an independent body and makes its own decisions about staff deployment and redundancies.

I have received representations from several honourable members about the redundancies mentioned in the question, but have not discussed these or the EHRC's reasons for the selection of particular staff with the Commission.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[67622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the reasons are for there being a difference in the level of entitlement depending on date of claim for existing employment and support allowance (ESA) claimants entitled to the former work-related activity group rate and the new ESA claimants who will receive a reduced rate.

Penny Mordaunt:

The ESA work-related activity component, as detailed in the 2006 Green Paper "*A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work*", was designed to act as an incentive to encourage people to participate in work-related activity, and therefore return to work more quickly, but with only 1 in 100 ESA claimants in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) leaving the benefit each month it clearly is not working.

Our reforms to ESA are about making sure that we provide the right support for those who are unable to work. That support is not limited to just money; for people in the WRAG we are offering more assistance to move closer to the labour market and, when they are ready, into work. This includes guaranteed places on the new Work and Health Programme or Work Choice, and additional places on the Specialist Employability Support programme.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Martyn Day: [\[67547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of the 2 March 2017 to Question 65538, on personal independence payment, what the criteria is

for a lack of mental capacity or insight for assessing a person with a brain tumour as eligible for additional support when assessing a personal independence payment claim.

Penny Mordaunt:

The assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is designed to treat people as individuals, considering the impact of their impairment or health condition on their everyday life and how each claimant has personally adapted to living with a disability. The PIP assessment is not a medical assessment, requiring the Health Professional to diagnose a condition or its severity and recommend treatment options; instead it is focussed on the claimant's functional ability.

We recognise that for some individuals with brain tumour(s) additional difficulties can arise, however there is no automatic entitlement to PIP by virtue of a health condition (except in terminal illness cases), either for new claimants or those claimants who were in receipt of DLA and who are being reassessed under PIP. We recognise that the symptoms of brain tumour(s) can fluctuate over time and where an activity cannot be performed for part of a day, it is deemed that it cannot be done on that day.

Martyn Day:

[\[67548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of the 2 March 2017 to Question 65538, on personal independence payment, if he will assess the potential merits of the personal independence payment assessment guide to permit claimants' companions to provide an account of the claimant's health condition or impairment in cases where that claimant has speech or hearing problems.

Penny Mordaunt:

The assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is designed to treat people as individuals, considering the impact of their impairment or health condition on their everyday life and how each claimant has personally adapted to living with a disability.

We recognise that information given by companions could be useful, particularly in cases where the claimant may lack insight into their condition, understate the challenges they face or have difficulty. We have made it very clear that when attending a face-to-face consultation, claimants can bring someone with them in order to support them or help them and in some cases we will also carry out consultations in claimants' homes.

Since its inception, the system of assessing claimants' eligibility for PIP has been continually reviewed and refined in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. We continue to work extensively with PIP assessment providers and disability representatives to make improvements to guidance, training and audit procedures in order to ensure a quality service is maintained. This includes in response to the Independent Review conducted by Paul Gray.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Martyn Day:

[\[67520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to improve training in conditions with fluctuating symptoms of healthcare professionals undertaking assessments for disability benefits.

Penny Mordaunt:

Health assessments take into account the fact that most health conditions fluctuate and as such, will not focus on an individual's 'best day', or take a 'snapshot' of their condition on the day of their assessment.

Health Professionals receive comprehensive training in disability analysis which includes a functional evaluation as to how medical conditions and the long-term medical treatment of those conditions affect an individual. Health Professionals also receive on-going professional training and support for the duration of their employment in the role.

In addition Health Professionals are subject to on-going quality audit to ensure they continue to deliver high quality assessments.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Homelessness

Minister for Local Government (Mr Marcus Jones):

[\[HCWS538\]](#)

At Autumn Statement 2015 the Government announced that the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Temporary Accommodation Management Fee would be replaced by increased funding to local authorities to give them more control and flexibility to tackle homelessness.

I am pleased to inform you that we have today announced the allocations for the Department for Communities and Local Government's new Flexible Homelessness Support Grant which will replace the DWP fee from April this year. The total funding over two years is £402 million. The details of allocations and methodology are attached.

We have published the funding allocations for the grant over two years so councils will know with more certainty how much they will receive under the new system. We will announce allocations for 2019/20 during 2017/18. The funding has been allocated according to a formula which reflects relative homeless pressures, while at the same time aiming to protect local authorities which currently have high levels of Temporary Accommodation.

No authority will receive an annual allocation less than we estimate they would have received under the DWP fee (assuming rising levels of demand).

The new grant gives councils more control and flexibility over homelessness budgets. It forms part of the Government's end to end approach to tackling homelessness, helping both those at risk of homelessness and those experiencing a crisis. It sits alongside other funding for homelessness, including the £315 million Homelessness Prevention funding, our recently announced £50 million homelessness prevention package and the £61million new burdens funding for Bob Blackman MP's Homelessness Reduction Bill, which will significantly reform England's homelessness legislation and ensure that more people get the help they need to prevent them becoming homeless.

In order to manage the transition to a new funding regime carefully, we are ring-fencing the grant for two years to ensure it is spent on homelessness services.

In recognition of the particular challenges faced by London boroughs, we have set aside £25 million of the funding over the next two years. Before making final decisions on the allocation of this funding we will work with the Greater London Authority and London boroughs to consider ways of helping councils to collaborate in the procurement of accommodation for homeless households.

In designing the grant, we worked with local housing authorities across the country, including all London boroughs.

Attachments:

1. FHSG Formula explanation [170315 FHSG - formula explanation.docx]
2. FHSG Methodology note [170315 FHSG methodology note.docx]
3. FHSG allocation 2 Years [170315 Copy of 170315 FHSG allocations 2 yr.xlsx]

■ The London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):

[\[HCWS543\]](#)

On 17 December 2014, my predecessor, the then-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, issued specific, targeted Directions to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets using his powers under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.

At that time a team of Commissioners was appointed to exercise specific functions of the Authority. Although initially progress was slow, more recently I have been pleased to return selected functions back to the Council. I am now considering the overall progress of the Council in anticipation of these Directions ending on 31 March of this year.

In line with the Council's own expectations, I am considering withdrawing the three Commissioners from the Borough and, in support of the recent progress made by the Council, maintaining an oversight role through a new general Direction. The new Direction allows for continued oversight of electoral administration. The Government has invited expressions of interest from local authorities on piloting the use of ID in polling stations in the 2018 local elections. As part of wider steps to strengthen electoral integrity in the Borough, I would welcome Tower Hamlets' participation.

I have received assurances from the Mayor of Tower Hamlets both in his fourth six-monthly report of 20 February, and in person on 27 February, that he is confident the Council is now in a position to drive forward and deliver their own improvement agenda.

This view is endorsed by the Commissioners in their report of 21 February which I have carefully considered and discussed with them on 27 February.

I am minded therefore to exercise my powers under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 to revoke the Direction of 14 December 2014, end the role of Commissioners in the Council and hand back executive functions to the Executive Mayor with the proviso that the Council delivers all outstanding actions in their Best Value Action Plan and the setting up of a Best Value Improvement Board as outlined in the Mayor's letter of 1 March.

I am minded also to direct the Council to provide quarterly reports against their Best Value Action plans for a further 18 months; and at the end of this period to carry out an independent review of delivery. As with all councils, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets must abide by the Best Value Duty.

This is a significant step forward for Tower Hamlets Council – they have made considerable progress over the past few months. I am pleased that the guidance of the Commissioner Team has played such a material role in putting Tower Hamlets on the right road to allow them take on their rightful functions.

I am inviting the Council to make representations on these proposals, which will be considered as part of my final decision.

I am placing a copy of the documents associated with these announcements in the Library of the House and on my Department's website.

HEALTH

■ Charges for NHS Prescriptions, Dental treatment, and Wigs and Fabric Supports

Minister of State (Mr Philip Dunne):

[\[HCWS539\]](#)

As at the start of previous financial years, regulations will today be laid before Parliament to increase certain National Health Service charges in England from 1 April 2017.

The prescription charge will increase by 20 pence from £8.40 to £8.60 for each medicine or appliance dispensed. To ensure that those with the greatest need, including patients with long-term conditions, are protected we have frozen the cost of the prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs) for another year. The 3 month PPC remains at £29.10 and the cost of the annual PPC will stay at £104, allowing unlimited prescriptions within a specified time period. Taken together, this means prescription charges are expected to rise broadly in line with inflation.

Existing arrangements for prescription charge exemptions will remain in place, principally covering those with certain medical conditions like cancer, epilepsy and diabetes, pregnant women and new mothers, children under 16 and anyone over 60, and those on a low income.

As part of a two year settlement announced last year, the patient charges for NHS dental care in 2017/18 will be as follows:

- a band one course of treatment and urgent treatment will increase by 90p from £19.70 to £20.60;
- a band two course of treatment will increase by £2.40 from £53.90 to £56.30
- a band three course of treatment will increase by £10.60 from £233.70 to £244.30.

The maximum band three charge is for the approximately 5 per cent of treatments that include items such as crowns or bridges.

Charges for wigs and fabric supports will rise in line with inflation.

Full details of the revised charges for 2017-18 are attached.

Attachments:

1. Charges [Charges for NHS Prescriptions, Dental Treatment, and Wigs and Fabric Supports.pdf]

HOME OFFICE

■ Disclosure and Barring Service Annual Report 2015 - 2016

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism (Sarah Newton): [\[HCWS541\]](#)

The 2015-16 Annual Report and Accounts for the Disclosure and Barring Service (HC 451) is being laid before the House today and published on www.gov.uk. Copies will be available in the Vote Office.

■ Security Industry Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2015/16

The Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS540\]](#)

The 2015-16 Annual Report and Accounts for the Security Industry Authority [HC 1088] are being laid before the House today and published on www.gov.uk. Copies will be available in the Vote Office.

■ Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

The Minister of State for Immigration (Mr Robert Goodwill): [\[HCWS542\]](#)

My rt hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules [HC 1078].

The changes include a new requirement that individuals over the age of 18, who are applying for entry clearance under the Tier 2 General route to work in education, health and social care sectors must provide a criminal record certificate from any country in which they have lived for 12 months or more in the previous ten years. This requirement will also apply to the partner of the applicant and a partner applying to join existing Tier 2 migrant in one of these work sectors.

This is the second stage in a phased implementation of the requirement. It currently applies to individuals over 18 applying for entry clearance under Tier 1 to come to the UK as entrepreneurs or investors, and their adult dependents. The Home Office will continue to monitor implementation with a view to extending the requirement to other migrants in the future.

On 24 March 2016 the Government announced two phases of reforms to Tier 2, following a review by the independent Migration Advisory Committee. The first phase was implemented on 24 November and the changes being laid today implement the second phase of the announced reforms. The changes also update the codes of practice relating to skilled workers, and make other minor updates to the rules for work routes.

Further changes are being made to amend or clarify other provisions in the Immigration Rules.