



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Daily Report

Thursday, 2 March 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 March 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 02 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

■ Attorney General: Information Officers

Justin Madders:

[65112]

To ask the Attorney General, 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.

Robert Buckland:

The table below lists the numbers of civil servants employed in media relations and communications at the Law Officers' Departments from 2008- 2016. Please note this is a snapshot figure, and may have varied slightly throughout the year. Figures for 2007 are not available.

SFO			AGO, GLD, HMCPSI			CPS	
Date	Staff Numbers	Total Salaries	Staff Numbers AGO	Staff Numbers GLD	Staff Numbers HMCPSI	Total Salaries GLD, AGO, HMCPSI	Salaries for 33 people in media relations and communications roles.
2008	6	£194k	1	2	2	£138k	£1,128k
2009	5	£165k	0	2	2	£107k	£1,415k
2010	5	£177k	3	3*	2	£202k	£1,747k
2011	7	£241k	3	3	2	£266k	£1,605k
2012	6	£223k	3	3	2	£304k	£1,320k
2013	5	£189k	3	4	2	£361k	£1,221k
2014	4	£158k	2	4	2	£287k	£1,329k
2015	5	£189k	2	5	2	£353k	£1,136k
20/16	5	£195k	2	5*	2	£321k	£1,082k

* Includes one Agency worker who was not directly employed

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **Companies: Dundee**

Roger Mullin: [\[65614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Trust and Company Service Provider supervisor's identifier is of the firm or sole practitioner who, at the date of the January 2017 Companies House extract, provided a registered place of business to 581 Scottish limited partnerships at 1-2 Taits Lane, Dundee.

Margot James:

Companies House does not require the Trust and Company Service Provider supervisor's identifier of the firm or sole practitioner who provides registered places of business for Scottish Limited Partnerships.

■ **Companies: Folkestone**

Roger Mullin: [\[65611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Trust and Company Service Provider supervisor's identifier is of the firm or sole practitioner who, at the date of the January 2017 Companies House extract, provided a registered place of business to 354 limited liability partnerships and limited companies at 80 Sidney Street, Folkestone, Kent.

Roger Mullin: [\[65612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Trust and Company Service Provider supervisor's identifier is of the firm or sole practitioner who, at the date of the January 2017 Companies House extract, provided a registered place of business to 451 Scottish limited partnerships at 45 Rosehaugh Road, Inverness.

Roger Mullin: [\[65613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Trust and Company Service Provider supervisor's identifier is of the firm or sole practitioner who, at the date of the January 2017 Companies House extract, provided a registered place of business to 1,318 Scottish limited partnerships at Suite 1, 78 Montgomery Street, Edinburgh.

Margot James:

Companies House does not require the Trust and Company Service Provider supervisor's identifier of the firm or sole practitioner who provides registered places of business for Scottish Limited Partnerships.

■ **Consumer Advice, Protection, Standards and Enforcement for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Independent Review**

Steve McCabe: [\[64311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2017 to Question 62374, what plans he has to report on the

progress of industry implementation of the recommendations in his Department's Each Home Counts review, published in December 2016.

Jesse Norman:

Implementation of the recommendations will, as proposed by the independent review, be led by industry. Following the Stakeholder Launch of the Report on 2 February, Government will continue to work constructively with the sector to understand how and when they propose to implement the recommendations.

Steve McCabe:

[\[65128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Each Home Counts: an independent review of consumer advice, protection, standards and enforcement for energy efficiency and renewable energy, published in December 2016, whether he plans to implement any of the recommendations of that review.

Jesse Norman:

Implementation of the recommendations will, as proposed by the independent review, be led by industry. Following the Stakeholder Launch of the Report on 2 February, the Government will continue to work constructively with the sector to understand how and when they propose to implement the recommendations.

■ **Energy: EU Action**

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[64205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to implement the EU's Clean Energy for All Europeans package if it is adopted before Spring 2019.

Jesse Norman:

While the UK remains in the EU, the Government will continue to engage constructively on new and existing EU legislation and regulation.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Drew Hendry:

[\[64516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with energy suppliers on enabling dual fuel customers with different suppliers of electricity and gas to allow the use of their smart meters for readings.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 23 February 2017]: The Department has worked closely with energy suppliers to make sure that consumers who get their gas and electricity from different energy suppliers will get the benefits of smart meters.

The latest standard for smart meters (SMETS2) allows either a gas or an electricity smart meter to be installed first by one supplier and for the other smart meter to be installed later by the other supplier.

Ahead of that most energy suppliers are installing smart meters to customers where they provide both fuels or electricity only.

Steve McCabe:

[\[65363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has assessed the potential merits of broadening the smart meter roll out to include manufacturing premises.

Jesse Norman:

Manufacturing premises, like other non-domestic premises, are already included in the smart or advanced metering arrangements. Energy suppliers were required to roll out advanced meters to their larger non-domestic energy users by April 2014, ie electricity premises in profile classes 5-8, and gas premises with annual consumption of greater than 732 MWh. The current roll-out of smart meters will cover smaller non-domestic energy users, ie non-domestic electricity premises in profile classes 1-4, and non-domestic premises with annual gas consumption below 732 MWh per year.

■ Fuel Poverty

Gill Furniss:

[\[64855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies on support for fuel-poor households of the report by National Energy Advice of February 2017 entitled, *In from the cold*.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 24 February 2017]: The Government has noted the paper presented by National Energy Action on February 13 th and will assess what the implications are for current policies. Government will consider this and other evidence provided by stakeholders as part of the design of any future fuel poverty schemes. In particular it will consider the views of the Committee on Fuel Poverty.

Government recently confirmed plans to reform the Energy Company Obligation, which is worth £640m per year. In 2017-18, 70% of the scheme will be directed at low income households. This represents an increase from £310m to £450m of funding per year. Energy companies are also required to provide over 2 million low income and vulnerable households with a £140 rebate off their energy bill each winter, under the Warm Home Discount Scheme, which is worth £320m per year.

■ Green Investment Bank: Yorkshire and the Humber

Diana Johnson:

[\[65062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Green Investment Bank has provided to projects in Humberside in each fiscal year since its inception.

Mr Nick Hurd:

UK Green Investment Bank plc (GIB) has invested £522.3m into two offshore wind farms in the Humberside area: Westernmost Rough in 2013/14; and Lincs in 2016/17. In addition, GIB's Offshore Wind Fund has invested £641.5m into three offshore wind funds in the Humberside area: Lynn and Inner Dowsing in 2015/16; and Lincs in 2016/17. GIB's Offshore Wind Fund is managed by GIB's subsidiary GIB Financial Services Limited, and has raised and invested capital of over £1.1bn.

In addition, some of GIB's UK wide investment platforms such as its indirect investments in LED lighting upgrades to Santander branches and NCP car parks are likely to have benefitted the Humberside area. Further information on all of GIB's investments can be found on its website: www.greeninvestmentbank.com

■ Mergers: Foreign Companies

Louise Haigh: [65618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of the firm bids received for mergers and acquisitions of UK companies were made by bidders based outside the UK in financial year (a) 2015-16 and (b) 2016-17 to date.

Louise Haigh: [65625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many firm offers were made for mergers and acquisitions of UK companies in financial year (a) 2015-16 and (b) 2016-17 to date.

Margot James:

The Government does not collect these figures.

The Office for National Statistics publishes statistics relating to mergers and acquisitions on its website at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/changetobusiness/mergersandacquisitions/bulletins/mergersandacquisitionsinvolvingukcompanies/julytosept2016>

■ Natural Gas: Prices

Jim Shannon: [65386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the big six energy providers on steps to ensure that future increases in consumer gas bills are minimised.

Jesse Norman:

Ministers in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, meet energy supply companies to discuss a wide range of issues.

■ Nuclear Power Stations: Cumbria

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[64005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution to domestic energy production of the planned Moorside nuclear plant; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The proposed nuclear plant at Moorside could deliver up to 3.8GW of gross electricity capacity. The developers of the project, NuGen, estimate this will provide 7% of the UK's electricity needs – equivalent to powering 6 million homes.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[64027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with firms to invite interest to invest in the planned nuclear plant at Moorside; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The UK Government is committed to new nuclear as an important part of the UK's energy mix, having signed a deal for the first new nuclear power station in a generation. Government continues to work closely with partners as they develop proposals to see Moorside built.

■ Renewable Energy

Stephen Timms: [\[64895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of energy was generated from renewable sources in (a) the UK and (b) Greater London in each year since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 24 February 2017]: The table below gives the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the UK since 2010, using the method behind the EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED). Data for 2016 will be available on 29 June 2017. Data is not available for Greater London.

YEAR	PROPORTION OF ENERGY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES IN THE UK (RED METHOD) (%)
2010	3.7%
2011	4.2%
2012	4.6%
2013	5.8%
2014	7.1%

YEAR	PROPORTION OF ENERGY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES IN THE UK (RED METHOD) (%)
2015	8.3%

Source: Digest of UK Energy Statistics, table 6.7, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/renewable-sources-of-energy-chapter-6-digest-of-united-kingdom-energy-statistics-dukes>

■ Solar Power and Tidal Power

Edward Argar:

[64630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the UK's energy was generated by (a) tidal and (b) solar power in each year from 2005.

Jesse Norman:

a) Tidal power includes tidal stream and tidal range devices (i.e. barrages or lagoons). Due to the very small scale nature of tidal stream deployments (all of which were limited-period tests of innovative devices) a negligible portion of the UK's energy was generated by tidal stream devices. No energy was generated by tidal range devices.

b) The proportion of the UK's indigenous energy production generated by solar sources (photovoltaics and solar heating) before 2010 was negligible. Figures for 2010 to 2015 are presented below.

Proportion of UK electricity and UK energy production generated from solar, 2010-15 ⁽¹⁾

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
% of electricity generation	0.01	0.07	0.38	0.57	1.21	2.25
% of energy production	0.03	0.05	0.13	0.19	0.34	0.56

(1) Energy and electricity generated from solar sources before 2010 was negligible, less than 0.05% of UK production.

Source: DUKES [table 6.6](#), [table 5.1](#) and [table 1.1](#) available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/digest-of-uk-energy-statistics-dukes>.

■ Unified Patent Court

Mr David Nuttall: [\[65809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's policy is on the holding of a referendum under the terms of the European Union Act 2011 prior to ratifying the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court.

Joseph Johnson:

The Agreement on a Unified Patent Court is not a treaty which attracts a referendum under the European Union Act 2011.

Mr David Nuttall: [\[65810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to ratify the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court; and what assessment his Department has made of whether the UK can remain a member of the Unified Patent Court after the UK leaves the EU.

Joseph Johnson:

The Government confirmed in November 2016 that the UK will proceed with preparations to ratify the Unified Patent Court Agreement. Those preparations are progressing. No decision has been taken on our future involvement in the court once we have left the EU. That will be part of the negotiations which have not yet begun.

■ Wind Power: Offshore Fixed Structures

Martyn Day: [\[64320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using decommissioned oil platforms for wind energy installations.

Jesse Norman:

The Department has not made any assessment of the merits or feasibility of the re-use of decommissioned oil platforms for wind energy installations. The majority of infrastructure being decommissioned is very mature and has often operated well beyond its original design life. Nonetheless, companies must consider reuse as part of the decommissioning process.

■ Xcite Energy

Steve McCabe: [\[64263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent representations he has received from Xcite Energy Limited shareholders.

Jesse Norman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has received correspondence from Xcite Energy Limited shareholders in recent months, and I was sorry to hear of the impact the company's recent insolvency has had on them. BEIS and the Oil and Gas Authority continue to monitor the situation. The arrangements

surrounding the sale process and the marketing of the assets is a matter for the court-appointed liquidators who, I understand, have been in contact with shareholders to explain the position.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Information Officers

Justin Madders:

[\[65115\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff in (a) the Prime Minister's Office and (b) the Cabinet Office as a whole 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.

Ben Gummer:

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

The Government Communications Group is a business group in my Department that is responsible for media relations and communications. At 31st January 2017, 144 full-time equivalent staff were employed in the Government Communications Group, working on Cabinet Office, PMO and cross-government business.

■ Electoral Register

Cat Smith:

[\[65055\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the 2016 Electoral Statistics published in March 2017 will be adjusted for double-counting where people are registered to vote in more than one constituency.

Chris Skidmore:

The Office for National Statistics report on Electoral Statistics for 2016 will be published with the figures as given to them by each local authority.

Mr Graham Allen:

[\[65480\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his letter of 20 February 2017 to the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Democratic Participation, (a) how the Government will measure the effect of the voter ID pilots on turnout and (b) by what criteria voter identification would be deemed a deterrent to the number of people voting.

Chris Skidmore:

The Government's response to Sir Eric Pickles' review of electoral fraud, *Securing the ballot*, outlined the Government's intention to run a number of pilot schemes at local government elections in May 2018. Over the coming weeks and months, the Government will be working with our key electoral partners (including the Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators) to set out the timing and methodology of the pilot schemes. My letter of 20 February to my Right Honourable friend, the Member for Loughborough, outlined that the purpose of the pilot schemes

is to test the impact of voter identification measures on the electoral process as a whole, including on factors such as turnout.

■ **Electronic Voting**

Mr Graham Allen: [\[65453\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing provision for remote online voting in areas affected by adverse weather conditions.

Mr Graham Allen: [\[65456\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the effect of severe weather conditions on (a) turnout for the EU referendum on 23 June 2016 and (b) turnout for the Stoke-on-Trent and Copeland by-elections on 23 February 2017.

Chris Skidmore:

Turnout at elections can be affected by a range of factors and it is difficult to apply impacts to any particular factor. We do not make assessments specifically focused on the effect of the weather on electoral turnout.

We have no current plans to introduce online voting.

■ **Extended Ministerial Offices: Staff**

Ian Lavery: [\[64945\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff employed in extended ministerial offices will be (a) redeployed to other posts within the Civil Service and (b) made redundant.

Ben Gummer:

This is a matter for the relevant departments.

■ **Government Departments: ICT**

Chi Onwurah: [\[65753\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of whether Government Digital Service guidelines on the procurement of cloud services offer similar potential benefits to businesses regardless of size; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Gummer:

Government departments use the G-Cloud framework to procure cloud services. Guidance on the use of this framework, issued jointly by Government Digital Service and Crown Commercial Service, is set out in the G-Cloud buyer's guide. Our approach is that procurement decisions should be based on the buyer's service requirements, rather than the size of supplier companies. To date, 57% of total sales by value from all reported G-Cloud sales have been awarded to SMEs.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[65754\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the capacity for small and medium-sized enterprises to provide cloud services for government departments.

Ben Gummer:

This Government is committed to removing all possible barriers to small businesses in our commercial arrangements, and we have set a target of 33% of central government procurement spend going to small and medium businesses by 2020.

We are already exceeding this target in the provision of cloud services. The G-Cloud framework is now in its eighth iteration offering customer access to over 22,000 services and over 2,300 suppliers, of which 89% are small businesses.

Of the £1.8 billion spent to date, 57% is with small businesses; of the £1.4 billion spent by central Government, 57% has been with small and sized businesses.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[65756\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that digital procurement opportunities are available to businesses of all sizes.

Ben Gummer:

The Government has committed to a challenging target to ensure 33% of its total procurement spend is with small businesses by 2020.

We are continuing to take action to cut out unnecessary bureaucracy in government procurement, simplify documentation and open up more public contracts to small businesses.

In terms of the procurement of digital services, the Crown Commercial Service's Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework provides access to over 2,000 suppliers, of which 89% are small businesses. Of the £103 million spent to date, 53% is with small businesses.

The fourth iteration of the Digital Outcomes and Specialist framework, has 2,018 suppliers, of which 89% are SMEs.

■ Government Departments: Reprography

Jim Dowd:

[\[65471\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether staff in government departments are covered by copyright licences related to the scanning and photocopying of documents where secondary royalties may be due to the author or creator of such documents.

Ben Gummer:

Staff in government departments are covered by copyright licences related to the scanning and photocopying of documents where secondary royalties may be due to the author or creator of such documents.

■ Government Digital Service

Chi Onwurah: [65298]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies on the Government Digital Service of the findings of the blog post by Ann Kempster entitled So long and thanks for all the cheese.

Ben Gummer:

The blog post in question was published in November 2016 and contains the personal reflections of Ms Kempster, who contracted with the Government Digital Service during 2015.

I believe that the ambitious approach set out in the Government Transformation Strategy, which was published last month, is absolutely the correct one. The Strategy sets out our priorities for the remainder of this Parliament and explains the critical role that the Government Digital Service will play. This includes equipping civil servants with the digital tools, techniques and skills which are so vital in ensuring public services work better for citizens.

■ Government: Assets

Alison Thewliss: [65416]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2017 to Question 63839, on Government: Assets, what the addresses or locations are of the 68 freehold land holdings in Glasgow Central constituency.

Ben Gummer:

The list of Government owned freeholds in the Central Glasgow constituency drawn from the central database of Government properties and land across the UK, ePIMS™ available at dat.gov.uk. A number of these are land holdings owned by the Department of Transport and as such there are no addresses held for these records.

Information on the Government Estate including a mapping service is published online at: <https://www.gov.uk/find-government-property>.

■ Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund

Caroline Lucas: [64885]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the Financial Reporting Council placed the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund in the secondary tier for compliance with the Financial Stewardship code; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Gummer:

The Financial Reporting Council assessed asset owners based on the quality of their written statement of compliance with the Stewardship Code.

The Stewardship Code is available at www.frc.org.uk/Our-Work/Publications/Corporate-Governance/UK-Stewardship-Code-September-2012.pdf.

The Trustees' Secretariat are revising their statement of compliance to more accurately reflect the stewardship work that is currently being undertaken by the PCPF. The Fund aims to achieve tier 1 status once this work is complete.

TREASURY

■ Bank Services: Standards

Craig Tracey: [\[65014\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, which regulator will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Open Banking Standard.

Craig Tracey: [\[65017\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timescale is for implementing the Open Banking Standard.

Craig Tracey: [\[65018\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of progress on implementing the Competition and Markets Authority's key recommendations on promoting open banking.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury welcomes the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA's) remedies on Open Banking, which has the potential to bring significant benefits to consumers and SMEs by promoting competition in the retail banking sector.

Responsibility for assessing and monitoring the progress on implementation rests with the independent CMA.

As set out by the CMA, the element of Open Banking dealing with non-personal information must be delivered by 13 March 2017, with the delivery of the full scope by January 2018.

■ Child Tax Credit

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[65666\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent representations he has received on exemptions to the proposed limit on tax credits to two children for women who have had a subsequent child as a result of rape.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government ran a public consultation on all the exceptions which closed on 27 November 2016. The Government published the consultation response setting out finalised policy decisions on 20 January 2017. The consultation response listed the organisations that made representations to the Government during the consultation period.

■ Concentrix: Minimum Wage**Gavin Robinson:** [\[65735\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many of the Concentrix staff transferred to HM Revenue and Customs via a TUPE arrangement are paid the minimum wage.

Jane Ellison:

Under TUPE arrangements a total of 241 Concentrix staff were transferred to HM Revenue and Customs. All of the staff transferred are paid above the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

■ Economic Situation: West Midlands**Emma Reynolds:** [\[65629\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has carried out an impact assessment on the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the West Midlands regional economy.

Mr David Gauke:

The government has provided a guarantee for all European Structural and Investment Fund projects signed before the UK's departure from the European Union. Officials are beginning the longer-term work of considering how best to support our regions following the UK's departure from the European Union.

The government will publish a Midlands Engine Strategy shortly. This will set out plans to address productivity barriers across the region. The Midlands will also benefit from £392 million of Local Growth Fund allocations.

■ Financial Services: ICT**Craig Tracey:** [\[65015\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to promote the UK's FinTech industry.

Craig Tracey: [\[65016\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of whether the retail banks' terms and conditions are a barrier to FinTech innovation.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury is working hard to promote the UK FinTech industry.

At Autumn Statement the government announced specific measures to boost the industry: the Treasury commissioned EY to produce an annual 'State of UK FinTech' report on key FinTech metrics to raise the profile of FinTech as an investment opportunity.

The Treasury has also appointed regional FinTech envoys for the Northern Powerhouse and Scotland to build networks and raise awareness of opportunities in these regions - alongside Special Envoy, Eileen Burbidge, whom the Treasury appointed last year to promote the UK FinTech sector at home and abroad.

Together with the Department for International Trade, the Treasury is hosting an International FinTech Conference, on 12 April 2017 in London, to showcase UK FinTech firms to investors from across the globe.

The Treasury is establishing FinTech bridges, which provide opportunities for UK FinTechs that want to scale-up internationally. By establishing links between Government, regulators and private sectors, FinTech Bridges reduce the barriers to entry in new jurisdictions and link UK FinTechs with opportunities for international investment. The UK currently has 3 FinTech Bridges with Singapore, the Republic of Korea and China.

The Treasury is also launching a FinTech Delivery Panel, designed to bring the industry together to develop an overarching FinTech strategy for the UK and to monitor and drive forward FinTech initiatives.

The Government continually engages with the Fintech industry and has not found any significant barriers for innovation arising from bank terms and conditions.

■ Inheritance Tax

Andrew Rosindell:

[65133]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what forecast his Department has made for the total revenue to the Exchequer raised through inheritance tax in each year to 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

The latest inheritance tax receipts forecasts for 2016/17 to 2021/22 are published in Table 4.6 of the Office for Budget Responsibility's *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* publication at: <http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/Nov2016EFO.pdf>.

■ Personal Care Services: VAT

John Mc Nally:

[65764]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the VAT registration threshold on hair salon owners; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

No specific assessment has been made of the effect of the VAT registration threshold on hair salon owners.

At Autumn Statement 2016, the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) was asked to conduct a VAT General Simplification Review. The OTS's interim report, which was published on 28 February 2017, highlights eight areas that it will be looking at in more detail, including the level of the VAT registration threshold. Its recommendations will be published in autumn 2017. To support the review, the OTS has issued a call for evidence, including asking for feedback from businesses and their representatives.

The UK's VAT registration threshold (above which persons making taxable supplies are required to register and account for VAT) is currently set at £83,000, although businesses below this threshold can opt to register voluntarily if it suits them to do so.

■ Tax Collection: Offshore Industry

Gill Furniss:

[65819]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Government's projected tax receipts are from North Sea oil and gas in the next 10 years; and what the total public liability for decommissioning costs will be in the next 10 years.

Jane Ellison:

The forecasted Exchequer revenues up to 2021-22 (Offshore Corporation Tax and Petroleum Revenue Tax) arising from the production and extraction of North Sea oil and gas from the UK and UK Continental Shelf are presented in Table 4.6 of the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR's) *Economic and Fiscal Outlook: November 2016*. This is available to view at:

<http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/Nov2016EFO.pdf>.

The OBR will be publishing updated forecasts on 8 March 2017.

Longer-term estimates of revenues from the production and extraction of North Sea oil and gas were published as a supplementary table of the OBR's *Fiscal Sustainability Report: June 2015*. This is available to view at:

http://budgetresponsibility.org.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/FSR_2015_Supplementary_Tables.xlsx.

It should be noted that the longer-term estimates are based on the March 2015 forecast and determinants.

There is considerable uncertainty in the costs, timing and the duration of decommissioning activity in the UK. The estimated Exchequer costs for the decommissioning of North Sea oil and gas infrastructure over the period 2015 to 2041 are £16 billion (nominal), as presented in Table 3.12 of the OBR's *Fiscal Sustainability Report: July 2016* analytical papers:

http://budgetresponsibility.org.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/FSAP_July_2016_public_sector_balance_sheet.pdf.

■ Taxation

Helen Goodman:

[64977]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in foreign governments on introducing public country-by-country tax reporting.

Jane Ellison:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Treasury Ministers continue to meet with their international counterparts on a regular basis, including at the G20 and the

European Union, to discuss multilateral actions to counter tax avoidance and promote tax transparency.

■ **Taxation: Scotland**

Roger Mullin:

[\[65615\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Scottish limited partnerships filed non-zero tax returns in the (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14 and (c) 2014-15 financial year.

Jane Ellison:

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

■ **Taxation: Self-assessment**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[65317\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to protect small businesses and low-income professionals against any negative fiscal impacts of the proposed revised threshold for Making Tax Digital.

Jane Ellison:

As announced on 31 January 2017, a decision on the level of the initial threshold for the income exemption will be made before legislation is introduced. The Government has committed to ensuring that free software is available for businesses with straightforward affairs. It will also continue to consider options on financial assistance and support for small business in the context of the overall fiscal framework.

■ **Treasury: Brexit**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65752\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64553, what discussions he had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Mr David Gauke:

HM Treasury, and other Departments, are working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union on all aspects of exiting the European Union

■ **Treasury: Information Officers**

Justin Madders:

[\[65105\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

Simon Kirby:

This information is not available in the format requested. HM Treasury holds data according to job title, which is not an accurate enough basis to answer the question.

Treasury: Procurement**Jon Trickett:**[\[65005\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many civil servants of his Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Simon Kirby:

The number of recorded contract managers is relative to the number of live contracts let across the Department. As at 27 February 2016, there are 89 recorded civil servants with responsibility for managing contracts.

Urban Areas: Cash Dispensing**Julian Knight:**[\[64984\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate against the effect of changes to the level of access to free ATMs on high streets and local communities.

Simon Kirby:

The Government believes that widespread free access to cash remains extremely important to the day-to-day lives of many consumers and businesses in the UK.

In 2015 Government set up the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) with the statutory objective to ensure that the UK's payment systems, including the LINK ATM scheme, work in the interests of their users. The PSR is monitoring developments within the LINK network and ATM provision in the UK more generally, including assessing the potential effect of any developments on the provision of ATMs in the UK and the possible impact on the scheme's users.

The PSR has the power to act if LINK or any of its members act in a way that conflicts with any of its objectives.

VAT: Tax Rates and Bands**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[65364\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that small businesses are not disproportionately affected by the proposed increase in flat rate VAT to 16.5 per cent.

Jane Ellison:

The new 16.5% VAT Flat Rate will only apply to businesses with limited costs and will help to level the playing field, while maintaining the administrative simplification for small businesses. Existing rates within the scheme remain unchanged.

The Government has consulted widely with businesses and their representatives affected by the measure, and has provided online guidance and a specific calculator

to ensure all affected businesses are aware as to whether the new rate will apply to them.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Churches: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[909029]

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Commissioners are taking to assist urban parishes with capital funding for urgent restorative building work.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

The Church of England highly values the work of the Heritage Lottery Fund in running the Grants for Places of Worship Scheme, a fund which puts £30m a year into UK listed places of worship, of all faiths and denominations. This dedicated scheme takes account of the specific needs of places of worship that are primarily run by volunteers who cannot afford to employ the skills of professional grant-application writers.

The Church has also worked closely with the National Heritage Memorial Fund during the recent Church Roofs Fund scheme that has invested £55m in over 400 places of worship, 300 of which were Anglican churches. This scheme has successfully kept the roof on churches where it was urgently needed in order to keep the building open for its community. This scheme has now ended and we are working with the National Heritage Memorial Fund to evaluate the impact of the scheme across the country.

Given the profound contribution churches make to the social and economic life of the nation it is right that this is recognised in this way, especially as the scheme ensures outcomes from repairs including benefits to local people.

The Church Buildings Council last year awarded just over £600,000 to churches for urgent repairs to buildings and objects including stained glass, sculpture and monuments. This is part of a long-term partnership with the Wolfson Foundation, Pilgrim Trust and Radcliffe Trust. The partnership between Wolfson Foundation, Pilgrim and Radcliffe Trusts has enabled a simple application process and fast response time, making it a relatively small but very valuable resource for struggling parishes. We are actively seeking to secure the future of this fund and increase its grant-giving capacity through the work of our new associated charity, the Anglican Parish Churches Fund.

■ Churches: Wifi and Broadband

Karl McCartney:

[909030]

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what progress has been made on identifying parish churches suitable for wi-fi and broadband in rural areas.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

Churches across the Country play an important role in supporting community infrastructure for their local communities. The Diocese of Norwich since 2011 have been the majority shareholder in WiSpire which provides discreet Fixed Wireless Access technology to attach to church towers. This system builds a network of transmitters offering schools, businesses and residents the opportunity to connect to Wi-Fi and broadband particularly in rural areas.

The Church is in early discussions to expand this provision into the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich and Diocese of Ely. Given the geography of the Diocese of Lincoln it may be a suitable candidate for consideration as the project expands as best provision using this system needs direct line of sight. Conversations are also in progress with the Government to test viability of this and other potential schemes across other parts of the country.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Agency Social Workers****Margaret Beckett:**[\[65049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the cost to local authorities of agency social workers.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Local authorities receive funds through local taxes, fees and charges, as well as through central government. Local authorities are best placed to take decisions on spend for social care based on local priorities. In response to calls for further funding to tackle the immediate pressures, the Local Government Finance Settlement increased the dedicated funding available for social care through increased flexibility around the social care precept and with a new dedicated £240 million Adult Social Care Support Grant in 2017 to 2018, distributed according to relative need.

■ Help to Buy Scheme: South Thanet**Craig Mackinlay:**[\[64000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many people received assistance from the Government's Help to Buy scheme in South Thanet in each of the last three years.

Gavin Barwell:

In the parliamentary constituency of South Thanet, the number of households who have purchased homes through Help to Buy schemes are:

Help to Buy: Equity Loan: 22 (from scheme launch in April 2013 to September 2016);

Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee: 164 (from scheme launch in October 2013 to September 2016);

Help to Buy: ISA: 41 (from scheme launch in December 2015 to September 2016);

Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee and Help to Buy: ISA are the responsibility of HM Treasury;

The Government does not publish an annual breakdown of scheme completions by parliamentary constituency.

The Government publishes cumulative totals on a quarterly basis by parliamentary constituency:

Help to Buy: Equity Loan

<http://opendatacommunities.org/def/concept/folders/themes/housing-market>

Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/help-to-buy-mortgage-guarantee-scheme-quarterly-statistics>

Help to Buy: ISA <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/official-statistics-on-the-help-to-buy-isa-scheme>

The Government publishes cumulative totals on a quarterly basis by local authority for:

Help to Buy: Equity Loan <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/help-to-buy-equity-loan-and-newbuy-statistics>

Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/help-to-buy-mortgage-guarantee-scheme-quarterly-statistics>

Help to Buy: ISA <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-isa-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2015-to-30-september-2016>

■ Neighbourhood Development Plans: Appeals

Mims Davies:

[64289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what proportion of planning applications which are contrary to an adopted neighbourhood plan and that have gone to an inspector's decision are decided in favour of that plan.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 23 February 2017]: We do not hold the information requested.

An adopted neighbourhood plan is part of the Development Plan for an area. Statute requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Such material considerations can be wide-ranging though must be related to planning. Where a proposal is judged to be contrary to the Development Plan, the decision maker (Inspector) must then apply judgment to the weight that those considerations should attract in deciding whether to approve permission. S/he may grant permission if s/he judges the considerations to outweigh the conflict with the Development Plan policy.

■ Non-domestic Rates**Diana Johnson:****[65203]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how the transitional relief scheme for business rate revaluation will be funded; and what assessment he has made of how that relief scheme will affect businesses in northern England.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The information the Hon Member has requested is included in the Government's response to the consultation on the transitional relief scheme, published online at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-rates-revaluation-2017>

Kevin Hollinrake:**[65204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the changes in business rates on businesses located in areas where there is population of (a) 10,000 or less and (b) 3,000 or less.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The effect of the revaluation of business rates on businesses in areas where there is population of 10,000 or less and 3,000 or less will depend on the specific circumstances and location of the relevant property. A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to properties which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Coventry South**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[65032]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to protect small and micro businesses from closure in Coventry South constituency as a result of the planned increase in business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to properties which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ Non-domestic Rates: East Riding**Diana Johnson:****[65057]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of businesses in (a) Hull and (b) the East Riding of Yorkshire

that will see their business rates (i) increase and (ii) decrease relative to previous years as a result of business rates revaluation.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The effect of the revaluation of business rates on businesses in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire will depend on the specific circumstances and location of the relevant property. A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to properties which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Rural Areas**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[65225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to provide support to businesses in rural areas affected by increases in business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to businesses, including those in rural areas, which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Small Businesses**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[65228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Prime Minister of 22 February 2017, how the hardest cases of small businesses that are particularly affected by the business rates revaluation will be defined and identified; how appropriate relief will be calculated; for how long such relief will apply; how much new funding will be made available for transitional relief; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to properties which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Southwark**

Neil Coyle:

[\[65763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of businesses in Southwark which will be able to access transitional support to help manage proposed business rates increases.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Eligibility for transitional support will depend on the specific circumstances and location of the relevant property. A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to properties which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Sports**Justin Tomlinson:**[\[65028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether transitional funding will be made available to community and amateur sports clubs that will be affected by the increase in business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Rateable values are set independently of Ministers by the Valuation Office Agency.

Community and amateur sports clubs already receive a mandatory 80 per cent relief on their business rates and local authorities have discretion to top this up. The Government has put in place a £3.6 billion package of transitional relief to support the minority of businesses that do face an increase. We are working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to those businesses facing the steepest increases and we expect to be able to make an announcement on this at Budget.

■ Personal Care Services: Non-domestic Rates**John Mc Nally:**[\[65765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of business rate revaluations on the hair and beauty industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The effect of the revaluation of business rates on businesses in the hair and beauty industry will depend on the specific circumstances and location of the relevant property. A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support to properties which face an increase in rates. My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget.

■ Social Rented Housing**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[64288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the (a) total number of social housing units to be built and (b) change in the number of social housing units that will be available for rent during this Parliament.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 23 February 2017]: At Autumn Statement, we announced an expansion of the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAHP) 2016-21, with an additional £1.4 billion investment, increasing the overall budget to £7.1 billion that will deliver 225,000 affordable housing starts by March 2021.

The expanded programme now allows a wider range of products and so the actual tenure split will depend on bids received. This programme flexibility enables providers to have the agility to respond to local needs and markets – building the right homes in the right places.

Figures showing the total stock of properties for rent from local authorities or private registered providers are available in live table 104

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

■ Social Services**Mr Chuka Umunna:****[64733]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much (a) the Government and (b) local authorities in England spent on adult social care in each year since 2010 by region.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 24 February 2017]: Local authorities spend on adult social care is financed through locally raised and retained income such as Council Tax and Business Rates and from centrally distributed revenue streams, such as the Better Care Fund, Revenue Support Grant and specific grants to local authorities and other organisations.

It is not possible to estimate all the elements of spend that go towards providing care from of each of these central government funding streams.

Information on adult social care spending by each and all local authorities in England is published on the Department's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>

DCLG has not produced statistics at regional level since 2012, as per Ministerial Statement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/local-statistics>

■ Social Services: Finance**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[64893]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect on the funding of adult social care of the reclassification of new homes bonus as an adult social care grant.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 24 February 2017]: Local authorities choose how much to spend on social care in their area, drawing on income from local taxes and national grants. The Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed that will provide an additional £240 million to fund adult social care through the Adult Social Care Support Grant in 2017-18, funded by reforms to the New Homes Bonus. This funding will be used to support immediate pressures being experienced by authorities delivering adult social care and will be distributed as a one-off grant allocated according to the adult social care Relative Needs Formula. This is in addition to measures to direct funding to social care announced at the 2015 Spending Review, including the improved Better Care Fund grant, which were partly funded from reforms to the New Homes Bonus.

■ **Victoria Tower Gardens****Sir Edward Leigh:**[\[65029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what proportion of Victoria Tower Gardens will be removed from the use of local residents on a (a) temporary and (b) permanent basis; and what assessment he has made of the extent to which security issues are likely to cause disruption to the subsequent use of Victoria Tower Gardens by local residents.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government launched an international design competition for a new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in September 2016 and this is still underway. A jury will select a winning design team in the coming months. The winning design team will work with Government in the months following to further develop their concept design, reflecting comments from technical experts and the general public. The competition brief is clear that the final design should improve the landscape qualities of Victoria Tower Gardens, while respecting and preserving the character and existing use of the Gardens as a public park, including for the use of local residents. The ten submitted designs include an underground learning centre.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **Culture: Finance****Tracy Brabin:**[\[65661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on funding of UK organisations specialising in heritage of the UK leaving the EU.

Tracy Brabin:[\[65662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on funding of UK organisations specialising in arts of the UK leaving the EU.

Tracy Brabin:

[\[65663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on funding of UK organisations specialising in culture of the UK leaving the EU.

Tracy Brabin:

[\[65664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect on the British film industry of the UK leaving the EU; and if she will make a statement.

Matt Hancock:

The UK's negotiations for exiting the EU are complex and the Government is focused on securing the best deal for Britain. Together with the Department for Exiting the EU, we are analysing all the impacts of leaving the EU, looking at over 50 sectors. Once we have left the EU, decisions on how taxpayers' money will be spent will be made in the UK. There may be European programmes in which we might want to participate, but this will be a decision for the UK as we negotiate the new arrangements.

■ **Data Protection: Fines**

Patricia Gibson:

[\[64780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, on what date she plans to publish her consultation on legislative proposals on the accountability of named directors of firms responsible for breaches of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations and the related imposition of fines for such breaches by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Matt Hancock:

We intend to issue a consultation during this session of Parliament on making company directors and those in similar positions, accountable for breaches of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003, in relation to direct marketing. The proposed measure would give the Information Commissioner a power to impose Civil Monetary Penalties (CMP) of up to £500,000 on those in positions of responsibility in all forms of corporate entity.

■ **Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Procurement**

Jon Trickett:

[\[64995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many civil servants of her Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Matt Hancock:

It is the responsibility of individual teams across the Department to manage contracts and maintain the appropriate level of oversight consistent with the value, strategic importance and levels of risk associated with individual contracts.

■ Schools: Sports

Justin Tomlinson:

[65121]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on increasing the number of children participating in sport in schools.

Tracey Crouch:

Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people, particularly those who are currently least active or from under-represented groups, have the best opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity.

The Secretary of State regularly meets the Secretary of State for Education. Our Departments work closely together on school sport, including through the Ministerial School Sport Board which I attend along with the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Innovation.

■ Speaker's Commission On Digital Democracy

Cat Smith:

[65031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the recommendations of the WebRoots Democracy report, Democracy 2.0: Hitting refresh on the Digital Democracy Commission, published on 26 January 2017, whether the Government plans to commission a review on the widespread internet abuse of politicians and citizens online; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) young people leave school digitally literate and (b) adults of all ages are educated in digital literacy.

Matt Hancock:

I announced on 27 February that we would lead a cross-Government initiative on internet safety. I will be convening a series of round-table discussions with social media companies, technology firms, young people, charities and mental health experts to examine online risks and how to tackle them. The round tables are also expected to examine concerns around issues like trolling and other aggressive behaviour which impact on politicians and citizens more generally.

The Department for Education (DfE) launched the new computing curriculum, includes digital literacy, in September 2014. DfE has provided additional funding for digital skills through The Good Things Foundation, funding 680,000 people since 2014.

Government is also introducing a digital entitlement to ensure that publicly funded digital training to people who are over the age of 19 and do not have such skills.

DEFENCE■ **Air Force: Secondment****Ms Margaret Ritchie:**[\[65757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Air Force personnel are on secondment to BAE Systems in Saudi Arabia; what the role of such personnel is; and what the cost to the public purse of that secondment is.

Harriett Baldwin:

As at 28 February 2017 the total number of RAF personnel on secondment with BAE Systems in Saudi Arabia is 22. These personnel are in aircraft engineering support and aircrew instructor training roles.

RAF seconded personnel are paid directly by BAE Systems therefore there is no cost to the public purse.

■ **Armed Forces: Body Armour****Nia Griffith:**[\[65602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which regiments have received Virtus body armour.

Nia Griffith:[\[65603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many individual service personnel have received custom-fitted Virtus body armour.

Harriett Baldwin:

As at 28 February 2017, 20,407 sets of Virtus body armour have been issued to land forces. Information on how many of these have been issued by units to individual personnel could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

As at 28 February 2017, the following units have received Virtus body armour:

40 Commando Royal Marines

42 Commando Royal Marines

45 Commando Royal Marines

1 Assault Group Royal Marines

24 Commando Regiment Royal Engineers

29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery

30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines

Commando Logistic Regiment Royal Marines

Headquarters 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines

Royal Marines Reserves Bristol

Royal Marines Reserves London

Royal Marines Reserves Mersey
Royal Marines Reserves Scotland
Commando Training Centre Royal Marines
Headquarters 16 Air Assault Brigade
Headquarters Force Troops Command
1st Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Brigade
7 Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery
The Royal Dragoon Guards
The Queen's Royal Hussars
The King's Royal Hussars
The Light Dragoons
12 Regiment Royal Artillery
26 Regiment Royal Artillery
22 Engineer Regiment
23 Parachute Engineer Regiment
26 Engineer Regiment
32 Engineer Regiment
35 Engineer Regiment
101 Engineer Regiment (EOD)
1st Battalion Grenadier Guards
1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
1st Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment
1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment
1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment
2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment
1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment
2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment
2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment

1st Battalion The Royal Welsh
2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment
3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment
2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles
2nd Battalion The Rifles
3rd Battalion The Rifles
4th Battalion The Rifles
5th Battalion The Rifles
3 Regiment Army Air Corps
13 Air Assault Support Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
16 Medical Regiment
7 Air Assault Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Special Operations Regiment Royal Military Police
The Royal Wessex Yeomanry
4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment
216 (Parachute) Signal Squadron
Pathfinders Platoon
4th Battalion the Parachute Regiment
Infantry Battle School
Infantry Training Centre (Catterick)
Support Weapons School (Warminster)
Infantry Trials and Development Unit (ITDU)
RAF Regiment
2503 (County of Lincoln) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force
2620 (County of Norfolk) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force
2622 (Highland) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force
2623 (East Anglian) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force
RAF Instructor Training Flight
Defence HUMINT Unit

Nia Griffith:

[65604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much the roll-out of the Virtus body armour has cost; and how much he expects the total cost of the roll-out to be.

Harriett Baldwin:

The cost to date of the Virtus system is £71 million and the total cost is estimated to be circa £228 million (both figures are inclusive of VAT).

Nia Griffith:[\[65606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect that Virtus body armour has on the ability of service personnel to use (a) equipment and (b) vehicles effectively.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Virtus system was fully and successfully evaluated during extensive human factors, equipment and vehicle compatibility trials.

Nia Griffith:[\[65607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the roll-out of Virtus body armour to be complete.

Harriett Baldwin:

There have been 20,407 sets of Virtus body armour issued, with further sets to be issued, and the full operating capability for Virtus to occur in 2015.

■ **Army****Caroline Lucas:**[\[65447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Written Statement HLWS366, on Strategic Defence and Security Review - Army, whether the operations and activities of the Army's new Specialised Infantry Battalions will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and the War Powers Convention (a) in general and (b) when those battalions are operating alongside Special Forces.

Mike Penning:

Normal policy and procedures for regular Army units will apply to Specialised Infantry Battalions. Members of regular units are only subject to the same disclosure policy as the Special Forces when they fall under the operational command of the Director of Special Forces.

■ **Iraq Historic Allegations Team****Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[65628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the Royal Military Police are working on Iraq Historic Allegations Team investigations.

Mike Penning:

There are no members of the Royal Military Police working on Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) investigations. All IHAT investigations are the responsibility of the Royal Navy Police.

■ Iraq: Military Intervention

Johnny Mercer:

[\[65616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government paid compensation as a result of UK operations in Iraq to (a) Nassir Abd Al Zahra Al Zayj Al-Tamini, (b) Hussein Ali Kazhin Zabayain Al-Maliki, (c) A'la or Dhia Jabbar Al-Khazhair/Okthair, (d) Muhammad Hatu Karim Al-Garizi, (e) Musa Isma'il Al-Fartusi and (f) Nabil Al-Mawzani.

Mike Penning:

There is no record of any of the named individuals having brought claims for compensation against the Ministry of Defence as a result of UK operations in Iraq.

■ Syria: Military Intervention

Jim Shannon:

[\[65420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress Coalition forces have made on recapturing Raqqa.

Mike Penning:

The Coalition are providing air support to Syrian Democratic Forces who began operations to isolate Daesh's stronghold in Raqqa on 5 November 2016. Since then, Syrian Democratic Forces have made considerable progress and are now less than ten kilometres from the outskirts of the city, increasingly constraining Daesh's freedom of manoeuvre. It will continue to be a long and difficult fight but Daesh have already lost some 30% of the territory they once controlled in Syria and our strategy to take the fight to Daesh in both Syria and Iraq is working.

■ Yemen: Armed Forces

Alison Thewliss:

[\[65581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel of each service of the armed forces are stationed in Yemen.

Mike Penning:

No UK military personnel are currently stationed in Yemen.

EDUCATION

■ Adult Education

Gordon Marsden:

[\[65745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of adult learners who are currently without a provider to complete their qualifications.

Gordon Marsden:

[\[65748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Skills Funding Agency on the number of adult learners who are currently without a provider to

complete their qualifications after the failure by a previous provider to deliver their courses.

Robert Halfon:

The Skills Funding Agency and the Student Loans Company regularly provide details to the Department on the number of learners that were studying at providers that no longer are operating in the loans programme. Those providers represent only 1% of the total number of providers.

The number of learners currently affected is around 400. The transfer process is progressing with learner involvement and our priority is to support learners to complete their learning. We are monitoring on a weekly basis as learners are transferred to new providers.

Gordon Marsden: [\[65746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Skills Funding Agency on its attempts to find alternative providers for adult learners affected by the liquidation of John Frank Training.

Robert Halfon:

The Skills Funding Agency has identified possible alternative providers for all Advanced Learner Loans funded learners previously at John Frank Training Limited. The transfer process is progressing with learner involvement.

Gordon Marsden: [\[65749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding she plans to make available for travel to those adult learners who have to move to another provider as a result of the failure of the existing provider to deliver their courses.

Robert Halfon:

Providers in the Advanced Learner Loans programme are allocated Bursary Funds by the Skills Funding Agency. This funding is to assist those in financial need to meet costs associated with their learning, including travel costs.

Providers may request an increase to their bursary allocation if they require additional funding to support loans-funded learners with a range of circumstances.

■ **Children's Centres**

Dan Jarvis: [\[65656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which local authorities have given notice to her Department of plans to dispose of grant-funded assets under the requirements of the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Grant.

Dan Jarvis: [\[65657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department recovered from local authorities disposing of grant-funded assets under the requirements of the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Grant in each of the last three years.

Caroline Dineneage:

The decision whether to dispose of grant funded assets is a local issue. Where local authorities dispose of or change the use of buildings or other assets funded wholly or partly through Sure Start capital grants, they must repay the money through the claw-back process. Details of the monitoring arrangements in place regarding claw-back rules are set out at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-24/28205/>. Further details of terms and conditions regarding claw-back are available in Sure Start capital guidance published by the department in December 2009 at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273740/capital_guidance.pdf.

A list of the local authorities who have notified the department of plans to dispose of, transfer or change the use of assets funded by Sure Start capital grants is available at attached. We do not hold a separate list of those local authorities who notified the department of plans to dispose of assets.

A list of the amount of money that has been recovered in each of the last three years from local authorities disposing of, transferring or changing the use of grant-funded assets is set out below

YEAR	AMOUNT RECOVERED
2014	£0
2015	£88,642
2016	£0[1]

[1]The department did not clawback any funding in 2016 but decisions about whether or not to claw-back funding from three of the local authorities who notified the department of the disposal, transfer or change of use of Sure Start grant-funded in 2016 are still pending.

Attachments:

1. List of Local authorities [PQ 65656 - List of LAs.xlsx]

■ Department for Education: Procurement**Jon Trickett:****[64996]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many civil servants of her Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Caroline Dineneage:

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

■ Early Years Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group

Louise Haigh: [\[65356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Early Years Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group is still operational.

Robert Halfon:

All nine standards that the Early Years Trailblazer was approved to develop in March 2014 remain in the development stage. We are committed to ensuring that all standards and assessment plans are developed in a timely manner so that they can be available to employers and apprentices to use. We have therefore notified the Trailblazer that we have withdrawn their right to develop these standards.

We remain committed to supporting employers wishing to develop standards for use in the Early Years sector.

The Children and Young People's Workforce framework for England, at levels 2 and 3, remains in place which includes the Early Years Educator pathway, at level 3. This framework will remain in place until new early years standards are in place.

■ Maria Strizzolo

Helen Goodman: [\[65229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2017 to Question 59416 on Maria Strizzolo, what circumstances created an urgent need; and what specific skills Ms Strizzolo possessed which qualified her appointment under Exception 1 of the Civil Service Commissioner's recruitment principles.

Caroline Dinenage:

Maria Strizzolo possessed the specific skills required for the post which were to be able to work effectively with external partners and have strong organisational skills. While these skills did exist in the Skills Funding Agency, they were already being utilised fully and there was a short term need for additional staff with these skills. The post filled was therefore temporary and filled on that basis, in line with Exception 1 of the Civil Service Commissioner's recruitment principles.

■ Mathematics and Science: Teachers

Rosie Cooper: [\[65846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help recruit and retain specialist teachers in mathematics and science-based subjects.

Nick Gibb:

Secondary postgraduate recruitment is at its highest level since 2011/12, showing that teaching continues to be an attractive career choice among graduates. It is encouraging that we have the highest number of trainee teachers in science and maths since 2011/12. Physics, traditionally the hardest subject area in which to recruit, is up 15% on 2015/16.

We recognise the challenge, particularly as the economy continues to strengthen, pupil numbers grow and the demand for talented graduates increases. This is why we continue to focus on recruiting the best graduates, particularly in the core academic subjects such as science and maths.

Physics trainees receive the highest bursary levels available, reflecting the fact it is a key priority for the Government, and physics graduates are in high demand across the economy. Physics trainees with a first receive a £30,000 bursary, and those trainees with a 2:1 or 2:2 in Maths or Physics receive a £25,000 bursary. Chemistry trainees with a first receive a £25,000 and those with a 2:1 or 2:2 receiving £20,000. Biology trainees receive a bursary of up to £15,000.

We are also continuing to fund the prestigious scholarship schemes in maths and physics.

Additionally, the Government has committed £67m to the STEM Teacher Supply Package. This package consists of a number of strands, which aim to improve pupil outcomes in mathematics and physics by improving the quality of teaching in the classroom. The package focuses on achieving this by recruiting a higher proportion of new teachers with specialist STEM backgrounds and providing qualified teachers who are not STEM specialists, but who have a firm grounding in a STEM, with subject specialism training.

Teacher retention has remained broadly stable for the past 20 years, with around 90% of teachers working in a state-funded school the year after qualifying, and around seven out of ten teachers still in the classroom after five years. We recognise the importance of supporting schools to retain good teachers, which is why we have taken action in the areas that teachers tell us are most likely to cause them to consider leaving the profession, such as reducing unnecessary workload and tackling poor pupil behaviour.

■ Pre-school Education

Lucy Powell:

[\[64678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the extent of any early years development gap measured by the Early Years Foundation Stage between those children eligible for free school meals and their peers (a) nationally and (b) in each local authority for the last 12 months for which data is available.

Caroline Dineneage:

A copy of the data requested has been placed in the Library.

The results from the 2016 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) show that 54% of children with free school meal eligibility achieved a good level of development in their reception year, compared to 72% of all other children. This gap has continued to narrow year on year – from 19.0 percentage points in 2013 to 17.3 percentage points in 2016.

We know, however, there is more to do, and that is why social mobility is at the heart of the Government's agenda, and why we are investing a record amount in childcare - £6 billion per year by the end of this Parliament.

We are working hard to ensure parents and children - wherever they live in England - have access to high quality early years education places through the funded 15 hour entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds and for all three- and four-year-olds.

The Early Years Pupil Premium provides over £300 per eligible child to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children. The Department is also investing £72m to address social mobility challenges in 12 Opportunity Areas across the country. Opportunity Areas will take a life course approach that runs from the early years through to university access and technical education

Jess Phillips:

[65066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the total number of nursery places created by free schools is since such schools were established.

Caroline Dinanage:

The January 2016 school census shows that 520 pupils were attending nurseries within a free school.

The census is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

■ Pre-school Education: Admissions

Lucy Powell:

[64677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number and proportion of eligible two-year-olds who have not taken up a funded early education place (a) nationally and (b) in each local authority.

Caroline Dinanage:

A copy of the data requested has been placed in the Library. The data tells us that 68% of two year olds are taking up their entitlement to funded early learning, an increase of 10% from January 2015.

■ Primary Education: Standards

Lilian Greenwood:

[64215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the international evidential basis is for the validity and reliability of an accountability progress measure using an assessment at the start of school as a baseline which is directly linked to an appropriate content domains at the end of Key Stage 2.

Nick Gibb:

There is evidence from the University of Durham that a baseline in reception can be used to measure progress by the end of primary school[1].

Different countries use different assessment systems to evaluate school quality and the progress made by pupils. Baseline assessments are used in a number of countries for a wide range of purposes; including demonstrating the value of early years and understanding what children know when they start school.

The Department will soon be launching a consultation on primary assessment and the implications for accountability. This will cover key issues, including the best starting point to measure the progress that children make in primary school.

[1] <http://www.cem.org/primary>

■ Pupils: Vocational Guidance

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[65842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps are being taken to ensure that pupils from all school types are able to access careers information, advice and guidance; and how such access is being monitored and assessed.

Robert Halfon:

Helping all young people to get the careers education and guidance they need to climb the ladder of opportunity is crucial to delivering real social mobility. All maintained schools and pupil referral units have a legal duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for year 8-13 pupils on the full range of education and training options, including apprenticeships. Statutory guidance underpinning the duty is clear that schools should have a careers strategy embedded within a clear framework to improve outcomes for pupils. All academies are encouraged to follow the guidance as a statement of good practice and some have a specific careers requirement written into their funding agreements.

We are investing £90 million over this Parliament to ensure that every young person has access to advice and inspiration to fulfil their potential. This includes further funding for the Careers & Enterprise Company to continue the excellent work it has started. The Company has connected over 1,500 schools and colleges with an Enterprise Adviser, helping to increase the level of employer input into their careers and enterprise programmes.

The quality of careers provision in schools is monitored by Ofsted. The Ofsted common inspection framework was revised in September 2015. Careers provision features within three of the four graded judgements made by inspectors conducting standard school inspections.

Destination measures also help schools to be held to account locally. As of January 2017, we have included destination data in national performance tables. This will help ensure that schools place an even greater importance on helping their pupils to transition successfully to positive destinations.

We want to go further to expand the quality and quantity of careers advice. In the Industrial Strategy Green Paper, published on 23 January 2017, we set out our intention to publish a comprehensive careers strategy for all ages later this year.

■ Sign Language: GCSE

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[65487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans her Department has to offer British sign language as an option at GCSE.

Nick Gibb:

There are no plans to introduce additional GCSE subjects.

■ Students: Loans

Gordon Marsden: [\[65747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will meet with the (a) Skills Funding Agency and (b) Student Loan Company to discuss the feasibility of writing off student loan debts for adult students unable to continue courses as a result of the failure of the course provider.

Robert Halfon:

Our priority is to help ensure learners can continue with their courses with minimal disruption. We are actively working with the Skills Funding Agency and Student Loans Company to identify suitable alternative training providers or colleges with whom learners can complete their studies, and to ensure they do not lose out from any transfer. We are committed to finding a solution for each learner and making the process as smooth as possible.

Where there may ultimately be no viable alternative providers available for some learners to complete their study, we will consider what might be done to avoid these learners being unfairly disadvantaged.

■ Teachers: Training

Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods: [\[65627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) formal and (b) informal consultation her Department conducted to inform the criteria determining which universities are awarded a (i) multi-year and (ii) single year allocation of initial teacher training places.

Nick Gibb:

The criteria used to determine the allocations universities received are set out on pages 7-8 of the 2017/18 allocations methodology, published in September 2016. The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) actively engaged with stakeholders, including relevant sector bodies, in open and constructive dialogue while building the policy on multi-year allocations. Last year the NCTL held 42 Initial Teacher Training Advisory Group (ITTAG) and regional network meetings and will continue to do so to improve the allocations process.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Animal Welfare****Mrs Theresa Villiers:**[\[64983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her Department's policy to ensure that maintaining high standards of animal welfare is a priority in future trade negotiations on food and agriculture.

George Eustice:

This government has a manifesto commitment to push for high animal welfare standards to be incorporated into international trade agreements.

■ Avian Influenza: Disease Control**Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**[\[65760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect on free-range producers of the definition of new avian flu higher risk areas; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (of strain H5N8) has been circulating in Europe since the autumn of 2016. There have been 10 confirmed cases in poultry in the UK and several findings in wild birds.

As part of our Department's continued measures to control and eradicate H5N8, a new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone was put in place on 28 February. This zone continues to require that all keepers of poultry and captive birds observe heightened biosecurity requirements regardless of their location. Subject to these measures being put in place, the majority of keepers will no longer be required to house their birds.

Within England, there are some areas that are at a higher risk of H5N8 due to their proximity to substantial inland or coastal bodies of water where wild waterfowl collect. The identification of these areas was based on expert advice in regards to the latest veterinary and ornithological data and has been reviewed by leading experts. In these Higher Risk Areas, which will cover around 25 per cent of poultry premises, mandatory housing or the full range netting of outside areas will be required. This may temporarily result in the loss of Free Range status for keepers in these areas unless they apply netting of range, rather than housing.

During this unprecedented period of high risk, the Secretary of State has taken a decision which is based on the best scientific and veterinary advice in order to control disease and protect our poultry industry. Effective disease control will always be Defra's priority: disease outbreaks cause birds to suffer, damage businesses and cost the UK taxpayer millions. No significant disruption to the supply of Free Range eggs after 28 February is anticipated.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Brexit**Caroline Lucas:****[65432]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the terms of reference are for her Department's EU Exit Programme; how many full-time equivalent civil servants are working on that Programme; and what budget has been allocated to that Programme for each of the next two years.

George Eustice:

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.

The Department has set up an EU Exit Programme led by a Director General to identify and coordinate work stemming from EU Exit across the Defra group. EU exit work is currently undertaken in all policy directorates in the Department, and in some corporate services areas. It is not possible to give an accurate figure of FTE civil servants working on the programme, given its extensive impact, nor to give a discrete figure regarding budget allocations to EU Exit.

■ Fisheries**Oliver Colvile:****[65026]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the economic costs to the UK of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (a) globally and (b) in the Western Indian Ocean.

George Eustice:

The UK Government has made no specific assessment of the economic cost to the UK of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing either globally or in the West Indian Ocean. IUU poses a threat to the economic livelihood for many countries with consequences for the marine environment. The UK fulfils its IUU obligations to prevent trade in illegally caught fish by prohibiting the import of fish from countries, identified by the European Union, as not supporting sustainable fisheries.

In 2009, prior to the implementation of the regulation, the European Commission commissioned an evaluation report on the expected impacts of the EU IUU Regulation on third countries. This report aimed to help third countries and the EU access the training requirements to implement this measure successfully, and is available at

https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/iuu_consequences_2009_en.pdf.

■ Fisheries: Exclusive Economic Zone**Melanie Onn:****[65163]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the UK obtains exclusive fishing rights up to 200 miles from the UK coast.

George Eustice:

When it leaves the EU, the UK will control access to fisheries in the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone and will manage those waters in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

■ Flood Control**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[65667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of long-term flood resilience strategies.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

To assess how the country can be better protected from future flooding and extreme weather events the Government established the National Flood Resilience Review (NFRR). It identified a number of actions to strengthen our resilience. Good progress is being made on the implementation of these recommendations. All infrastructure companies have completed initial assessments of their vulnerable sites for suitability for temporary flood defences. As a result companies have invested heavily in resilience measures to prepare for this winter.

The Government is working with utility companies to improve permanent defences in the longer term. This is being overseen by an inter-Ministerial group which has been established to oversee flooding policy, including the implementation of the NFRR recommendations.

■ Flood Control: West Lancashire**Rosie Cooper:**[\[65848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many grant-in-aid applications for flood prevention measures for properties in West Lancashire were received by her Department in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17; and how many such applications were (i) successful and (ii) unsuccessful in each of those years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Property resilience funding is offered to households affected by flooding to improve resilience during future flood events. This is not covered by Grant in Aid which funds flood resilience projects or schemes managed by local Flood Response Management Authorities.

No property resilience funding was applied for during 2014/15 in West Lancashire.

The numbers we have are running totals. In 2015/16 58 applications for funding were made in West Lancashire. 18 of these were approved by end of the financial year.

By the end of the financial year 2016/17, 180 applications for funding had been received in total in West Lancashire. 148 have been approved. 32 applications had not been confirmed as accepted by the 7th February 2017. This was the last report run.

■ Marine Environment: Litter

Kerry McCarthy: [\[65619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if the Government will participate in the UN Clean Seas global campaign on marine litter.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We have yet to decide whether to formally participate in this campaign. Our proposals, however, to ban the use of microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products as well as our wider approach to addressing marine litter are consistent with the aims of the campaign.

■ Microplastics: Cosmetics

Henry Smith: [\[64971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the planned timetable is for (a) consulting on and (b) bringing into effect a ban on plastic microbeads in cosmetic and personal care products.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

In September 2016 the UK government announced its intention to ban microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products. We are currently running a consultation on our proposals, which end on 28th February 2017. Subject to the results of the consultation we anticipate bringing in legislation for England by October 2017, with a ban on manufacture beginning in January 2018 and a ban on sale in June 2018.

■ RSPCA: Prosecutions

Julian Knight: [\[64920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to remove the right of the RSPCA to prosecute cases of animal cruelty.

George Eustice:

Anyone may bring forward a prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Government does not intend to change that position.

In the light of public criticisms of its role, the RSPCA set up the Wooler Review, which made 33 recommendations which the RSPCA have already assessed and considered for action. We believe that the RSPCA should be given the opportunity to implement the recommendations of the Wooler Review and demonstrate its commitment to responding to the concerns that have been raised.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Agriculture and Service Industries: Employment****Mr Graham Allen:**[\[65366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with reference to his speech in Tallinn of 21 February 2017, what steps the Government plans to take to promote jobs in the hospitality and agricultural industries to British citizens for fill potential vacancies after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

Supporting our food and farming industries and protecting the environment will form an important part of our exit from the EU. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will be engaging with industry to inform their initial thinking as part of the wider stakeholder engagement to help shape future agriculture and land use policy, as well as our 25 year Food and Farming Plan.

In addition, tourism and hospitality are a vital part of our economy. In 2015 foreign visitors contributed £22bn to our economy and the industry as a whole supports some 1.6 million jobs. Since the referendum result, Government has met a range of representatives from the hospitality industry. We are confident our exit presents opportunities for growth in hospitality and we will work closely with the industry to realise these.

As we conduct our negotiations, it must be a priority to regain more control of the numbers of people who come here from Europe. We are considering very carefully the options that are open to us for our future immigration system. As part of that it is important that we understand the impacts on the different sectors of the economy and the labour market from any changes that we make.

■ Brexit**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[64975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if the Government will publish its letter to trigger Article 50 for public scrutiny after it has been issued to the European Commission.

Mr Robin Walker:

When we trigger Article 50, it will need to be done through a communication to the European Council.

The Government will continue to be as open and transparent as possible, as long as this does not undermine the UK's negotiating position.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[65518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of leaving the Common Commercial Policy and the Common External Tariff as part of his Department's negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

We want the UK to have the greatest possible barrier-free trade with the EU, delivered through a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement.

After we have left the EU, we want to ensure that we can take advantage of the opportunity to negotiate our own preferential trade agreements around the world. We will not be bound by the EU's Common External Tariff or participate in the Common Commercial Policy. But we do want to ensure that cross-border trade with the EU is as frictionless and seamless as possible. These are our guiding objectives for the future customs arrangements with the EU.

Dan Jarvis:[\[65658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Government plans to publish the Great Repeal Bill before the next Queen's Speech.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government intends to introduce the Great Repeal Bill in the next Parliamentary session.

The Government will also bring forward a White Paper on the Great Repeal Bill that will set out our approach to giving effect to withdrawal on the domestic statute book. We will ensure it is published in time to allow Parliament sufficient time to digest its contents in advance of introduction of the Great Repeal Bill in the next session.

■ Exports: Origin Marking**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[65537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the potential costs to British manufacturers of being subject to non-preferential rules of origin on exports to the EU after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

We want the UK to have the greatest possible barrier-free trade with the EU, delivered through a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement.

The Prime Minister has set out our intention to negotiate a new customs arrangement with the EU. We have an open mind about the form of that arrangement, but it is in both the UK and EU's interest that cross-border trade be as frictionless as possible. We will be aiming to minimise the impact of any additional customs procedures on goods trade between the UK and EU.

■ Government Chief Scientific Adviser**Dan Jarvis:**[\[65659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if he plans to appoint a Chief Science Adviser prior to the opening of the negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department continues to discuss with Sir Mark Walport, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, what more we should do to ensure that DExEU is accessing the very best scientific expertise.

There are several models for achieving this, and it is important for us to take into account DExEU's role as a co-ordinating department when considering what provisions to put in place.

The department is currently exploring these options, including considering the appointment of a Chief Scientific Adviser.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: LGBT People****Catherine West:**[\[64954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which Government Minister has responsibility for the protection of LGBT rights in the (a) overseas territories and (b) Crown Dependencies.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The protection and promotion of human rights, including LGB&T rights, are primarily the responsibility of the Overseas Territory and Crown Dependency governments. Baroness Anelay of St Johns is the Minister of State for the Overseas Territories, excluding the Falklands and Gibraltar, for which I am responsible. The Secretary of State for Defence is responsible for the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. The Attorney General is responsible for the Crown Dependencies'.

■ Fisheries: Indian Ocean**Oliver Colvile:**[\[65027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of risk to the security of UK citizens posed by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Western Indian Ocean.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the West Indian Ocean poses a limited security threat to British nationals, so we have not made a formal assessment.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Information Officers**Justin Madders:**[\[65109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 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.

Alok Sharma:

Communication is core to diplomacy and is a component of many roles in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO): it is therefore not possible to specify the exact number of staff who have a communications remit.

The FCO's central Communication Directorate had 88 staff on its UK based headcount as of 31 January 2017.

The Communication Directorate consists of four departments: a Media Office, a Campaigns and Engagement Department, a Digital Transformation Unit and a Counter Daesh Communications Department. Collectively they have responsibility for a range of activities to achieve the FCO's priorities of protecting our national security, generating economic growth and helping British people overseas. These include increasing Britain's influence in the world through sponsoring the British Council and the Marshall and Chevening Scholarships schemes, promoting trade and investment with the UK through activities on the GREAT Britain campaign and providing travel advice so British people can keep themselves safe when overseas.

Salary costs for the Communication Directorate from 2009/10 to 2015/16 inclusive were as follows:

YEAR	SALARY COSTS
2015/16	£3,025,594
2014/15	£3,243,852
2013/14	£2,801,066
2012/13	£2,498,697
2011/12	£3,070,242
2010/11	£3,552,733
2009/10	£3,593,416

Our management information system does not allow us to go back further than 2009/10. Sourcing equivalent data for the years 2006/7 – 2008/9 inclusive is therefore not available except at disproportionate cost.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Pay

Philip Davies:**[64166]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the (a) mean and (b) median pay was for staff in his Department who were (i) male, (ii) female, (iii) white, (iv) from an ethnic minority background, (v) disabled and (vi) non-disabled in the most recent year for which information is available, broken down by (A) full-time and (B) part-time workers.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Mean and median salaries for UKB staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office broken down by diversity characteristics and working pattern are at 31 January 2017:

	MEAN SALARY		MEDIAN SALARY	
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time
Female	£36,748	£35,471	£29,864	£29,716
Male	£41,658	£49,199	£34,357	£49,051
White	£41,404	£39,009	£34,004	£36,414
BME	£31,499	£30,904	£27,221	£23,657
Non Disabled	£39,521	£38,656	£32,000	£34,357
Disabled	£36,269	£36,463	£29,864	£33,289

Staff in the FCO are paid according to standard salary scales that apply equally to all staff. We have made progress in improving diversity in the most senior levels of the FCO which will reduce the current pay differences but we recognise there is still work to do.

The data above is taken from a snap shot of UKB staff data at 31 January 2017 and is representative of staff who have made a declaration of ethnicity and/or disability but does not include staff who do not wish to declare nor those who have made no declarations. Salaries for staff working part time are full time equivalent i.e. not pro rated for hours worked.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Procurement

Jon Trickett:

[\[64998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many civil servants of his Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Providing numbers of all staff who oversee all contracts in the FCO (for the UK and Overseas) could only be provided at disproportionate cost. For major departmental contracts that are delivered in or from the UK for the FCO worldwide, there are approximately 50 staff overseeing contracts.

■ Georgia: Human Rights

Stephen Gethins:

[\[65206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans his Department has to compile a human rights report on South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We monitor the situation closely but have no plans to compile our own such report.

■ **Iran: Israel****Jim Shannon:**[\[65418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions the Government has had with Iran on its policy towards Israel.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The reopening of our Embassy in Tehran in August 2015, and the subsequent upgrade in the relationship to Ambassadorial level in September 2016, provides us with the ability to discuss regularly a range of issues with the Iranian government, including regional affairs and to address areas including Iran's policy towards Israel.

■ **Islamic State: Syria****Patrick Grady:**[\[65626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of his predecessor of 2 December 2015, Official Report, column 323, on what occasions the Government has met its commitment to provide quarterly progress reports to the House on military action against ISIL in Syria; and whether the Government plans to continue making such reports to the House on a quarterly basis.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

In the 14 months since the 2 December 2015 vote to support airstrikes against Daesh targets in Syria, the Government has updated the House on four occasions: 16 December 2015, 8 February 2016, 24 May 2016, 3 November 2016. The next update is due soon. It is the intention of this Government to continue to update the House regularly on the progress of the counter Daesh campaign in Iraq and Syria for the foreseeable future.

■ **Religious Hatred****Justin Tomlinson:**[\[65122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle faith-based persecution in countries with a high level of such persecution.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

This Government remains firmly committed to the promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief in all countries. Through our bilateral work we lobby host governments to raise individual cases and highlight practices and laws that discriminate against people on the basis of their religion or belief. For example, the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) raised the rights of all Pakistani citizens, including religious minorities, during his visit to Pakistan in November 2016. Multilaterally, we work to sustain consensus on the adoption and implementation of two important Resolutions: the European Union's resolution on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation (OIC)'s resolution on Combating Religious Intolerance. We also support a number of projects through the FCO's Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights. For example, we support a network of human rights defenders in South Asia working on this priority. In October 2016 the FCO hosted a groundbreaking international conference to draw attention to the importance of freedom of religion or belief to global efforts to counter violent extremism.

HEALTH

■ Care Homes: Closures

Diana Johnson:

[\[64980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many (a) private and (b) local authority-controlled care homes were closed by the Care Quality Commission due to poor ratings in each year since 2009-10.

David Mowat:

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

The CQC has advised the following information:

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF CARE HOMES DE-ACTIVATED AS A RESULT OF ENFORCED DE-REGISTRATION OF THE PROVIDER BY THE CQC, BY LATEST OVERALL RATING WHERE APPLICABLE.

	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	No published overall rating	Total care homes de-activated due to enforced de-registration of the provider
2014/15	0	0	1	33	34
2015/16	1	3	28	20	52
2016/17	0	5	38	11	54
Total care homes for providers deregistered through enforcement	1	8	67	64	140

For the purposes of this Question, the CQC has included information relating to services which have been subject to enforced de-registration. There will be a number

of other care homes who voluntarily exited the market before being forcibly removed by the CQC.

The CQC is not currently able to separate private and council-run services within adult social care. The CQC is currently looking at the way in which it records and reports on adult social care information.

However, the table shows the number of locations closed as a result of the enforced de-registration of the provider. In some cases, these will be true closures where the care home service is no longer open or operating. In others it may be that the care home has appeared to close but the service continues under a new registration due to a legal entity change or a change in the provider.

Enforced de-registration is only recorded at provider level and the CQC cannot currently report on locations closed through enforcement if the provider de-registered voluntarily or remains registered (if one of a provider's locations is closed). Therefore, the table will not be an exhaustive list of the care homes the CQC has closed down; the actual figure will likely be higher.

■ Care Homes: Standards

Diana Johnson:

[\[64989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and what proportion of (a) independent and (b) local authority controlled care homes were rated (i) outstanding, (ii) good, (iii) requires improvement and (iv) inadequate in each year since 2009-10.

David Mowat:

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

Following an inspection, the CQC rates a provider on a four point scale running from outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. This gives patients and the public a fair, balanced and easy to understand assessment of performance of a provider. The CQC began rating adult social care providers in October 2014 following the introduction of its new inspection methodology.

The CQC has provided the following information:

The attached tables show the number and percentage of care homes rated by financial year.

The CQC is not currently able to separate private and council-run services within adult social care. The CQC is currently looking at the way in which it records and reports on adult social care information.

Data is shown in financial years from 2014/15 only as this is when the CQC began rating services. The CQC began rating adult social care services on 1 October 2014 which is why the figures for 2014/15 are lower than in other years.

A cumulative total for the number of rated care homes has been used as this provides a more accurate figure for the proportion of rated care homes.

Attachments:

1. PQ64989 [PQ64989 attached document.docx]

Diana Johnson:**[64990]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and what proportion of (a) independent and (b) local authority-controlled care homes were placed under special measures by the Care Quality Commission in each year since 2009-10.

David Mowat:

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

Since 1 April 2015, any adult social care provider rated "Inadequate" by the CQC has been placed in Special Measures. Such providers will have six months to improve. If they fail to do so, their registration may be cancelled and they will exit the market. If they show significant improvement at the six month point, they will have a further six months to demonstrate that they can maintain that improvement. If they do, they will come out of Special Measures.

NUMBER OF CARE HOMES WITH A PUBLISHED INSPECTION, BY
FINANCIAL YEAR OF INSPECTION

	2015-16	2016-17
Care homes placed in Special Measures with a published inspection ¹	353	418
Total care homes with a published inspection	9,462	7,108
Percentage of inspected care homes placed in Special Measures	4%	6%

¹ Includes inspections with the decision type of 'Continue Special Measures'. Some care homes were placed in Special Measures more than once and are counted within both financial years.

The CQC is not able to separate private and council-run services. We are currently looking at the way in which we record and report on adult social care information.

The CQC can only report on adult social care Special Measures from 1 April 2015 when it was introduced.

Diana Johnson:**[65063]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2017 to Question HL5363 on 20 February 2017, how many Care Quality Commission de-

registrations have taken place for (a) independent and (b) local authority-controlled care homes in each year from 2010-11 to 2017-18 for (i) England, (ii) Hull City Council and (iii) East Riding in Yorkshire Council.

David Mowat:

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

FINANCIAL YEAR OF DE-ACTIVATION	ENGLAND	EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE	KINGSTON UPON HULL
2010/11	31	0	0
2011/12	2,157	15	5
2012/13	1,358	10	5
2013/14	1,060	8	2
2014/15	1,291	7	1
2015/16	1,214	15	7
2016/17	1,382	7	8
Total	8,493	62	28

Note:

The figures provided represent the number of care homes that have de-activated. In some cases, these will be true closures where the care home service is no longer open or operating. In others however, it may be that the care home has appeared to close but continues to operate under new registration due to a legal entity change or a change in the provider. This means that the number of de-activations should not be used as an indication of the total number of care homes that have closed.

■ **Community Nurses: North West**

Julie Cooper:

[\[65767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many district nurses there are in (a) Lancashire and (b) the North West.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) Qualified District Nurses employed in the North West Health Education England (HEE) region and employed in Lancashire is shown in the table below. The November data is the most recent data available.

National Health Service Hospital and Community Health Services: Qualified District Nurses in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups in Lancashire and North West Health Education England region, as at 30 November 2016

	FTE	
	North West HEE Region	Lancashire
Qualified District Nurses	1,321	69

Source: NHS Digital

Lancashire includes data for all organisations which fall within the area of the NHS England Region (Local Office) of NHS England North (Lancashire).

■ Dental Services

Steve McCabe:

[\[65127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Local Government Association report, Tackling poor oral health in children: local government's public health role, published in April 2016, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of the rise in the number of hospital tooth extractions by dentistry services in each year since 2012-13.

Steve McCabe:

[\[65382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2017 to Question 62250, how much has been spent on adult tooth extraction in hospitals in each year since 2010.

David Mowat:

The cost of tooth extractions carried out in hospitals is assessed from reference costs.

The following table shows the estimated cost of tooth extractions for all patients in hospitals from 2012/13 to 2015/16 and for all adults from 2010/11 to 2015/16. The data covers all tooth extractions/removals.

Reference costs are the average unit costs to National Health Service trusts and NHS foundation trusts of providing defined services in a given financial year to NHS patients. Reference costs for acute care are collected by healthcare resource group, which are standard groupings of clinically similar treatments which use common levels of healthcare resource.

Reference Costs: Tooth extractions/removals 2010/11 to 2015/16

	ESTIMATED TOTAL COST £ MILLION					
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Extractions/Removal for all patients			117.0	123.4	129.5	131.6
Extractions/Removal for Adult	70.3	71.5	71.1	72.8	73.6	75.8

Source: Department of Health, Reference Costs

■ Department of Health: Brexit

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64545, what discussions he had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

David Mowat:

We, and other Departments, are working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union on all aspects of exiting the European Union.

■ Department of Health: Procurement

Jon Trickett:

[\[64999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many civil servants of his Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

David Mowat:

There are a number of policy teams across the Department who deal with contract management. There is a central contract management team in place who are responsible for overseeing this activity.

■ Department of Health: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[\[65559\]](#)

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

David Mowat:

The information requested that is held centrally is set out in the following table:

CATEGORY	PROPORTION OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT STAFF
Men	57%
Women	43%
Disabled	5%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	6%

Information is not held centrally on the social economic backgrounds of senior civil servants.

■ **Drugs: Allergies**

Alex Chalk:

[\[64976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps the Government is taking to make allergen-free drugs more widely available.

Nicola Blackwood:

No medicine is free from side effects and the balance of risks and benefits of medicines are carefully assessed at the time of licensing. Warnings about known side effects, including allergic reactions, are included in the product information for healthcare professionals (the Summary of Product Characteristics) and the Patient Information leaflet which accompanies the medicine. Ingredients (excipients) of known effect are declared on the outer packaging of licensed medicines. Anyone with an allergy should make this known during their discussion about their treatment with their pharmacist or doctor.

■ **Drugs: Licensing**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[65172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what evidence NHS England used to reach the decision to set the proposed budget impact threshold for new medicines at £20million.

Nicola Blackwood:

The proposed budget impact threshold is intended to help to ensure that technologies with a large budget impact can be introduced in a phased way that does not displace other effective treatments for NHS patients. NHS England has advised that the proposed budget impact threshold was based on consideration of the frequency and magnitude of high budget impact technologies that have recently received a recommendation from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). An analysis of positive technology appraisals published between June 2015 and June 2016 reveals that around 80% of new technologies recommended by NICE fell below the proposed budget impact threshold.

■ Drugs: Research

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[65207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of (a) NHS England and (b) NICE on the proposed £20million budget impact threshold for new medicines.

Nicola Blackwood:

Officials in the Department regularly meet with colleagues in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and NHS England to discuss a range of issues.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[65208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made on the effect of the proposed £20million budget impact threshold for new medicines on (a) cancer patients and (b) breast cancer patients.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England have recently consulted on the proposals and will carefully consider stakeholders' responses to the consultation before taking a decision on implementation. National Health Service patients will continue to have a right in the NHS constitution to drugs and treatments recommended in NICE technology appraisal guidance.

■ Eating Disorders

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[65669\]](#)

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

Nicola Blackwood:

£30 million is being invested each year this Parliament to improve children and young people's services for eating disorders. This new funding will be used to improve community based eating disorder services so patients are helped earlier and fewer need in-patient care.

NHS England will set a new access standard, to be achieved by 2020, that 95% of patients to be treated within four weeks of their first contact with a designated healthcare professional. For urgent cases, the standard will be one week. The first data demonstrating performance against this standard will be published in May 2017.

■ Epilepsy: Children

Catherine West: [\[65605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average waiting time is for children seeking access to the ketogenic diet for the treatment of epilepsy.

Catherine West: [\[65608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase public awareness of the benefits of the ketogenic diet for children with epilepsy.

Catherine West:

[65609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase access to the ketogenic diet for children with epilepsy in line with NICE guidelines.

Catherine West:

[65610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness among clinicians of the benefits of the ketogenic diet for children with epilepsy.

David Mowat:

A ketogenic diet (high in fat and low in carbohydrates) may reduce seizures for some children whose epilepsy cannot be successfully managed with drugs. Information for the public on the use of ketogenic diets in the treatment of epilepsy is available on the NHS Choices website and is also provided by Epilepsy Action and the Epilepsy Society, the two leading charities for the condition in England. Information provided via NHS Choices can be found at the following link:

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Epilepsy/Pages/Treatment.aspx

In January 2012 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) updated its clinical guideline The diagnosis and management of the epilepsies in adults and children in primary and secondary care, which sets out best practice for clinicians in the treatment of children with epilepsy. The update included a new recommendation that children and young people with epilepsy whose seizures have not responded to anti-epileptic drugs should be referred to an epilepsy specialist to consider treatment with a ketogenic diet. The decision to refer patients for consideration is a clinical matter. The NICE guidance can be found at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg137/resources/epilepsies-diagnosis-and-management-35109515407813

Information regarding the average waiting time for children seeking access to assessment for a ketogenic diet for the treatment of epilepsy is not collected.

■ General Practitioners

Jim Shannon:

[65385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure elderly people are able to book GP appointments over the phone.

David Mowat:

Practices typically offer a variety of ways to book appointments. Most commonly, patients book appointments either by telephone or by visiting the surgery. Some practices also allow patients to book and cancel appointments using an online booking system.

■ General Practitioners: Accident and Emergency Departments

Justin Tomlinson: [\[65123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GP surgeries are co-located in accident and emergency units.

Justin Tomlinson: [\[65124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GP surgeries are planned to be co-located in accident and emergency units in the next three years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information is not held centrally. There are several different models of co-located services (Urgent Care Centres, Walk-in Centres, Minor Injuries Units, other clinics) which exist across the National Health Service in England, and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with all systems to ensure there is streaming to primary care (and other specialities) from emergency departments as standard. The specific models implemented will vary depending on local circumstances.

■ General Practitioners: Finance

Steve McCabe: [\[65202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how the General Practice Resilience Programme fund has been allocated for 2016-17; and which clinical commissioning groups have received funding through that programme.

David Mowat:

NHS England has allocated £16 million under the General Practice Resilience Programme in 2016/17. The following table shows the breakdown of spend per region.

Responsibility for the programme rests with NHS England's local teams. NHS England does not routinely collect centrally the amount of funding passed through clinical commissioning groups, as central monitoring is focused on outcomes at individual practice level.

GENERAL PRACTICE RESILIENCE PROGRAMME

Local Team/Region/National	Allocation
Cheshire and Merseyside	£ 716,861
Cumbria and North East	£ 903,514
Lancashire	£ 425,752
Greater Manchester*	£ 823,699
Yorkshire and the Humber	£ 1,593,913
North Region:	£ 4,463,741

GENERAL PRACTICE RESILIENCE PROGRAMME

Central Midlands	£ 1,337,330
East	£ 1,238,288
North Midlands	£ 1,031,882
West Midlands	£ 1,230,738
Midlands and East Region:	£ 4,838,238
North East London	£ 1,004,483
North West London	£ 646,770
South London	£ 970,372
London Region:	£ 2,621,624
South Central	£ 1,053,258
South East	£ 1,315,623
South West	£ 916,871
Wessex	£ 790,646
South Region:	£ 4,076,398
National:	£16,000,000

* Share of programme funds devolved to
Greater Manchester Transformation Fund

■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

Mrs Theresa Villiers:

[64981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress has been made to date on recruiting 5,000 more GPs by 2020; and how many additional GPs he estimates will offer services in the Chipping Barnet constituency.

David Mowat:

The Government has committed to an extra 5,000 doctors in general practice by 2020, as part of a wider increase to the total workforce in general practice of 10,000.

NHS England and Health Education England are working together with the profession to increase the general practitioner (GP) workforce. This includes measures to boost

recruitment into general practice, encourage GPs to return to practice, and address the reasons why experienced GPs are considering leaving the profession.

Health Education England has implemented a range of improvements to increase the flexibility of the GP recruitment processes and enable maximum recruitment into GP speciality training. Health Education England reports that 3,019 new starters were recruited to GP training posts in 2016. This represents the highest number of GP trainees the National Health Service has ever recruited in to specialty training in general practice.

In October 2016, NHS England announced a package of improvements to the GP Induction and Refresher Scheme to make it easier and quicker for qualified doctors to return to general practice, this is supplemented by a campaign to encourage doctors to return. Over 200 are currently registered on the induction and refresher scheme. NHS England is also starting to approve local schemes to bring in suitably qualified and experienced doctors from overseas.

To support the retention of doctors NHS England has announced the launch of the GP Career Plus Scheme in 2017 to test a range of ways to offer flexibility and support for experienced GPs at risk of leaving general practice, this is in addition to the retained doctors scheme which offers funding to support doctors who can only work a limited number of sessions in general practice.

No central estimate has been made of the number of GPs that will offer services in the Chipping Barnet constituency. This is for the NHS to determine locally.

■ Health Services: Private Sector

Gavin Robinson:

[65141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the percentage change in the (a) cost and (b) number of patients receiving NHS treatment from private sector providers in each of the last 10 years.

Gavin Robinson:

[65142]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the proportion of patients currently receiving NHS treatment delivered by private sector providers.

Mr Philip Dunne:

[Holding answer 27 February 2017]: Data on the number of National Health Service patients receiving treatment from the private sector in England is not available. NHS Commissioner spending on private providers over the last 10 years is set out in the attached table.

A figure for the percentage of patients currently receiving NHS treatment delivered by private providers is not available. However, during 2015/16 3.4% of finished admission episodes and 6.1% of outpatient attendances were delivered by a non-NHS provider. This will include a range of non-NHS providers, not just private providers, including the voluntary sector, social enterprises and local authorities.

Attachments:

1. Spending on private providers 2006-16 [65141 table.docx]

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements**Tim Farron:**[\[65772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the NHS claimed back from other EU countries to cover the use of the European Health Insurance Card by non-UK citizens in the UK in each of the last five years.

Tim Farron:[\[65773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the NHS paid out in reimbursement for the use of European Health Insurance Cards by UK citizens overseas in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Under European Union Regulations, other Economic European Area (EEA) countries and Switzerland reimburse the United Kingdom for the cost of the National Health Service providing treatment to people they are responsible for under EU law, including UK nationals insured in another EEA country or Switzerland. In the same way, the UK Government reimburses other EEA countries and Switzerland for the cost of providing treatment to people we are responsible for under EU law, irrespective of nationality.

It is not possible to separate out claims to the UK from other EEA countries solely linked to European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) usage. Claims to the and by the UK, for treatment relating to EHICs, are included in a larger category which also includes pre-authorised planned treatments and coverage for posted and frontier workers. Note that Member States, including the UK, can submit claims up to 18 months in arrears so claims for any 12 month period do not necessarily reflect treatment provided in that period.

Requested figures are provided in the attached document.

Attachments:

1. PQ65772 attached table [PQ65772 attached document.xlsx]

■ Health Services: Standards**Diana Johnson:**[\[65069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2016 to Question 48395, on health services: standards, if he will provide a breakdown of that data by clinical commissioning group.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

The CQC has provided the attached table showing the number of registered private providers the CQC has placed in special measures in each year since 2009-10. The

CQC has updated this information to be correct at 31 December 2016. For the purposes of this Question, the CQC classifies 'private' to mean 'independent'.

Attachments:

1. PQ65069 attached document [PQ65069 attached document.xlsx]

■ **Heart Diseases**

Andrew Rosindell:

[65230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much has been spent to date on NHS England's proposals for changing the organisation of congenital heart disease services; and what the projected total cost is for implementing that change in each of the next three years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

To account for the total spend to date on NHS England's proposals for changing the organisation of congenital heart disease (CHD) services is challenging, given the lengthy timeframe and the number of organisations involved.

NHS England has spent £808,039 between August 2015 and January 2017 developing its proposals for implementing the new CHD standards including running the consultation on the draft standards and service specifications for congenital heart disease services and preparing for and launching the current consultation on implementing the standards for CHD services for children and adults in England.

In terms of the projected total cost for implementing the proposed changes and meeting the standards, we understand from NHS England that many of the costs of providing services which meet the new standards can be considered to be already within tariff funding because the standards describe ways of working and staffing levels that are already business as usual in a number of trusts.

Trusts are paid for CHD services through tariff, which ensures that the money received is linked to patient activity. NHS England expects activity within CHD services to rise, resulting in higher income for provider trusts. We understand from NHS England that the cost of meeting the standards will be affordable to providers from within that higher income. In addition it is likely that there will be some economies of scale for providers linked with providing a higher volume of activity.

Growth in activity is driven by an increasing population, increased longevity for CHD patients and advances in clinical practice. This is unaffected by the proposals on which NHS England is consulting. NHS England will fund these additional costs, in line with national tariff and local price arrangements, from within the notified annual increase in the allocation for specialised services.

■ Heart Diseases: Surgery

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[65134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many congenital heart disease surgery cases there were in (a) 1990-91 and (b) 2015-16; and how many of those cases resulted in a fatality.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The National Congenital Heart Disease Audit run by the National Institute for Cardiovascular Outcomes Research began collecting data in 2000-01. There are no reliable data from before that period.

In 2000-01 there were 4,105 surgical procedures and 227 deaths had occurred by 30 days after surgery.

In 2014-15 there were 5,661 surgical procedures and 158 deaths had occurred by 30 days after surgery.

2014-15 is the most recent year for which there is validated data. The 2015-16 data is still being validated against the Office for National Statistics death data and will be available later this year.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation

Melanie Onn:

[\[65305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what measures are in place to ensure CCGs follow the guidance provided to them by NICE on the provision of IVF treatment.

Melanie Onn:

[\[65306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to improve the enforcement of NICE guidance related to IVF treatment.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) fertility guideline is advisory but clinical commissioning groups are expected to have regard to it when making decisions on commissioning fertility services for their community.

I wrote to the National Medical Director, Sir Bruce Keogh, on 10 February 2017 to ask that NHS England re-emphasise to all those involved in commissioning fertility services that they should have regard to the NICE fertility guideline as it currently stands.

■ Kidneys: Donors

Rehman Chishti:

[\[65021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of additional kidney donors that would be required to reduce the waiting time on the transplant register from two to three years down to one year or less.

Nicola Blackwood:

There are currently around 5,000 patients registered on the United Kingdom kidney transplant waiting list. The number of patients waiting have come down since the launch of the UK-wide Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 Strategy in July 2013, from 6,348 patients at end of 2012-13 compared with 5,030 in 2015-16. Our aim by 2020 is to increase organ donation and transplant rates to match the best performing countries and to maximise the number of people who can benefit from a transplant.

■ Midwives: Insurance**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[64941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he plans to take to ensure that independent midwives can access affordable indemnity cover; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

It has been a legal requirement since 2014 for all healthcare professionals, including midwives, to have adequate indemnity arrangements in place. This requirement ensures that there is redress available for women and families should anything happen to them or their babies during childbirth. Individual professionals are responsible for ensuring that adequate indemnity insurance arrangements are in place.

The Government supports choice in maternity services, but this has to be a safe choice. It is therefore appropriate that registered midwives are required to have adequate indemnity insurance to cover their scope of practice.

Whether or not a midwife's indemnity cover is appropriate is a decision for the Nursing and Midwifery Council as the independent regulatory body responsible for the regulation of midwives in the United Kingdom.

■ NHS Trusts: North West**Mr Mark Hendrick:**[\[64156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what companies are (a) owned and (b) part-owned by each NHS trust in the North West; what proportion of each part-owned company is owned by each such trust; and what the total value of shareholdings is in each company owned and part-owned by each trust.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not collected centrally.

Foundation Trusts are required to publish information on ownership of companies in their annual accounts.

■ Nurses: Schools

Julie Cooper:

[\[65768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many school nurses there are in (a) Burnley constituency, (b) Lancashire and (c) the North West.

Nicola Blackwood:

The school nurse workforce is relatively small and no formal assessment has been made of recent changes to school nursing numbers by the Department or Public Health England (PHE), who only hold national figures. School nurses can be employed by a range of organisations including health trusts and, more recently, local authorities. Current local data collections do not cover the complete range of these organisations. As a result, it is not possible to provide accurate data on the total size of the school nurse workforce.

Data is available for National Health Service trust and clinical commissioning group (CCG) area based school nurses for the North West Health Education England (HEE) Region and for Lancashire and is presented in the table below. Parliamentary constituencies do not correspond directly to recognised health geographies, so no data is provided for Burnley constituency.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services: school nursing staff in NHS trusts and CCGs in Lancashire and North West Health Education England region, as at 30 November 2016

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT		
	North West HEE Region	Lancashire
All registered nurses working within school nursing teams	573	101

Source: NHS Digital

Lancashire includes data for all organisations which fall within the area of the NHS England Region (Local Office) of NHS England North (Lancashire).

■ Organs: Donors

Rehman Chishti:

[\[65020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the NHS Blood and Transplant budget was spent in 2015-16 on awareness campaigns to encourage more people to join the organ donor register.

Nicola Blackwood:

In 2015-16, NHS Blood and Transplant spent £1.2 million to deliver the behaviour change interventions in England. This included awareness campaigns to increase the number of registered organ donors and encourage conversations around donation

wishes. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales also ran campaigns that were funded on a devolved basis.

■ Ovarian Cancer

Mr Peter Bone:

[65673]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when NHS England plans to publish its service specification on ovarian cancer.

David Mowat:

In order for NHS England to formally consider a new or revised service specification, a number of associated reports and processes need to be completed. The Complex Gynaecological Services Clinical Reference Group (CRG) did start the process of developing a new service specification for ovarian cancer, however, this did not progress through the process. This was due to technical difficulties encountered during the Impact Assessment stage and included issues in identifying activity and the associated financial impact.

In the subsequent period, CRGs have been restructured and the responsibility for this clinical area now resides with the Specialised Cancer Surgery CRG, within the National Cancer Programme of Care. In addition, NHS England has also published a revised process for service specification development (titled: 'Methods'), which can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/key-docs/>

The Methods sets out the process for completing service specification work and, in accordance with this process, the Specialised Cancer Surgery CRG has been asked to consider progressing this work. The CRG Chair is due to discuss the matter with a representative of the Gynaecology CRG later this week and, following this, it is expected that the first step of the process will be completed by the middle of March 2017.

■ Ovarian Cancer: Screening

Mr Peter Bone:

[65672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress has been made on the inclusion of information on ovarian cancer in letters to patients containing the results of recent cervical and breast screening.

Mr Peter Bone:

[65674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the results were of focus groups set up to establish how women respond to information on (a) screening results for and (b) other aspects of ovarian cancer.

David Mowat:

The Department's Policy Research Unit on Cancer Awareness Screening and Early Diagnosis has undertaken a qualitative research study in which members of the public were given access to available leaflets on ovarian cancer awareness and then

participated in six focus groups and interviews on their acceptability and how they would be received and understood if included within the all clear screening results letter from the breast or cervical screening programme. This study is now complete and is being prepared for peer-reviewed publication. A further qualitative research study with professionals will commence when approval is received from the Health Research Authority.

A second project is a synthesis of published incidence, mortality, stage distribution and stage-specific survival rates for ovarian cancer by age. The aim of this project is to identify which age group would be most likely to benefit from such an intervention, in terms of risk of ovarian cancer and room for improvement in stage at diagnosis. This project is also complete and is being prepared for peer-reviewed publication.

■ **Postnatal Depression**

Tim Farron:

[\[65769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many women have been diagnosed with post-natal depression in England in each of the last five years.

Nicola Blackwood:

The data requested is not centrally collected.

Work is underway to improve data collection in perinatal mental health services. NHS Digital has started publishing monthly experimental statistics collected via the Mental Health Dataset, which includes information on perinatal mental health services. In addition, a core objective of the NHS England led perinatal mental health transformation programme is to improve data over the coming years in order to better understand access and outcomes for women in line with availability of services locally.

■ **Prescription Drugs: Expenditure**

Tim Farron:

[\[65770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the NHS in England spent on prescribing (a) paracetamol, (b) Viagra and (c) Sildenafil in 2016.

David Mowat:

The 2016 data is not currently available and will be published by NHS Digital as part of the Prescription Cost Analysis publication in due course.

■ **Primary Care Support England: Contracts**

Holly Lynch:

[\[65058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the savings to be made as a result of the new Primary Care Services England contract; and in what areas those savings are expected to arise.

David Mowat:

The savings from the 2015 outsourcing of Primary Care Support Services are expected to be 40% over previous costs during the lifetime of the contract. These savings are delivered primarily through economies of scale that derive from delivery of the services from national centres as opposed to local offices, and efficiency savings derived from investment in new IT systems to streamline work processes.

■ Shingles: Vaccination**Norman Lamb:**[\[65617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the reasons are for age restrictions on eligibility for the shingles vaccination in the NHS; and whether he has made an assessment of the availability of alternative provision for people who do not qualify for that vaccination.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation recommended shingles vaccination for adults aged 70 years up to and including 79 years. Shingles immunisation is currently offered to people aged 70 – 73 and 78 – 79 based on their age on 1 September 2016. Eligibility will be extended in the future to all those aged 70 – 79. The rate of the further extension of eligibility is determined by annual negotiations between the Department and NHS England taking into account factors such as the capability of the National Health Service to provide the additional immunisations, and the overall affordability of doing so.

Medical professionals are able to apply their clinical discretion and offer immunisation to anyone aged over 50 years who is not currently eligible but could benefit clinically, for example those with underlying health issues putting them at increased risk of shingles. Shingles immunisation is also available privately from a number of high street pharmacists and other providers.

■ Young People: Counselling**Jim Shannon:**[\[65440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to widen the availability of counsellors for young people on the NHS.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Five Year Forward View – One Year on was published on 1 March 2017. The report states that ‘the expansion of services anticipated by 2020/21 requires a parallel increase in the number of skilled staff able to provide care and treatment. National investment has begun in 2016/17 to deliver the 1,700 new therapists who are estimated to be required within five years. In line with the new all-age workforce strategy for mental health, the first 150 training places have been made available this year for newly-recruited therapists. Most of these courses will complete within 12 months’.

HOME OFFICE**■ Antisocial Behaviour****Mr Douglas Carswell:****[65600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to introduce new powers for police forces in England and Wales to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Brandon Lewis:

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gives the police and their local partners a range of flexible powers to enable them to respond quickly and efficiently to different forms of anti-social behaviour.

These powers give the police and other local agencies the powers they need to protect victims and to stop anti-social behaviour in public which can spoil the community's quality of life.

■ Asylum: Children**David Warburton:****[65438]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the most recent consultation with local authorities took place on their capacity to receive vulnerable children under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016; and what steps her Department is taking to consult local authorities on whether they can make more places available.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

In accordance with the Immigration Act 2016 the Government conducted a comprehensive consultation with local authorities across the UK in order to assess capacity for the care of unaccompanied children. On 13 May 2016, the then Immigration Minister wrote to all local authorities to provide an update on the launch of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and to encourage local authorities to participate in all schemes designed for children. On 7 June 2016, the then Immigration Minister, the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families and the then Minister with responsibility for Syrian Refugees attended a national launch event in London which was attended by local authorities from across the UK. This was followed by regional events in England and in Scotland and Wales.

On 8 September last year, I wrote to all local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland asking them to confirm how many places they could offer to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Home Office officials also maintained an ongoing dialogue with individual local authorities and regional Strategic Migration Partnerships throughout.

This is a voluntary scheme whereby local authorities sign up to accept unaccompanied asylum seeking children on a voluntary basis.

We asked local authorities to consider carefully whether they have the infrastructure and support networks needed to ensure the appropriate care of these unaccompanied children before participating in the NTS

Our consultation with local authorities indicated that there was capacity for an additional 400 UASC. This is in addition to the unaccompanied children already in local authority care. We estimate that at least 50 of the family reunion cases will require a local authority placement in circumstances where the reunion does not work out.

We estimate that at least 50 of the family reunion cases transferred from France as part of the Calais clearance will require a local authority placement in cases where the family reunion does not work out. We estimate that at least 50 of the family reunion cases transferred from France as part of the Calais clearance will require a local authority placement in cases where the family reunion does not work out.

Every region in England is participating in the NTS and we are working very closely with local authorities in Scotland and Wales who have also responded positively.

Heidi Allen:

[\[65759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what each response was from those local authorities which replied to her letter of September 2016 requesting confirmation of how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children they could accommodate.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I wrote to local authorities on 8 September last year asking them to confirm via their Strategic Migration Partnership the number of unaccompanied children who could be placed in their local authority area. We received a range of responses from Strategic Migration Partnerships but also from local authorities directly. Based on those responses and our extensive consultation over the summer we calculated they had capacity for an additional 400 unaccompanied asylum seeking children until the end of the 2016/17 financial year. This is in addition to the many unaccompanied children already in local authority care. We estimate that at least 50 of the family reunion cases will require a local authority placement in circumstances where the reunion does not work out.

■ Counter-terrorism: South Wales

Stephen Doughty:

[\[65503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were referred to the Channel programme in South Wales Police Force area in each of the last 12 months.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Channel is a voluntary and confidential programme. Due to the likelihood of small numbers being involved, and therefore the risk of personal identification, we do not provide breakdowns of Channel data by police force area.

Since 2012, over 1,000 people have received support through Channel. The vast majority of those who receive support go onto leave the programme with no further terrorism-related concerns.

■ Detainees

Caroline Lucas:

[\[65278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Investigatory Powers Commissioner will have oversight of the Government guidance, Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees, published in July 2010.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will have oversight of the Government guidance, Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees.

■ HM Passport Office

Grahame Morris:

[\[65319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to enable DNA testing to be carried out in regional passport offices.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The need for a DNA test to clarify an applicant's claim to British nationality is rare, affecting a small number of cases. It is not compulsory to undergo a test to support an application for a passport.

In light of this, the supervised submission of a sample for DNA testing is conducted in our London office at present. The feasibility of offering this in other passport offices is currently under review. The DNA test itself is conducted in an accredited laboratory.

■ HM Passport Office: Durham

Grahame Morris:

[\[65318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve access to overseas interview services at Durham Passport Office.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Her Majesty's Passport Office is continuously looking to improve its services.

The future locations of interview services for applicants applying for a passport from overseas are one of a number of factors being reviewed.

■ Home Office: Brexit**Paul Blomfield:** [\[65750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64546, what discussions she had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office is working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union on all aspects of exiting the European Union to enable the UK to make a successful exit from the EU.

■ Immigrants: Detainees**Tom Brake:** [\[65362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to table dt 09 q of the Quarterly Immigration Statistics, October to December 2016, for what reasons two children who left immigration detention in the fourth quarter of 2016 has been detained for between 29 days and two months.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office does not routinely comment on individual immigration cases.

Currently, unaccompanied children under the age of 18 may be detained only in a limited number of very exceptional circumstances. Such detention is usually pending alternative care arrangements being made (with relatives or local authority children's services), would be for the shortest possible time, and would not take place in an immigration removal centre.

The Home Office is committed to protecting unaccompanied asylum seeking children - ending the routine detention of children for immigration purposes and fundamentally changing the system to ensure their welfare is at the heart of every decision we make.

■ Overseas Students: EU Nationals**Martin Docherty-Hughes:** [\[65299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to develop a system for short-term study visas for EU citizens after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are working across Government to identify and develop options to shape our future immigration system.

Parliament will have an important role to play in this and we will ensure businesses and communities have the opportunity to contribute their views.

■ Overseas Students: Visas

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[\[65239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of changes to the short-term study visa system as a result of the UK's exit from the EU on the (a) UK's English language teaching sector and (b) further education sector.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are working across Government to identify and develop options to shape our future immigration system.

Parliament will have an important role to play in this and we will ensure businesses and communities have the opportunity to contribute their views.

■ Prostitution

Jim Shannon:

[\[65422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle the operation of pop-up brothels.

Brandon Lewis:

Local police forces are in the best position to identify and respond to issues around prostitution and sex work in their area, including 'pop-up' brothels. Forces are supported by clear operational guidance for policing prostitution and sexual exploitation. The guidance is clear that where indoor premises are identified, the safety and welfare of those working in brothels, investigation of coercion and exploitation, and reducing the impact to local communities must all be taken into account.

It is illegal to keep a brothel, or to allow premises to be used as one. The law does not distinguish between types of brothel, and we will continue to ensure that police forces have the powers they need to identify and close down these brothels.

Prosecutions for brothel keeping offences have risen, from 99 in 2014-15 to 111 in 2015-16.

■ Refugees: Children

Will Quince:

[\[64871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to consult with local authorities on whether they can make more places available under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

On February 8, the Government announced that we will transfer the specified number of 350 children to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act following consultation with local authorities on capacity. We ran a full consultation process, with regional events in every part of England, one in Scotland and one in Wales. Over 400 local authority representatives attended the regional events. Any further places

offered by local authorities will be gratefully received, and we will use them to fulfil our existing commitments, including ensuring a fairer distribution of children between local authorities through the National Transfer Scheme.

In July 2016 the Government significantly increased the funding it provides to local authorities who look after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Local authorities now receive £41,610 per annum year for each unaccompanied asylum-seeking child aged under 16 and £33,215 per annum for unaccompanied asylum-seeking child aged 16 and 17. This represents a 20% and 28% increase in funding respectively. In addition, the Government went further and also increased the funding it provides to local authorities for those young people who turn 18 and go on to attract leaving care support by 33%. We will be working with local authority partners to conduct a review of our funding rates and remain fully committed to maintaining the current rates.

■ Vetting

Rosie Cooper:

[\[65847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there is a specified timeframe in which the Disclosure and Barring Service is required to process a certificate renewal application.

Sarah Newton:

Criminal record certificates issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service do not expire after a specific period of time and do not include a renewal date. A certificate has no set period of validity. Information revealed through a Disclosure and Barring Service check reflects the information that was available at the time of its issue. Disclosure certificates are primarily designed to be used by an employer at the point of recruitment for a particular position.

Some roles and some employers require the person concerned to “renew” their Disclosure and Barring Service check at specific intervals. The person can do that either by applying for a new certificate or by using the Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service.

■ Weapons: Seized Articles

Jim Shannon:

[\[65387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of weapons seized by the National Crime Agency in the last six months were from people suspected of terrorist activity.

Jim Shannon:

[\[65424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the countries of origin were of the 833 firearms seized by the National Crime Agency in its operation that commenced in October 2016.

Brandon Lewis:

The National Crime Agency and Police continue to conduct specific operations to disrupt the threat posed by illegal firearms falling into the hands of both criminals and terrorists. In line with our longstanding practice, it would be inappropriate to comment further on operational matters relating to terrorist activity.

The National Ballistics Intelligence Service regularly assesses the volume, type and origin of illegal firearms in use in the UK, including those seized during the multi-agency operation that commenced in October 2016. The information is operationally sensitive and is not suitable for release.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Developing Countries: Forests****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[65758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what financial support her Department plans to provide to support forest governance in developing countries in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18, (c) 2018-19 and (d) 2019-20.

James Wharton:

In financial year 2016-17 DFID expects to spend approximately £55 million to ensure better governance and management of forests. Future funding plans are subject to agreement by ministers.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services**Gareth Thomas:**[\[65774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she or a representative of her Department plans to attend the She Decides conference in Brussels on 2 March 2017; what steps she is taking to ensure that women's access to sexual and reproductive health services is safeguarded; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

DFID will be represented at the She Decides conference by the Minister of State, Rory Stewart.

The UK is, and will remain, a global leader on family planning, women's rights and sexual and reproductive health. Women should have the right to choose when to have children, and how many. This year, with UNFPA and the Gates Foundation, DFID will co-host a major follow up to the 2012 Family Planning Summit to accelerate global family planning efforts, so that we can get the world back on track to enable 120 million additional women and girls get the contraception they need.

■ Developing Countries: Taxation

Steve McCabe: [\[65130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department has taken to promote coherence between the Government's tax treaties, international trade policies and her Department's development strategy in relation to the effect of UK tax and trade policies on developing countries.

Rory Stewart:

DFID is working in collaboration with HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs to develop the Government's tax and development policy, and to improve the capacity of developing country tax administrations to raise revenue. We are also working closely with the Department for International Trade to support the Government's work on international trade policy, with a specific focus on creating jobs and livelihoods in order to reduce poverty around the world.

■ Yemen: Famine

Alison Thewliss: [\[65431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the emerging famine in Yemen.

Rory Stewart:

In 2016/17 UK Aid has so far supported 462,000 people with food or food vouchers in Yemen, and improved the nutrition of 889,000 women and children. In 2015/16, the UK helped over one million people with emergency humanitarian assistance, including over 730,000 benefitting from food.

The Secretary of State for International Development issued a call to action last week urging the international community to step up their response in Yemen, as one of four potential famines around the world in 2017. We will be making another significant pledge of humanitarian aid for 2017/18, which will include funding to help those most vulnerable to the risk of famine.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

Barry Gardiner: [\[65173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK fisheries legislation of the investment protection provisions of the EU-Canada free trade agreement.

Barry Gardiner: [\[65181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK environmental legislation of the investment protection provisions in the EU-Canada free trade agreement.

Greg Hands:

The investment protection provisions in the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will have no impact on UK environmental or fisheries legislation. They cannot force the UK, Canada or other EU Member States to change their laws on the environment, fisheries or any other area of public policy.

Patrick Grady:[\[65736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, following the debate at European Committee B on 6 February 2017, and vote taken as division 151 on 8 February 2017, what further opportunities he expects Parliament to have to scrutinise the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement before the agreement is ratified by the UK.

Greg Hands:

Treaties, including CETA, that are subject to ratification, approval, acceptance, accession or the mutual notification of completion of procedures are typically laid before Parliament for scrutiny purposes for a period of 21 parliamentary sitting days under the provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (Part 2: ratification of treaties), which commenced on 11 November 2010. This legislation provides that the UK cannot legally ratify or consent to be bound by a treaty laid under its provisions until the statutory 21 sitting day process has elapsed. During the 21 sitting days, hon Members and Select Committees have the chance to scrutinise the treaty provisions, ask questions, and potentially report.

■ Department for International Trade: Information Officers**Justin Madders:**[\[65103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff of his Department are employed in media relations and communications roles; and how much has been spent on the salaries of such staff members.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade became a legal entity in November 2016. The department currently employs 15 civil servants in media relations and communications roles. From November 2016 to February 2017, £253,566 has been spent on their salaries.

UK Export Finance currently employs 6 civil servants in media relations and communications roles. From November 2016 to February 2017, the spend on their salaries was £70,188.

■ EU External Trade: Developing Countries**Stephen Kinnock:**[\[64948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Government will continue to apply the standards forming the basis of the EU's Everything But Arms programme in UK trade with the world's least-developed countries after the UK has left the EU.

Greg Hands:

The UK remains committed to ensuring developing countries can reduce poverty through trading opportunities, helping them leave aid dependency behind.

The UK has a strong history of protecting standards and promoting our values globally. We will in due course consider all options in the design of future trade arrangements including preferences for least developed countries, and how developing countries can become our trading partners of the future.

■ Government Chief Scientific Adviser**Dan Jarvis:**[\[65660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he plans to appoint a Chief Science Adviser prior to the opening of negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on the 2 February to my hon Friend for South Basildon and East Thurrock, UIN 61710.

■ Origin Marking: Jordan**Barry Gardiner:**[\[65180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what his policy is on maintaining the simplified rules of origin on Jordanian exports agreed by the EU in 2016 for the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

Greg Hands:

The UK remains committed to pursuing free trade. We are looking to deliver maximum continuity and certainty for businesses in our trade and investment relationships with third countries once we leave, as well as to ensure continued preferential arrangements for developing countries. We are actively exploring what may be possible with our trading partners on ways to achieve this.

■ Overseas Trade**Stephen Timms:**[\[65190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February to Question 63568, if he will take steps to include a clause on compliance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in future bilateral trade and investment agreements; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Existing EU trade agreements refer to commitment to the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a whole.

I refer the hon Member for East Ham to the answer I gave him on 20 February 2017, UIN 63568.

■ Petrobras

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Brazil on whether UK export finance provided to Petrobras in the last five years has been used for the purpose intended.

Greg Hands:

Since 2012, UK Export Finance (UKEF) has applied all due diligence procedures to the loan guarantee provided to Petrobras to finance the purchase of goods from UK exporters.

Before UKEF provided its support to Petrobras, it carried out anti-bribery due diligence in line with the OECD Recommendation on Bribery and Officially Support Export Credits (2006 OECD Bribery Recommendation).

Any drawdown from the loan must be supported by evidence that goods have been delivered or services performed in accordance with the original contract.

■ Rolls-Royce

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[65071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2017 to Question 62357, how many times Rolls Royce received cover from UK Export Finance in each year since 2010.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[65072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2017 to Question 62357, what the value of cover provided to Rolls Royce was in each year since 2010.

Greg Hands:

Details of all UK Export Finance (UKEF) support for Rolls Royce since 2010 are published in UKEF's Annual Report and Accounts, which have been presented to Parliament.

■ Trade Agreements

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions his Department has had on protections for the UK agricultural and fishing sectors with (a) trade partners that are members of the Friends of Fish or the Cairns Group blocs and (b) other trade partners.

Greg Hands:

Ministers and officials in the Department for International Trade are working closely with counterparts across a wide range of markets, in order to promote the UK as a great place to do business and to trade. In line with international normal practice, it

would not be appropriate to provide details of private diplomatic engagement with foreign Governments.

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh: [\[65670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans he has to provide information regularly to (a) hon. Members and (b) the public on the progress of those trade working groups which have been established in the last 12 months.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade will engage with stakeholders over the coming weeks and months, and Parliament will have an important role to play in future UK trade deals. In line with normal international diplomatic practice, it would not be appropriate to routinely provide details of private diplomatic engagement with foreign governments.

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh: [\[65671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with which countries he has established trade working groups in the last 12 months.

Greg Hands:

Ministers and officials in the Department for International Trade are working closely with counterparts across a wide range of markets, in order to promote the UK as a great place to do business and with which to trade. We have announced nine working groups in the last 12 months: with Australia, China, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Israel, India, New Zealand, Norway, Turkey and South Korea. The GCC comprises 6 countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. As the PM announced during her visit to Washington, we will also take forward high-level talks with the USA.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Barry Gardiner: [\[65178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether liberalisation of the UK's agricultural markets has been raised (a) in his discussions with his Australian counterpart and (b) within the Australia-UK trade working group dialogue.

Greg Hands:

Department for International Trade ministers and officials have discussed a range of trade topics with Australia, including the strong political commitment from Australia and the UK to take the lead in pushing for greater global free trade. In line with normal international diplomatic practice, it would not be appropriate to routinely provide details of private diplomatic engagement with foreign governments.

■ Trade Agreements: Commonwealth

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his counterparts in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa have raised the issue of abolition of farming subsidies during discussions on future trade agreements.

Greg Hands:

Ministers and officials in the Department for International Trade are working closely with counterparts across a wide range of markets, including Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, in order to promote the UK as a great place to do business and trade with. In line with normal international diplomatic practice, it would not be appropriate to routinely provide details of private diplomatic engagement with foreign governments.

■ Trade Agreements: New Zealand

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether liberalisation of the UK's agricultural markets has been raised (a) in his discussions with his counterpart in New Zealand and (b) within the UK-New Zealand trade policy dialogue.

Greg Hands:

We have discussed a range of trade topics with New Zealand, including the strong political commitment from New Zealand and the UK to take the lead in pushing for greater global free trade. In line with international normal practice, it would not be appropriate to routinely provide details on private diplomatic engagement with foreign Governments.

■ Trade Agreements: NHS

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the NHS is specifically protected from privatisation in any international trade deals.

Greg Hands:

The Government is clear – the NHS is and always will be protected in trade deals. There is nothing in any trade deal which would require the UK to privatise public services. The UK will ensure that trade deals continue to include the necessary exclusions, exemptions, and 'reservations' to ensure that decisions on how to run public services – including the NHS – will always remain for the UK Government and not trade partners or corporations.

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the need to protect the NHS when considering any future trade deal.

Greg Hands:

The treatment of the NHS in trade agreements has not been raised in any discussions between my Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and his international counterparts. The Government has consistently been clear in its engagement with international counterparts that the NHS is of the utmost importance for the UK and will always be protected in trade deals.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Barry Gardiner: [\[65182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he plans to take in negotiations for a US-UK trade deal to protect the British automotive industry.

Mark Garnier:

While we are a member of the EU, we cannot negotiate and conclude trade agreements. However we can and have begun to have discussions on our future trading relationships. It is too early to say what exactly could be covered in a future UK-US deal. Any deal will of course take into account the needs of UK consumers, businesses and manufacturers.

Barry Gardiner: [\[65183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he plans to take to ensure that UK social and labour standards are maintained in any negotiations for a trade deal with the US.

Greg Hands:

While we are a member of the EU, we cannot negotiate and conclude trade agreements. However we can and have begun to have discussions on our future trading relationships. Any deal will of course take into account the needs of UK consumers, businesses and manufacturers.

Barry Gardiner: [\[65184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he plans to take to ensure that UK environmental standards are maintained in any deal with the US.

Greg Hands:

While we are a member of the EU, we cannot negotiate and conclude trade agreements. However we can and have begun to have discussions on our future trading relationships. Any deal will of course take into account the needs of UK consumers, businesses and manufacturers.

■ Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Barry Gardiner: [\[65176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is the UK's preferred model for a future UK-US trade agreement.

Greg Hands:

It is too early to say what exactly could be covered in a future UK-US deal.

■ UK Trade and Investment: Environment Protection**Andrew Rosindell:****[65135]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to promote trade and investment in green technology into the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade undertakes a range of promotion activities to support investment into, and export of, green technologies including those under the 'GREAT' campaign, further information about which can be found on this Department's website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade>.

Engagement with key UK suppliers, potential and existing investors and foreign Governments and procuring authorities also forms part of the work of our renewable energy technologies sector team – as well as our international network of trade and investment advisors, with green technologies a key theme.

JUSTICE**■ Animal Welfare: Sentencing****Mr Barry Sheerman:****[64497]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to tackle unduly lenient sentencing for animal cruelty offences.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Sentencing is a matter for the courts, which are independent from government. When deciding what sentence to impose the courts take into account the circumstances of the offence and any mitigating and aggravating factors, in line with the sentencing guidelines.

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions: Appeals**Paul Farrelly:****[65316]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many First-tier Tribunals in respect of war pensions and armed forces compensation took place in each quarter in each of the last five years; and in how many of those cases the tribunals found in favour of the complainants.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The number of appeals heard by the First-tier Tribunal (War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber) is published on gov.uk
[https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate)

[statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2016](#) ; the number which were found in favour of the appellant could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Coroners: Greater London

Seema Malhotra: [\[65530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases referred to the West London Coroners Office have been waiting more than a week for a coroner's report.

Seema Malhotra: [\[65531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases have been referred to the West London Coroners Office in each of the last five years.

Seema Malhotra: [\[65547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funding her Department allocated to Coroner's court services in the West London Coroner District in each of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice collects annual statistical data on deaths reported to coroners. The table below shows the total number of deaths reported to the West London coroner service between 2011 and 2015.

YEAR	TOTAL DEATHS (INCLUDING NO FURTHER ACTION CASES)
2011	3,886
2012	3,813
2013	3,858
2014	3,437
2015	3,364

Data on the number of cases that have been waiting more than a week is not held centrally.

The Ministry of Justice has not allocated funding to the West London coroner service as coroner services are funded by local authorities.

■ Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

Justin Tomlinson: [\[65284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assistance is available to victims of sexual violence applying to the criminal injuries compensation scheme.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We deeply sympathise with anyone who has been a victim of sexual violence. Violent and sexual crimes ruin lives and it's vital that victims who have been physically or mentally injured are able to claim compensation. Victims of sexual violence may be eligible for compensation under the Government funded Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2012 (the Scheme) which is designed to compensate blameless victims of violent crime in Great Britain. The rules of the Scheme and the tariff for awards paid under it are approved by Parliament.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) administers the Scheme and decides all claims independently of Ministers and Parliament. Applicants can get assistance to apply for criminal injuries compensation or for any question about the application process by contacting the CICA's Customer Service Centre advisors on 0300 003 3601. The helpline is available Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 17:00 except Wednesday when they are open from 10:00 to 17:00.

Information about the Scheme can also be found on GOV.UK at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-injuries-compensation-a-guide>. An applicant can also apply on GOV.UK or by calling the helpline on the above number. The application process is designed to be used without the need for paid representation such as a solicitor. Free independent advice may be available from Victim Support or other charitable organisations.

■ HM Inspectorate of Prisons**Yasmin Qureshi:****[65528]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what meetings she and Ministers of her Department have had with the Chief Inspector of Prisons in the last six months; what the dates of those meetings were; and what was discussed at each such meeting.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Secretary of State for Justice had meetings with the Chief Inspector of Prisons on the following dates:

18th July 2016

13th September 2016

29th November 2016

15th February 2017

The Secretary of State also met with the Chief Inspector on 15th December 2016 at a round table seminar with inspectors.

Sam Gyimah, the Prisons and Probation Minister, met with the Chief Inspector of Prisons on the following dates:

21st July 2016 (this was an introductory phone call)

26th September 2016

15th November 2016

6th February 2017

Dr Phillip Lee, Minister for Victims, Youth and Family Justice, met with the Chief Inspector of Prisons on the following dates:

26th July 2016 (introductory phone call)

24th October 2016.

■ Human Rights Act 1998

Margaret Ferrier: [\[65196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2016 to Question 42839, who will be invited to respond to any consultation on reform of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[65197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2016 to Question 50967, when her Department plans to consult on the legislative proposals to replace the Human Rights Act 1998.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Government remains committed to reforming our domestic human rights framework. We will consider further the Bill of Rights once we know the arrangements for our EU exit and consult fully on our proposals with all organisations and individuals with an interest in human rights reform in the full knowledge of the new constitutional landscape that EU exit will create.

■ Ministry of Justice: Information Officers

Justin Madders: [\[65107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff of her 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.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) works to protect the public, reduce reoffending and provide a more effective, transparent and responsive criminal justice system. It is vital that this work is communicated.

The communication section of the Communications and Information Directorate (CID) at MOJ Head Office currently has 45 staff employed in media relations and communications roles, including 30 staff in the MOJ press office.

The MOJ press office operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and deals with all national, regional and specialist media enquiries for the department and its agencies including the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Legal Aid Agency (LAA) and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS).

Other communications roles in CID include campaigns officers, planning, digital, speechwriting and internal communications staff.

The breakdown of information requested on salaries and staff number of such staff members in each of the last ten years is not held centrally and compiling this information would incur a disproportionate cost.

■ Ministry of Justice: Procurement

Jon Trickett:

[65003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many civil servants of her Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Dr Phillip Lee:

I have 172 Civil Servants within the Commercial and Contract Management Directorate, 100 in the LAA and 218 in NOMS overseeing contracts awarded to external suppliers.

In addition there are others in the department and agencies who monitor performance against contracts as part of their role. The precise numbers are not available.

■ Ministry of Justice: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[65563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The proportions of staff requested based on September 2016 staff in post data is tabled below; it should be noted not all staff have declared their disability status or ethnicity. Information on socio-economic background is not held centrally.

	PROPORTION
Male	54.9%
Female	45.1%
Declared Disabled	5%
Declared Ethnicity from a Black and Minority Background	6.5%

■ Ministry of Justice: Telephone Services**Justin Madders:** [\[64741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much income has been accrued to her Department from premium rate telephone lines in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Dr Phillip Lee:

During 2014 extensive work was undertaken to transfer MoJ's higher rate customer service lines into local rate numbers. This initiative was reported at that time and a copy of the report that was issued is attached for reference. Since that time the responsibility for these lines has been devolved to the ALBs and MOJ does not hold any information centrally, in this regard.

■ Northumberland Prison**Ian Lavery:** [\[64943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of withdrawing Sodexo's prisons contract at HM Prison Northumberland as a result of the reports of mismanagement and understaffing at that prison.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

These are extremely serious allegations which are being urgently investigated. The Justice Secretary has been clear that levels of violence and self-harm in our prisons are too high which is why we are investing an extra £100m annually to boost the frontline by 2,500 officers. Every officer will be responsible for a case load of six offenders, making sure all prisoners get the support needed to quit drugs and get the education and training that will help turn their lives around.

These are long-standing issues which will not be resolved in weeks or months but we are determined to make our prisons places of safety and reform. We have robust processes in place to closely monitor and manage private contractors and will not hesitate to take action when standards fall short.

■ Prison Accommodation**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[65526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many additional places her Department plans to create in public sector prisons in each of the next five years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We will close down ageing and ineffective prisons, replacing them with buildings fit for today's demands. HM Prison Berwyn opened at the end of February this year, with a capacity of around 2,100 places. In addition, we will build up to 10,000 further prison places on a 'new for old' basis. No decisions have yet been made on who will operate the new prisons.

■ Prison Officers: Females**Caroline Flint:**[\[65365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prison officers were female in each year since 2010.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is set out in the table below::

[1]

BAND 3-5 PRISON OFFICERS, AS AT 31 MARCH

Date	Women	Men	Female Representation %
Mar-10	5953	19600	23.3%
Mar-11	5880	19266	23.4%
Mar-12	5539	18020	23.5%
Mar-13	5261	17113	23.5%
Mar-14	4460	14477	23.6%
Mar-15	4553	14405	24.0%
Mar-16	4716	14373	24.7%

[1] NOMS Staff Equalities Annual Report 2015-16

■ Prison Officers: Redundancy**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[65495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information her Department holds on the reasons why prison officers left employment in England in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Information on the number of prison officers leaving the prison service and their reasons for leaving is published quarterly in the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Workforce Statistics Bulletin, available on gov.uk.

■ Prison Officers: Training**Richard Burgon:**[\[64709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will list what mental health training courses are available to prison officers who are not Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork assessors after those officers have completed prison officer entry level training.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We are committed to making prisons places of safety and reform and giving prisoners the support and treatment they need to help turn their lives around.

All prisons have established procedures in place to identify, manage and help prisoners with mental health issues. Increased support is now available to those at risk of self-harm or suicide, especially in the first 24 hours, and we have invested in mental health awareness training for staff.

All establishments provide The 'Introduction to Mental Health' which covers the factors which cause mental ill-health and the main types of disorders which offenders can display and 'Introduction to Safer Custody' course which are delivered locally for all prison officers.

There is also a 'Personality Disorder' module within the 'Introduction to Mental Health' course, and the 'Introduction to Safer Custody' course, for Prison Officers which highlights the impact a personality disorder may have on an offender and how they can be supported. It also explains how to respond to challenging behaviour from an offender with this type of disorder. As part of the accredited Personality Disorder Knowledge and Understanding framework (PD-KUF) awareness level training is widely available to prison-based staff. Further non-accredited 'Personality Disorder' training is offered at prisons that host an Offender Personality Disorder treatment service.

'Emotional and Mental Wellbeing' training is delivered to officers who will be working in the Young People's Estate. This training outlines the factors which influence typical and atypical developments during adolescence and ensures learners can identify when an offender requires specialist support and referral.

There is an 'Enhanced Mental Health' course which is run locally for Case Managers and Assessment Care in Custody Treatment (ACCT) Assessors only as they are the point of contact for an offender who is identified to be at risk. Within this training learners are taught to identify signs and symptoms for the various forms of mental ill-health, how to manage the offender and when it is necessary to seek help from healthcare professionals.

For note, there are also a number of establishments who have worked with NHS trusts to commission bespoke mental health training

■ Prisoners' Release**Philip Davies:****[48567]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer on 12 October 2016 to Question 41032, what the average release period was for those offenders broken down by category of offence.

Philip Davies:

[\[48568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2016 to Question 41032, from which prisons the 61 prisoners convicted of murder were released from on temporary licence for Christmas Day 2015.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested in relation to Question 48567 can be found in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: AVERAGE RELEASE PERIOD FOR PRISONERS ON TEMPORARY RELEASE ON 25 DECEMBER 2015, ENGLAND & WALES

	Number of prisoners released	Average number of days released ⁽¹⁾
All offence groups	973	5
Violence against the person	200	5
Sexual offences	10	5
Robbery	66	5
Theft offences	86	4
Criminal damage and arson	7	4
Drug offences	441	5
Possession of weapons	32	5
Public order offences	*	3
Miscellaneous crimes against society	48	4
Fraud offences	79	4
Summary non-motoring	*	5

(1) Cases where a prisoner has been released on temporary licence on 25 December 2015 and also returns to prison on the 25 December 2015 will be counted as a release of 1 day in length. Equivalently, a release on temporary licence on 25 December 2015 with a return to prison occurring the following day will be counted as a release of 2 days in length.

An asterisk (*) has been used to suppress values of two or less. This is to prevent the disclosure of individual information. Further disclosure control may be completed where this alone is not sufficient.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE RELEASE PERIOD FOR PRISONERS ON TEMPORARY RELEASE ON 25 DECEMBER 2015, ENGLAND & WALES

Data sources and quality

The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

The information requested in relation to Question 48568 can be found in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2: PRISONERS CONVICTED OF MURDER ON TEMPORARY RELEASE ON 25 DECEMBER 2015, BY DISCHARGING PRISON ESTABLISHMENT, ENGLAND & WALES

Discharging prison establishment

Askham Grange

Brixton

Drake Hall

East Sutton Park

Ford

Grendon/Spring Hill

Hewell

Hollesley Bay

Kirkham

Kirklevington Grange

Moorland / Hatfield

Norwich

Standford Hill (Sheppey cluster)

Sudbury

Usk / Prescoed

Data sources and quality

TABLE 2: PRISONERS CONVICTED OF MURDER ON TEMPORARY RELEASE ON 25 DECEMBER 2015, BY DISCHARGING PRISON ESTABLISHMENT, ENGLAND & WALES

The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

■ **Prisoners: Arrests**

Mr David Hanson: [65250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many arrests have taken place on the prison estate in (a) total and (b) each prison in each year since 2010 for possession of (i) a novel psychoactive substance, (ii) a class A drug, (iii) a class B drug, (iv) a class C drug and (v) offensive weapons.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is not held centrally and could only be collected at disproportionate costs.

■ **Prisons: Drugs**

Mr David Hanson: [64326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the volume of drugs by type found in prisons was in each of the last seven years; and what proportion of that volume by type was brought into prison by (a) prisoners, (b) visitors, (c) drones or other external means and (d) staff.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-17/64326>

Mr David Hanson: [65252]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much has been spent on drug detention equipment by each prison in each year since 2010.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

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

Mr David Hanson: [65302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many deaths in prisons occurred which have been attributed to the use of novel psychoactive substances in each year since 2010.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government publishes quarterly statistics on deaths in custody, including their apparent causes. Those and the latest annual figures can be viewed on gov.uk.

Figures on the number of deaths caused by the use of psychoactive substances are not held centrally.

Catherine West:[\[65394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many reports of drug dealing there have been in (a) HMP Wormwood Scrubs, (b) HMP Pentonville and (c) other prisons over the last 12 months.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is not held centrally and could only be collected at disproportionate costs.

■ Prisons: Locks and Keys**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[65527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many incidents of lost keys have required the re-locking of prisons since May 2012; and what the cost of those incidents have been to the public purse.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Security is paramount within prisons and it is important that the risk of any potential key compromise is addressed as quickly as possible in order to protect the public. When a key/lock incident is reported an immediate investigation is undertaken to assess the risk and unless it is clear that security has not been compromised, locking mechanisms and keys will be replaced and/or other necessary remedial action will be taken.

Between 2005 and May 2010 there were 16 relocks which resulted in costs of £1,280,234.

In the period from May 2012 to Feb 2017 there were 6 full or partial relocks of prisons in England and Wales as a result of theft or loss of keys at a total cost of £192,420 to the taxpayer.

Notes

1. The cost of a relock will depend upon the size of the prison establishment and on which keys have been lost or compromised. If a complete set of keys are lost, a full relock of the prison will be undertaken, whereas if a single key is lost only a partial relock will be needed, incurring a lower cost.
2. Numbers of re-locks of private sector prisons are included in the above but costs of re-locks at private sector prisons are met in full by the private contractors operating the prisons at nil cost to the public purse and as such these costs are not included in the financial cost totals.

3. Prisons are also responsible for re-locks of crown court cells. Figures exclude any numbers or costs of re-lock of cells in crown courts during the period.
4. Figures include re-locks arising from loss of keys and where keys have been forcibly taken from staff.
5. The figures quoted have been drawn from live administrative databases and may subsequently be amended. Due care is taken during processing and analysis, but the detail is subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system.

■ Victim Support Schemes

Justin Tomlinson:

[65191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of transferring the commissioning of victim support services to Police and Crime Commissioners on the quality of services commissioned and delivered.

Justin Tomlinson:

[65195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she has taken to ensure that victim support services provide victims with the support needed to cope and recover from the crime.

Dr Phillip Lee:

This Government has protected the overall level of funding for victims for the Spending Review period and has allocated funding of around £95m in 2016/17 to fund crucial support services for victims of crime.

In 2015 the previous Government devolved responsibility for the commissioning and provision of the majority of support for victims of crime to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), as best placed to understand the needs and priorities of victims in their areas.

Under the terms of Government grant funding to PCCs for victims' support provision, PCCs are required to make sure that locally commissioned support for victims deliver against victims' entitlements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and EU Victims' Directive, and show how the grant has been used to support victims to cope and recover.

Where the Secretary of State for Justice directly funds support for victims of crime, regular performance information is required on the outcomes achieved for those victims supported, to help measure and make sure that the support provided helps victims of crime cope and recover from the impact crime has had on them.

The Ministry of Justice is currently working with service providers it directly funds, and PCCs, to agree and implement a consistent set of service standards and performance measures across the range of national and locally funded support. As we announced in the House of Lords last month, we will set out our strategy for victims within 12 months, and will take the appropriate action to give effect to the strategy, including bringing forward any appropriate primary legislation.

■ Visas: Appeals

Martyn Day: [\[65378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will review timescales for out-of-country visa appeals to ensure that they are reasonable and appropriate.

Sir Oliver Heald:

We keep under review the time it takes for immigration and asylum appeals to be dealt with, both in-country and out-of-country appeals.

Martyn Day: [\[65384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many out-of-country visa appeals have taken more than six months to be decided in the last two years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The number of out of country visa appeals that have taken more than six months to be decided is 19,335 for the financial year 2014/15 and 13,470 for the financial year 2015/16. For the first six months of 2016/17 (April to Sept) the number is 5999.

We do everything we can to avoid unnecessary delay in the Immigration & Asylum Chamber. We have provided an additional 4,950 tribunal sitting days for this financial year and 138 additional Fee Paid Judges have been assigned to the Immigration and Asylum Chamber from the Employment Tribunal and Social Entitlement Chamber to ensure caseloads decrease.

■ Wills

Mr Charles Walker: [\[65054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether her Department has assessed the merits of establishing a national register of wills; and if she will make a statement.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Secretary of State has no plans to create a national register of wills at present. Individuals who wish to entrust their will to a third party to ensure it can be found after their death can deposit a will for safekeeping with the Probate Service on payment of the relevant fee (currently £20) or use a private safeguarding or registry service.

■ Witnesses

Justin Tomlinson: [\[65192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people who gave evidence at court as a witness were given special measures in each of the last three years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Ministry of Justice does not currently hold data on the number of people who give evidence at court as a witness where special measures are granted.

The decision on whether or not to grant special measures is made by the Judge or Bench on a case by case basis.

Justin Tomlinson:

[65193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support is provided and by whom to vulnerable witnesses including people (a) under 18 years of age at the time of the offence, (b) who suffer from a mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983, (c) who have a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning, (d) have a physical disability or are suffering from a physical disorder and (e) who are victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence in England and Wales.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government is committed to making the process of going to court simpler, easier and more sympathetic to victims. We are helping vulnerable and intimidated witnesses give their best possible evidence so that offenders are brought to justice.

A range of measures exist to help reduce the anxiety of going to court. These are available to all vulnerable and Intimidated witnesses set out at (a) to (e) in the question who fall within the definition of s.16 and s.17 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. The measures include giving evidence away from the court room, from behind a screen or via an intermediary, who is a communication specialist who helps the witness understand the questioning and to follow the proceedings.

Additionally, we began the roll out of pre-recorded cross-examination for vulnerable witnesses in the Crown Court in January 2017, to ensure eligible vulnerable victims and witnesses are spared the trauma of reliving events at the trial.

We are also determined to improve the family justice response to domestic abuse and are legislating in the Prisons and Courts Bill to allow courts to prevent abusers from questioning their victims in person in family proceedings. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) works directly with children involved in family court proceedings to, among other things, safeguard and promote their welfare.

Justin Tomlinson:

[65194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what role victim support services play in assisting victims to give their best evidence in court as witnesses, in particular victims of (a) domestic abuse, (b) a sexual offence, (c) human trafficking and (d) child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government is committed to making the process of going to court simpler, easier and more sympathetic to victims, to help them give their best possible evidence so that offenders are brought to justice.

A range of measures for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses exist to help reduce the anxiety of going to court. These include giving evidence from behind a screen, via an intermediary or away from the court room.

Additionally, in January 2017 we commenced the roll out of recorded pre-trial cross-examination in the Crown Court for vulnerable victims, which includes victims of child

sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation, so they are spared the trauma of reliving events at trial.

We are also determined to improve the family justice response to domestic abuse and are legislating to allow courts to prevent abusers from questioning their victims in person in family proceedings.

The Government also fund a range of victim support services which can help provide support through the criminal justice system. These include Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, Independent Sexual Advisors, and caseworkers for victims of Modern Slavery and families bereaved by homicide, to assist victims and other witnesses who are giving evidence at court.

The Government provides grant funding for a court-based witness service at all criminal courts in England and Wales, which provides emotional and practical support and information to victims and witnesses, including an enhanced service for vulnerable and intimidated and young witnesses.

■ Witnesses: Children

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[65253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children were witnesses in court in each month of the last year for which figures are available.

Sir Oliver Heald:

MoJ does not collect data on the number of children who are witnesses in criminal and family courts. However, the Government continues to work with the judiciary and others to improve support and protections for vulnerable witnesses, including children.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Information Officers

Justin Madders:

[\[65110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff of 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.

David Mundell:

Details of staff employed and salaries in Communications and Media Relations roles in the Scotland Office since 2010/11 are shown below. Information prior to this period is no longer held in the form requested.

The communications team in the Scotland Office has been resourced during this period to enable effective engagement and communication with the public on the constitutional arrangements for Scotland. This includes the Scotland Act 2012, the UK Government's position on the Scottish independence referendum and the Scotland Act 2016.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF STAFF	TOTAL SALARY BILL
2010-11	2	£108,439
2011-12	3	£169,373
2012-13	3	£180,954
2013-14	4	£241,636
2014-15	6	£348,895
2015-16	9	£426,223

■ Scotland Office: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[\[65565\]](#)

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

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff directly, and detailed diversity data would be a matter for the employing departments. However, a gender breakdown of staff is provided in the Scotland Office Annual Report, which is available from the Library of the House.

TRANSPORT

■ Department for Transport: Information Officers

Justin Madders:

[\[65111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff of 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 John Hayes:

The estimated full time equivalent number of staff who worked on communications activities which include internal communications, website and other digital communications, speechwriting, publishing, marketing and public information campaigns, communications strategy and external affairs for the last full financial year (2015-16) is as follows:

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF FULL TIME EQUIVALENT
NUMBERS

2015-16

Department for Transport (Central)

61.1

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF FULL TIME EQUIVALENT
NUMBERS

2015-16

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	53.6
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency	14.6
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	8.6
Vehicle Certification Agency	Nil

The estimated pay cost for communications staff for 2015-16 and earlier years is as follows:

COMMUNICATIONS

PAY COST £000S	2009-10	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
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Department for Transport (Central)	3,691	3,537	3,526	3,745	3,901
Driving Standards Agency ¹	956	705	519	N/A	N/A
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	1,372	1,061	1,636	1,857	1,829
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	676	635
Government Car 51 and Despatch Agency ²		Nil	N/A	N/A	N/A
Highways Agency ³	2917	2,332	2,211	3,450	N/A
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	398	362	351	368	327
Vehicle Certification	N/A	Nil	N/A	Nil	Nil

COMMUNICATIONS

PAY COST £000S	2009-10	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
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Agency					
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Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	296	285	253	N/A	N/A
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1. The Driving Standards Agency and Vehicle and Operator Services Agency became the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency in April 2014.

2. GCDA ceased to be an agency on 30 September 2012.

3. Highways Agency was replaced by Highways England in April 2015, a government-owned company, and is no longer an executive agency of the Department.

Communications staff pay costs for years not shown above can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Eddisbury

Antoinette Sandbach:

[\[65185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many properties in Eddisbury constituency are within one kilometre of the proposed route of High Speed 2.

Andrew Jones:

According to High Speed Two (HS2) Limited data, 567 properties are within one kilometre of the proposed HS2 route in the Eddisbury constituency.

■ High Speed Two

Antoinette Sandbach:

[\[65186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list all the companies which have been awarded contracts with (a) HS2 Ltd and (b) his Department in each year since 2010.

Mr John Hayes:

a) The companies that have been awarded contracts since 2010 with HS2 Ltd can be found in Annex A.

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

Attachments:

1. 065186 - Annex A - List of contracts with HS2 Ltd [065186 - Annex A - List of HS2Ltd contracts.docx]

WALES■ **Wales Office: Senior Civil Servants****Jon Trickett:**[\[65568\]](#)

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

Guto Bebb:

The Wales Office published equal opportunities data for staff in senior civil service positions in its 2015-16 annual report. It should be noted not all staff declared their disability status or ethnicity. The Department does not hold information on socio-economic background.

**STAFF IN SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS
(MARCH 2016)**

Proportion of women	20% (1)*
Proportion of men	80% (4)*
Proportion of women at Pay band 2 & above	0%
Proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)	0%
Proportion of Disabled staff	0%

*Number of staff in post.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Carers: Liverpool****Luciana Berger:**[\[65741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many carers are currently registered as (a) claimants and (b) staff at jobcentres in (i) Wavertree and (ii) Edge Hill.

Caroline Nokes:

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

■ **Child Benefit****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[65297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of rapes reported in order to claim child benefit for a third or subsequent child after April 2017.

Damian Hinds:

Child benefit will be unaffected by the changes limiting Universal Credit and Tax Credits to the first two children, and will continue to be paid in respect of all children.

Children: Maintenance**Caroline Lucas:**[\[64979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of non-resident parents with cases in the Child Maintenance Service's caseload have a statutory calculation which includes earnings from self-employment.

Caroline Nokes:

For cases administered by the Child Maintenance Service, as at November 2016, 8% of the total caseload with a statutory calculation was identified as self-employed.

Please note it is not possible to validate employment records for around 20% of the relevant caseload. If we were to exclude those cases without employment records, the self-employed would constitute 10% of the caseload.

Department for Work and Pensions: Information Officers**Justin Madders:**[\[65114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff of 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.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested for 2007 to 2013 could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The table below shows the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for staff working in the Communications Directorate for the last three years. The FTE provided in the table below is for staff who are communication specialists working on a variety of activities such as external engagement, strategic communications, internal communications, media and campaigns. An average FTE figure has been provided for each financial year.

The FTE figures provided include 10 staff who are not communications specialists. The total staff costs are included in the table.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
FTE	179	160.77	158.67
Staff Costs	£8,223,000	£7,135,224	£7,295,616

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Procurement

Jon Trickett: [\[65535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many officials of his Department oversee contracts awarded to external providers after those contracts have been awarded.

Caroline Nokes:

There are currently 83 Contract Managers overseeing current live contracts.

■ Disability: Employment

Stephen Timms: [\[65189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January to Question 61042, what estimate his Department has made of how long it will take to halve the disability employment gap.

Penny Mordaunt:

Making progress on the government's manifesto commitment to halve the disability employment gap is central to our social reform agenda. We want to build a country and economy that works for everyone, whether or not they have a long-term health condition or disability.

We have seen nearly 600,000 more working age disabled people in employment over the past three years. Over the same time we have seen the employment rate for disabled people increase by over 5 percentage points, where it now stands at 50 per cent. But we know that there is much more that needs to be done, so that everyone who can work is given the right support and opportunities to do so. We know that halving the disability employment gap is ambitious, and will take time to achieve.

Improving Lives, the Work, Health and Disability Green Paper published on 31st October 2016 sets out the short-term action we intend to take to bring about change. It also asked questions on ideas for longer-term reform over this Parliament and beyond through a formal national consultation, so that our systems, sectors and social attitudes all work together to help achieve the ambition of halving the disability employment gap. The consultation closed on 17th February 2017. We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations who have submitted responses. We will now consider these carefully as we plan next steps on this important agenda.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Stephen Kinnock: [\[65042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons people who are in receipt of employment and support allowance and who live with a relative are unable to claim a disability premium if they meet all other relevant assessment criteria.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Enhanced Disability Premium is automatically payable as part of income-related ESA to people who are in the support group, whether or not they live with a relative.

In addition, income-related ESA claimants may qualify for a Severe Disability Premium if they live alone or as part of a couple who both receive a qualifying benefit. The Severe Disability Premium is intended for those severely disabled people who live independently, and who are therefore most likely to need to purchase care.

No premiums are payable as part of contribution based ESA.

Kate Green:

[65064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how his Department plans to monitor the effect of changes in the level of financial support for new claimants in the employment and support allowance work-related activity group on disabled people.

Penny Mordaunt:

Our reforms to Employment and Support Allowance (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 Work-Related Activity Group, we are offering more assistance to move closer to the labour market and when they are ready into work, including guaranteed places on the new Work and Health Programme, or Work Choice, and additional places on the Specialist Employability Support programme.

As part of this, we have allocated a total of £330m for new, voluntary support for people with limited capability for work, over four years starting from April 2017, and an extra £15 million through a top up to the existing Flexible Support Fund in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Programme support for people with health conditions and disabilities will be devolved to Scotland from April 2017. The block grant to the Scottish Government will be adjusted to reflect the devolution of welfare, as set out in the Fiscal Framework.

This is a substantial investment in those affected by the removal of the Work-Related Activity Component, but there are several factors around the nature of this group and the voluntary elements of the support which mean that we cannot monitor this change in isolation.

Kate Green:

[65283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will confirm that all elements of the personalised support package for recipients of employment and support allowance will be in place by April 2017.

Penny Mordaunt:

As set out in the Improving Lives The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper, we will be introducing a new Personal Support Package (PSP) for people with health conditions from April 2017. This is in line with our ambition to provide a support system which can be tailored to individuals' needs. In relation to this, we have already recruited 300 new Disability Employment Advisers with the expertise to compliment work coaches and better support claimants' needs.

As part of the PSP, we will also begin to roll-out a £330m package of employment support for new ESA Work Related Activity Group and UC Limited Capability for Work claimants, from April 2017, which will deliver a broad range of employment and health support.

In addition to all of this, an extra £15m will be made available through the Flexible Support Fund in both 2017/18 and 2018/19 to offer more targeted support at a local level.

■ Jobcentres: Closures

Margaret Ferrier: [\[64988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2017 to Question 58932, on what date his Department will (a) conclude and (b) publish its equality analysis for the proposed jobcentre closures.

Damian Hinds:

Throughout the development of these proposals, the Department has been mindful of its duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Consideration of the potential impact on staff and customers has been informed by statistical analysis of population data, local knowledge and consultation.

As we obtain further local, site-specific information we will ensure any issues identified are also taken fully into consideration when the final decisions are made. We intend to complete this work within the next 12 weeks; equality analysis is not generally published separately but it will be used to inform final decisions.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[65668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations he has received on the effect of the proposed closure of Jobcentre Plus offices on disabled people.

Damian Hinds:

We have received a number of questions from MPs, MSPs, AMs, customers and other representatives as well as from public consultations for sites that are outside of the criteria we have set. We are conducting public consultation on all proposals to close or move a Jobcentre outside of these criteria to help determine any impacts that additional travel will have on claimants.

Throughout the development of our proposals, the Department has been mindful of its duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our continued focus on equality analysis will be important in helping to assess the needs of disabled people. Full equality analysis covering all sites where changes are proposed, will be carried out in due course to inform the final decision making process. This assessment will take into account feedback we have received for sites where we have undertaken public consultation and help establish the need for any alternative provision, such as outreach services.

Luciana Berger:

[65738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what health and safety risk assessments have been conducted for (a) staff and (b) claimants relating to the proposed closures of the jobcentres in (i) Liverpool, (ii) Newcastle and (iii) Glasgow; and what such assessments have been conducted for such people and the jobcentres that will remain open in such areas of the risk of gang violence.

Damian Hinds:

The safety of claimants is vitally important and is an issue we have taken very seriously as part of these proposals. Where we are proposing to close a Jobcentre we are taking all possible precautions, not only to minimise disruption for claimants, but also to protect vulnerable people by providing home visits and postal claims where it is appropriate to do so.

Throughout the development of these proposals, the Department has been mindful of its duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our continued focus on equality analysis will be important in helping to assess any risks for individual claimants brought about by these proposals. As we obtain further local, site-specific information we will ensure any issues identified are taken fully into consideration when the final decisions are made.

Chi Onwurah:

[65820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government has taken to consult Jobcentre Plus users on proposed closures.

Damian Hinds:

The Department considers it a reasonable expectation that a claimant travels for 3 miles or 20 minutes by public transport. We are conducting public consultation on all proposals to close or move a Jobcentre outside of these criteria.

The public consultation for some Jobcentres in Glasgow started on 7 December 2016 and closed on 31 January 2017. Following the announcements for other Jobcentre Plus closures on 26 January 2017, further consultations started on 30 January 2017 and closed on 28 February 2017. These consultations will help establish people's ability to access services from alternative Jobcentre locations before any final decisions are made.

■ **Jobcentres: Liverpool**

Luciana Berger:

[65737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 6 of his Department's Proposal for the Future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres, published in January 2017, what the evidential basis is for his statement that the proposals for jobcentres will (a) achieve access to more employers and partners and (b) give access to more employment opportunities.

Damian Hinds:

The larger sites are all geographically based in locations that can offer better services to our customers and access to employers. We are working with partner organisations to ensure individuals have access to the widest range of support during periods of unemployment.

Luciana Berger:[\[65739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 23 February 2017 to Questions 64227, 64643 and 64644, and with reference to his Department's Proposal for the Future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres, published in January 2017, whether High Park House jobcentre and Toxteth jobcentre are separate jobcentres.

Damian Hinds:

To clarify my responses to Questions 64227, 64643 and 64644, there is only one Jobcentre; Toxteth Jobcentre which is based at High Park House 7 High Park Street L8 8DY. The Department has not undertaken an assessment of the number of buses or the public transport costs for journeys to Toxteth and Huyton Jobcentres based on claimants' residential addresses.

Luciana Berger:[\[65740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of people who are currently registered to jobcentres in (a) Wavertree and (b) Edge Hill who do not have access to (i) the internet, (ii) a computer and (iii) a telephone; and whether his Department will issue guidance to claimants on places where they can go to access such amenities in the event that the proposed jobcentre closures go ahead.

Damian Hinds:

No specific assessment has been made of the proportion of claimants registered at Wavertree and Edge Hill Jobcentres without access to the internet, a computer or a telephone. Increasingly, our customers access many of our services on-line. This includes claiming benefits, looking for jobs and keeping us informed of their efforts to find work.

The roll out of Universal Credit and our reforms of Jobcentre Plus have increased the number of interactions claimants now have with us online. For example, eight out of ten claims for Jobseeker's Allowance are now made online and 99.6% of applicants for Universal Credit full service submitted their claim online, reflecting increased digital capability and accessibility. This allows the Department to tailor its service so that face-to-face contact can be focused on those who need extra support.

We are committed to retaining an accessible Jobcentre network and continuing to serve customers in all areas and the face to face support our work coaches offer at Jobcentres will continue to be a core part of the service we deliver. In order to be able to support customers in the most appropriate way, we have various means of interacting with them, including face to face, e-mail; telephone and by post. In offices

over three miles and 20 minutes away by public transport, we are carrying out local consultation prior to implementing any changes to help inform decisions about additional provision, such as outreach services.

■ **Jobcentres: Sheffield**

Louise Haigh:

[\[65355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employees at Eastern Avenue Jobcentre, Sheffield opted out of the Employee Deal.

Caroline Nokes:

Four employees at Eastern Avenue Jobcentre elected to opt out of the Employee Deal.

■ **Jobseeker's Allowance: Email**

Alison Thewliss:

[\[65654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to prohibit the issuing of Jobseeker's Directions for the creation of email accounts by claimants in areas with low broadband uptake.

Damian Hinds:

The existing policy already takes account of the individual circumstances for each Jobseeker's Allowance claimant when deciding if it is reasonable to issue a Jobseeker's Direction. Before issuing a Jobseeker's Direction we consider if the claimant has the skills and means to undertake the activity including whether they have access to the internet or not.

To demonstrate positive behaviours towards finding employment all Jobseeker's Allowance claimants are asked to undertake a series of activities from the onset of their claim. This includes the expectation that all claimants will create an email account to be used for employment purposes. For the majority of claimants creating an email account will be an important part of improving their employment prospects, however we recognise for some claimants it may not be reasonable to expect this to happen.

To support claimants in areas with a low broadband uptake to use online channels, customer computers are available in Jobcentreplus offices and claimants may be signposted to local partners who also provide internet access.

■ **Jobseeker's Allowance: Glasgow**

Alison Thewliss:

[\[65655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Jobseeker's Directions were issued at Bridgeton Jobcentre Plus in Glasgow in (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15 and (d) 2015-16.

Damian Hinds:

The Information requested is not available.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Martyn Day:

[\[65538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons brain tumours are not included in the list of health conditions requiring additional support needs in the most recent Personal Independence Payment Assessment guide.

Penny Mordaunt:

Claimants to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) who cannot engage effectively with the claims process due to a lack of mental capacity or insight, and who do not have any support from another person or organisation, are considered to require additional support from the DWP and elements of the PIP claims process have been adapted to provide further support for this group.

The PIP Assessment Guide provides guidance for Health Professionals carrying out assessments for PIP on who is likely to require additional support and describes the broad health conditions which would give rise to a lack of mental capacity or insight together with some specific examples. The guidance would not preclude someone with a brain tumour from being considered for additional support if the tumour gave rise to a lack of mental incapacity or insight.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[65755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the people who are eligible for personal independence payments are aware of and able to access those payments.

Penny Mordaunt:

Information about Personal Independence Payments (PIP) is available on the GOV.UK internet site and on all the main disability organisations' websites. We work closely with organisations through our partnership managers and national forums to raise awareness and understanding about the benefit, and to take feedback on how we can improve the information we provide. We also update professional bodies and associations covering hospitals, GP surgeries and local authorities on developments about PIP.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is ending for people who were born after 8 April 1948 and are 16 or over. For customers who are currently receiving DLA, the annual DLA uprating notice has contained information about PIP since 2014 onwards, including that DWP will write to them to tell them when their DLA will end and to invite them to claim PIP. A leaflet about DLA ending is freely available for, and promoted to, disability and support organisations.

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[65761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria his Department uses to assess claimants for the enhanced rate mobility component of personal independence payments; and what the differences are between those criteria and the criteria previously used to assess claimants for the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance.

Penny Mordaunt:

Please find attached link to the Personal Independent Payment assessment guide - www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-assessment-guide-for-assessment-providers

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is aimed primarily at individuals with a physical health condition. Under DLA higher rate mobility was for those unable or virtually unable to walk by reference to whether their ability to walk is limited by the distance, the speed or the time they can walk without severe discomfort or which would constitute a danger to their life or lead to a deterioration in their health.

The higher rate of DLA is also available to double amputees, those who are either deaf and blind or who are severely visually impaired (as defined) and to severely mentally impaired people who have severe behavioural problems and are also entitled to the highest rate of the care component.

26% of recipients are receiving a combination of highest rates, compared to 15% on DLA.

Kate Green:[\[65782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Oral Answer of 20 February 2017, Official Report, column 763, on personal independence payments, (a) how his Department plans to appoint personal independence payments and employment and support allowance claimants to service user panels, (b) how many such panels his Department plans to establish, (c) how many members each such panel will have and (d) what the length of the term will be for each such panel member.

Penny Mordaunt:

We want to reach as many people as possible across the country. Contributors will be able to participate as little or as much as they want, rather than commit to being part of a joint Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) panel for a fixed period. Participation will be entirely voluntary.

We aim to run a panel approximately every 8 weeks, totalling around 6 in the next year. We will be exploring different approaches to reaching people, including working with charities and representative organisations to draw on their expertise.

■ Social Security Benefits: Correspondence**Frank Field:**[\[65762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whose responsibility it is to ensure that claimants receive letters from his Department and its agencies on forthcoming appointments or meetings upon which benefit receipt is conditional; and with whom such responsibility lies when such letters fail to be received by the claimant.

Damian Hinds:

The DWP service is responsible for sending notifications regarding forthcoming appointments or meetings. In addition to sending letters, we do attempt to remind people of appointments where an alternative channel like SMS text is available to

use. Royal Mail is responsible for delivering DWP letters to claimants and in circumstances where mail fails to reach the recipient, the DWP service is responsible for rectifying the issue once made aware, for example if a claimant has failed to inform us of a change of address.

■ **Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals**

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[65601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the potential cost savings arising from the cessation of benefit payments to EU nationals after the UK has left the EU.

Damian Hinds:

We're currently preparing for a smooth and orderly exit from the EU and by working together with our European neighbours we are confident we will be able to secure a deal that works in the mutual interests of both the UK and the rest of the European Union. We are considering various policy options and it would be wrong to set out further positions at this stage.

■ **State Retirement Pensions**

Chris Elmore:

[65248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to make changes to the state pension rules for cohabiting, unmarried couple to allow a cohabitee to claim extra state pension payments after their cohabitee's decease.

Richard Harrington:

We have no plans to extend access to state pension based on a deceased partner's National Insurance contributions to surviving members of cohabiting couples. This is a feature of the old State Pension system for surviving spouses and civil partners who reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016 and, except as provided by transitional arrangements, will not apply to people in the new State Pension.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad**

Steve McCabe:

[65725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK retirees living in other EU countries and receiving a state pension based on the triple lock of the UK leaving the EU.

Richard Harrington:

The reciprocal rights and entitlements that will apply following the UK's exit are subject to the wider negotiation on our future relationship with the EU. We have not yet begun these negotiations, so it is not possible to set out any positions in advance.

At every step of this negotiation we will seek to ensure the best possible outcome for the British people, at home and overseas.

■ Supported Housing

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[65665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of provision in the supported housing sector in (a) Coventry South constituency and (b) nationally.

Caroline Nokes:

We have recently completed a joint DWP/DCLG consultation on the supported housing model with commissioners and providers, developers and investors, residents and those who represent their views. The new model proposed in our consultation will enable local authorities to assess their adequacy of provision by utilising their local knowledge to drive transparency, quality and value for money from their service providers.

■ Universal Credit

Melanie Onn:

[\[65157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that recipients of universal credit do not fall into rent arrears while waiting to receive payments.

Damian Hinds:

Arrears are an important and complex issue. There are many factors at play and arrears can arise not only because of failure to pay rent but also through the charging policies of landlords that can create “book” arrears from the outset of a tenancy. Distinguishing between these two effects is not straightforward and we are undertaking work to investigate the issue of rent arrears in Universal Credit, aiming to understand the true level of rent arrears and what is causing them. It is also important to note that many people are coming into Universal Credit with pre-existing arrears. For example, recent research by the National Federation of ALMOs showed that over three-quarters of their tenants were already behind with their rent before their Universal Credit claim started.

We have taken a number of steps to support claimants from falling into arrears:

First, improving our processes for verifying housing costs so that claimants get their housing costs taken into account in their payments at the end of the first assessment period. We have centralised and streamlined the management of emails from Social Rented Sector Landlords to speed up the verification process and we continue to improve the support given to our work coaches so that they can identify and resolve housing issues as they arise in jobcentres.

Secondly, whilst Universal Credit promotes personal responsibility and expects the majority of tenants to manage their finances, including their own housing cost, we recognise that some people may need help with this, so we can provide budgeting advice and benefit advances if appropriate. Claimants can apply for an advance of up to 50 per cent of their indicative award (including housing costs). Once people have

successfully transferred to Universal Credit direct payments, they do generally succeed in managing their finances effectively, paying their rent and reducing their arrears. In Universal Credit we increased the recovery rate for rent arrears, from a maximum of 5%, to 20% and our research shows that after four months, the proportion of UC claimants who were in arrears at the start of their claim, fell by a third.

Thirdly, we recognise that for some people, payment of rent is best made direct to the landlord and we have speeded up the process for Social Rented Sector landlords so that they can now apply for them at the same time as they verify rent and we have provided guidance to our work coaches to help them identify circumstances in which this would be appropriate.

We continue to work closely with landlords, Local Authorities and other organisations to identify further improvements to ensure claimants are fully supported.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

EDUCATION

■ **Qualifications in modern languages with smaller cohorts, and Biblical Hebrew**

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):

[\[HCWS515\]](#)

The government is tomorrow publishing subject content for AS and A levels in a range of languages with smaller cohorts. This fulfils the commitment made in 2015 to work with the exam boards to ensure the continuation of these qualifications.

The reformed GCSE content for modern foreign languages, published in 2014, is suitable for all the modern languages which have been redeveloped as part of the GCSE review process. These are: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, modern Greek, modern Hebrew, Polish, Panjabi, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. The exam boards have either already developed specifications for these GCSEs, or are currently doing so.

At A level, we have worked with the exam boards to develop specific content for modern languages with smaller cohorts. These languages are named in the content as follows: Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, modern Greek, modern Hebrew, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Portuguese, Polish, Turkish and Urdu.

The content for modern languages with smaller cohorts is largely identical to the reformed A level (and AS) content which applies to French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian and Russian. This was developed by the independent A Level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), appointed by the Russell Group to meet the expectations of higher education, and was published in 2015.

This content for modern languages with smaller cohorts addresses the risks associated with examinations for smaller numbers of candidates, including the challenges of recruiting specialist examiners. The requirement to demonstrate speaking skills is not included in the content, which is consistent with current AS and A level qualifications in the relevant languages – with the single exception of Urdu (in which speaking skills are currently examined). We have, however, included a clarification that specifications should encourage the development of speaking skills, although those skills will not be formally examined. To secure a level of rigour which is comparable for all modern languages, the government is introducing a new requirement for modern languages with smaller cohorts. The proposed content requires students to apply language skills (reading, writing and listening) in combination, by responding to spoken and written sources addressing common subject matter.

The A level (and AS) content for modern languages with smaller cohorts will apply to courses beginning in September 2018. The current specifications for these languages will remain available for courses beginning in September 2017.

The government is also publishing tomorrow revisions to the ancient languages subject content, at both GCSE and AS/A level. This was first published in 2014, to apply to all

ancient languages. For Biblical Hebrew, however, it has become evident that certain aspects of that content could not apply directly, or would be inappropriate at this level of study. To clarify how particular requirements will apply to Biblical Hebrew, and whether any requirements will not apply, we have worked with independent subject experts and others with a close interest in the subject. The revised content maintains the overall level of demand of the content while ensuring clarity as to how certain requirements should be met in Biblical Hebrew specifications.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ March Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (George Eustice):

[HCWS513]

Agriculture and Fisheries Council will take place on March 6 in Brussels. I will represent the United Kingdom.

As the provisional agenda currently stands, the primary focus of the Council will be an exchange of views on a Regulation establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea.

There will also be an exchange of views on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020.

There are currently five items scheduled under 'Any other business':

- Our Ocean Conference – An Ocean for Life (Malta, 5–6 October 2017) (tabled by the Commission).
- G20 Agriculture Ministers' Conference (Berlin, 22 January 2017) (tabled by the German delegation).
- European Solidarity Corps (tabled by the Commission).
- Dual Quality Foodstuffs (tabled by the Slovakian delegation).
- Update on the Animal Welfare Platform (tabled by the Commission).

Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. The outcome of these negotiations will determine the future shape of a new UK-EU partnership.

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords:

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ General Affairs Council March 2017

The Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr David Jones): [\[HCWS514\]](#)

The General Affairs Council (GAC) on 7 March 2017 is expected to focus on: Resolutions, decisions and opinions adopted by the European Parliament; Preparation of the March European Council from 9 to 10 March 2017; European Semester and; Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

Resolutions, decisions and opinions adopted by the European Parliament

The Presidency will outline the resolutions, decisions and opinions adopted by the European Parliament (EP) at its plenary sessions of 13 to 16 February 2017.

Preparation of the March European Council from 9 to 10 March 2017

The Presidency will present its draft conclusions on the agenda for the March European Council. The agenda will include: jobs, growth and competitiveness; external security and defence; migration; and external relations, focusing on the Western Balkans. There will also be two procedural items on the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the election of the President of the European Council.

European Semester

The presentation on the European Semester is expected to cover: the priorities for the 2017 Semester; the implementation of reforms undertaken by Member States in response to their Country-Specific Recommendations; and the endorsement of recommendations on the economic policy of the euro area.

Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making

Information is expected on the 'Joint Declaration on inter-institutional priorities' signed by the Presidents of the European Council, European Commission and European Parliament in December 2016. The Presidency will also present an overview on legislative programming and the latest on Commission proposals regarding Delegated and Implementing Acts.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Foreign Affairs Council (Foreign and Defence Ministers): 6 March 2017

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan): [\[HCWS516\]](#)

My Right Honourable Friends the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Secretary of State for Defence will attend the Foreign Affairs Council (Foreign and Defence Ministers) on 6 March. The Foreign Affairs Council will be chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The meeting will be held in Brussels.

Foreign Affairs Council

The morning will start with a joint session for Foreign and Defence Ministers on defence. The foreign policy agenda will feature Western Balkans, migration, Egypt and the Middle East Peace Process.

Defence

Ahead of the joint session, Defence Ministers will discuss the strategic outlook for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). EU Foreign and Defence Ministers will then review the implementation of the December European Council package on defence. The discussion and Conclusions will cover: improving the functioning of non-executive military (training) missions through the establishment of a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC); Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) for better joint capability development; and the proposed Co-ordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD).

Western Balkans

Ahead of discussion on the Western Balkans at the March European Council, HRVP Mogherini will brief Ministers on her forthcoming regional tour and update the Council on the EU-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue. In her 17 January speech, the Prime Minister identified the Western Balkans as a region in which the UK has played and will continue to play an active role in promoting European security.

Migration

There may be a discussion on migration following the Valletta Senior Official Meeting on 8-9 February which reviewed progress against the Valletta Action Plan. The UK used its Chairmanship of the Khartoum Process in 2016 to encourage implementation of the Valletta Action Plan to tackle unmanaged migration flows from the Horn of Africa. The UK provided a total of £4 billion in aid for Africa in 2015-16, with an increasing focus on jobs and livelihoods.

Egypt

Foreign Minister Shoukry will attend the lunch discussion where Ministers will discuss Egypt's relationship with the EU and role in the region. Discussions are expected to cover Egypt's political and human rights situation, including the growing restrictions on civil society. Ministers are also likely to discuss how the EU can best help strengthen Egypt's internal security, cooperate on bringing stability to Libya, and work together on combating illegal migration in the region.

Middle East Peace Process

Ministers will discuss developments on the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and are likely to discuss obstacles to peace, including incitement, terrorism, demolitions and recent settlement announcements.

HOME OFFICE

■ Policing

The Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Brandon Lewis):

[\[HCWS517\]](#)

I want to update the House on work by the police to improve transparency on how they use force and on their use of conductive energy devices, commonly known as TASER.

In October 2014, the former Home Secretary commissioned the then national policing lead for conflict management, Chief Constable David Shaw, to carry out an in depth review of the data that should be recorded and published every time significant force is used by the police. This formed part of a range of work focused on improving the way the police interact with people, in particular vulnerable people, those with mental health issues, and Black and Minority Ethnic groups. A key driver has been to ensure transparency and accountability on the police use of sensitive powers.

I am pleased to update the House on the significant progress made, supported by a diverse range of partners including Amnesty International and BMH UK. Chief Constable David Shaw's review made a number of recommendations, which set out that the police should publish a range of key information in respect of every serious use of force, including the ethnicity, age, location and outcome. The information should report on the situations when physical restraint is used, as well as the type of equipment, such as handcuffs, batons, sprays and conductive energy devices.

The recommendations made by Chief Constable Shaw were agreed by the former Home Secretary, and work has since been undertaken to ensure all police forces are ready for a new data collection system beginning on 1 April 2017. All forces will publish the data recorded locally on a quarterly basis, with a sub set of the key information collected provided to the Home Office as part of the Annual Data Requirement for 2017/18.

This data collection will be a significant factor in improving public trust and confidence in the police use of force. Improved transparency will contribute to delivering a real commitment on behalf of the police to respond to the genuine concerns raised by the public.

For the first time, this data will allow meaningful comparison across the range of techniques and tactics used by the police, and this should in time directly influence and strengthen police training, and operational decisions around the most appropriate tactics and equipment available where needed. It will allow scrutiny of why force is being used, which will provide invaluable insight, particularly in respect of minority and vulnerable groups, and in locations of concern, such as hospitals, mental health institutions and custody cells.

The wide range of data collected will also include information on injuries suffered, by the subject and also by the officers concerned. Our police forces deal with volatile and potentially dangerous situations every day, and this data will allow us to better understand the need for appropriate, justifiable use of force, as well as providing evidence of the tactics and techniques that may be more or less likely to result in injury in different circumstances.

This work is a real step forward. I am particularly pleased with the progress made to ensure the police and the public have the information needed to rightly scrutinise how the use of force is deployed and I am proud that this level of reporting is unmatched anywhere in the world.

This is particularly fitting today as I would also like to inform the House of the Home Secretary's decision to authorise a new conductive energy device (CED), Taser International's TASER X2, for use by police forces in England and Wales. This decision is in response to the formal request from the national policing lead, DAC Neil Basu on behalf of the police in England and Wales following the end of production of the existing authorised device, the TASER X26, and an open and transparent procurement exercise to identify a replacement.

This Government is committed to giving the police the tools they need to do their job effectively, and where modern specialist equipment like CEDs are used, to ensure our officers have access to the best and most appropriate technology. The decision to authorise the TASER X2 follows stringent consideration of strategic, ethical, operational and societal issues, including an assessment of environmental factors. As part of this process, a full technical evaluation of the TASER X2 has been carried out. The results of this evaluation, as well as user handling trials, and training and guidance materials, were submitted for independent medical assessment by the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (SACMILL). The Committee has provided a medical statement on the TASER X2 and which confirms that when used by trained operators in accordance with UK policy and guidance, the medical implications of the TASER X2 are in line with those expected of a less lethal weapon of this type.

The decision to authorise the TASER X2 for use by the police also marks the award of a commercial contract with Taser International's UK distributor, Axon Public Safety Limited. A new national framework agreement will shortly be in place, subject to a 10 day standstill period.

A copy of the Use of Force Data Review can be found in the House Library, and I will ensure that SACMILL's medical statement is placed there and on gov.uk.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Agenda of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) 3 March 2017, Brussels

Minister of State for Employment (Damian Hinds):

[\[HCWS512\]](#)

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will take place on 3rd March in Brussels. I will be representing the UK.

The Council will be invited to an orientation debate on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation 883 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation 987 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation 883. The Council will also be invited to a policy debate on the European Semester and the implementation of country-specific recommendations.

The Council will be invited to adopt draft Council Conclusions on the 2017 Annual Growth Survey and Joint Employment report, and to adopt the draft Joint Employment reports. As part of this, the Commission will also present the 2017 Country Reports, published 22 February. The Council will be invited to adopt the draft Council Conclusions on enhancing the skills of women and men in the EU Labour Market.

There will be a joint presentation by the Commission and the Presidency on the Tripartite Social Summit.

Under any other business, there will be information from the Commission about the communication on modernisation of the EU Occupational Safety and Health legislation and policy, and information in follow-up to their recent communication on Investing in Europe's Youth. There will be information from the Presidency on the state of play of the legislative proposal on Posting of Workers. The Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) will provide information on their respective work programmes for 2017. There will be information from the European Institute for Gender Equality on the key findings of their study titled "Economic benefits of gender equality in the EU". The Portuguese delegation will provide information on the upcoming UNECE International Conference "A sustainable society for all ages: Realising the potential of living longer" (Lisbon, 21-22 September 2017).

■ **National Employment Savings Trust charge structure**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions (Richard Harrington):

[[HCWS511](#)]

From 1 April 2017, changes to the National Employment Savings Trust Order 2010 and to the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) Rules will allow individual and bulk transfers into and out of the scheme in prescribed circumstances. These changes will help people who wish to consolidate their savings with NEST or with other pension providers, which is critical to reducing costs in pension schemes and avoiding large numbers of small scattered pots, often forgotten about by savers and hard to trace.

I can now confirm the charge structure that will relate to such transfers. Under the determination made by the previous government, the trustee of NEST (the Trustee) makes an annual charge on funds under management. This has been set by the Trustee at 0.3%. In addition, to help cover the set up costs, the Trustee makes a charge on contributions into the scheme from both employers and employees. This has been set by the Trustee at 1.8%.

Introducing a new type of charge for transfers in would add complexity for members and be inconsistent with the Government's policy on charges. Therefore the existing contribution charge and annual management charge will apply to funds transferred into NEST. The Trustee will set the level of these charges as they apply to transferred funds.

Levying a 1.8 per cent contribution charge in these circumstances would be punitive for members and would discourage pot consolidation. Charges on transfers in are the exception in modern pension schemes and our policy is to discourage such charges. Therefore, I expect the contribution charge that will apply to transfers to be less than 1.8

per cent and place no lower bounds on its level, which is to be set by the Trustee with due regard to the impact on members and scheme finances. The Trustee will also be able to set a minimum transfer value.

In the case of bulk transfers, the Trustee will also have the option of recovering the costs of administering the transfer from the employer.

Government aims to achieve a balance between delivering good value to NEST's members, managing impacts on the wider pensions industry and ensuring affordability for the taxpayer. I have been assured by the Trustee that, in setting the level of the charges to apply to transfers, it will take into account its target market and public service obligations and am putting in place arrangements to enable me to keep this under review.