



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 November 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:12 P.M., 24 November 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Barristers

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [\[53489\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how much (a) the Government Legal Department, (b) the Attorney General's Office and (c) HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate spent on counsel fees to independent barristers in the last 12 months.

Robert Buckland:

Government Legal Department (GLD) provides legal services to other government departments and instructs external barristers on their behalf. The amount paid by GLD to external barristers for such services in the 12 months from October 2015 to September 2016 was £25.1m. These charges are recharged to the client departments.

In addition, the GLD, Attorney General's Office (AGO) and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) made the following payments to external Counsel for their own cases in the same period:

	£
GLD	33,584
AGO	131,150
HMCPSI	0
Total	164,734

The amount paid to barristers in one financial year is not necessarily reflective of the work carried out during that year. Payment may sometimes take place some time after the work has been done and so fees paid in one financial year may relate to an aggregate of work done over more than one year.

All the figures listed exclude VAT (individuals must pay the VAT to HM Revenue and Customs) but are inclusive of disbursements incurred such as travelling costs.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: ICT

Tim Farron: [\[53175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of his Department's digital and IT projects are (a) under review and (b) subject to probable cancellation.

Margot James:

[Holding answer 21 November 2016]: (a) None of the Department's digital and IT projects is currently under review;

(b) None of the Department's digital and IT projects is subject to probable cancellation.

■ **GKN: Yeovil**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[53894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with GKN on the future of the workforce at that company's Yeovil helicopter plant.

Jesse Norman:

GKN are making every effort to support workers and their families throughout this period of uncertainty and, wherever possible, GKN will seek to offer alternative jobs to employees at other UK sites. We remain in contact with the company and stand ready to support any affected workers where we can.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Sick Leave**

Norman Lamb:

[\[53510\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many working days were lost due to mental illness in his Department in each of the last three years.

Ben Gummer:

The table below sets out information about working days lost in my Department due to sickness absence related to mental illness over the last three calendar years.

CALENDAR YEAR	2013	2014	2015
Working Days Lost due to Mental Illness	1574	1382	1443
As % of All Sick Absence	39%	31%	29%
As % of Total Workforce	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%

The Cabinet Office is committed to reducing work related absence due to mental illness and has a number of services in place to support members of staff suffering from such conditions. Our Workwell community is staffed by volunteers who aim to make Cabinet Office a happy and healthy workplace through a number of interventions including a listening service for staff. We also offer a 24 hour counselling support helpline through our Employee Assistance Programme provider and advocate early referral to our

occupational health service where appropriate for advice on a number of conditions including mental health.

TREASURY

■ Assets: Sales

Patrick Grady: [53912]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will issue a response to Early Day Motion 689, Sale of Public Assets.

Mr David Gauke:

Where there is no longer a strong policy reason for continued public ownership or where there is potential for an asset to operate more sensibly and efficiently in the private sector, the Government will look into the potential sale of public sector assets. Asset sales help achieve stronger public finances, reduce national debt and encourage economic growth through investment. The Government is committed to ensuring the effective and efficient management of publicly owned assets and keeps ownership of all assets under review.

■ Banks: Closures

Jonathan Edwards: [53481]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the banking sector on the closure of branches in rural areas.

Simon Kirby:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

■ British Nationals Abroad: Australia

Kevin Foster: [52643]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what reciprocal arrangements are in place to allow UK citizens who have worked in Australia to import the pension contributions that they paid while working abroad.

Jane Ellison:

Tax rules allow UK registered pension schemes to accept a transfer of pension rights from a non UK pension scheme – including those in Australia. However, rules applying in each individual country, including Australia, may preclude an individual transferring their pension to the UK or give rise to a tax charge.

■ Companies: Prosecutions

Tom Brake: [53309]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether there have been any prosecutions in relation to companies which have significant funds paid into their bank accounts yet report in corporate filings that they are dormant and not trading in the last 10 years.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) uses a range of information and intelligence sources, including Companies House returns, where it suspects a company is being misused to facilitate serious tax fraud to inform its investigation and prosecution strategies. If an individual is abusing a seemingly dormant company HMRC will investigate and determine the most appropriate operational outcome including prosecution.

HMRC does not collect data to a sufficient level of detail required to provide the requested information.

■ Companies: Registration

Tom Brake: [53285]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HM Revenue and Customs has (a) refused to register a company formation agent or (b) withdrawn the registration of a company formation agent due to a failure to meet regulatory requirements on money laundering in the last 10 years.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs has both refused to register, and withdrawn registrations of company formation agents because of failure to meet requirements under the Money Laundering Regulations in the last 10 years.

■ Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation

Neil Coyle: [53932]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2016 to Question 52165, whether his Department plans to publish its report on Equitable Life in December 2016.

Simon Kirby:

The progress report was published on Friday 18th November and a copy can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-final-report>

■ HMS President

Diana Johnson: [53219]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward proposals to fund the restoration of HMS President in Hull.

Mr David Gauke:

1. The Treasury has recently considered an application for support from LIBOR fines to restore HMS President and return her to her previous location on the Thames. We are unaware of any intention to move the ship to Hull.

■ Insurance Premium Tax

Drew Hendry: [53397]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to review the current rates of insurance premium tax.

Jane Ellison:

As announced at Autumn Statement 2016, the standard rate of insurance premium tax will increase to 12% with effect from 1 June 2017.

■ Ministry of Defence: Land

Mr Kevan Jones: [53485]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.19 of the National Audit Office report, Delivering the defence estate, published on 15 November 2016, if he will provide details of the alternative funding arrangements being explored with his Department to fund the defence estate Footprint Strategy.

Mr David Gauke:

On 7th November, MoD published the Better Defence Estate strategy (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565858/20161107_MOD_Better_Defence_Estate_FINAL.pdf). As that document sets out, MoD are exploring alternative funding sources, but the exact scale and profile will be subject to further analysis as the strategy is implemented.

DIO intends to provide an annual update to Parliament on implementation.

■ Money Laundering: Prosecutions

Tom Brake: [53282]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HM Revenue and Customs has prosecuted a company formation agent for facilitating money laundering in the UK in the last 10 years.

Tom Brake: [53283]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many investigations HM Revenue and Customs is conducting into company formation agents on suspicion of facilitating money laundering in the UK.

Tom Brake: [53284]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employees within HM Revenue and Customs are responsible for investigating company formation agents.

Tom Brake:

[\[53305\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information his Department holds on the (a) letter sent by the lawyers of Hermitage Capital Management (HCM) to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in 2013 on the company formation agency GSL which HCM accuses of facilitating money laundering in the UK and (b) response to that letter by HMRC.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is not a prosecuting authority and does not collate statistics specifically on investigations or prosecutions involving company formation agents. The number of HMRC employees involved in investigating company formation agents is not available, as HMRC staff would not normally work just on company formation agent cases, and activity statistics are not broken down to this level of detail.

HMRC has a statutory duty of confidentiality and therefore is unable to comment on individual cases.

■ Mortgages

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:

[\[53916\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to assist those mortgage holders who are seeking to switch to mortgage providers which offer better repayment terms.

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:

[\[53917\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Financial Conduct Authority on the effect of its regulations on mortgage affordability assessments on the ability of mortgage holders to switch mortgage providers.

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:

[\[53918\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of Financial Conduct Authority requirements on mortgage affordability assessments on the (a) ability of mortgage holders to switch mortgage providers, (b) competitiveness of the sector for existing mortgage holders and (c) favourability of post-introductory mortgage terms for existing mortgage holders.

Simon Kirby:

The government is committed to increasing competition in banking and creating an environment in which firms compete to offer a range of products that suit the varying needs of their customers. Both existing and prospective mortgage borrowers may benefit from shopping around to find the best deal available to them.

The Chancellor has not discussed with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) what effect its regulations on mortgage affordability assessments have had on the ability of borrowers to switch providers. Similarly the government has not undertaken a formal analysis of these effects.

Although the Treasury sets the legal framework for the regulation of financial services, specific rules are a matter for the FCA whose day-to-day operations are independent from government control and influence.

In May 2016 the FCA published a review which assessed the impact of recent changes to the regulation of mortgage lending. Where lending is affordable, the FCA did not see evidence that the responsible lending rules have prevented creditworthy consumers obtaining loans.

The full review can be found here: <https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/thematic-reviews/tr16-04.pdf>

According to data from the Bank of England, in September 2016 the average interest rate on outstanding mortgages fell to a historic low of 2.74%.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Greater London

Stephen Hammond: [53490]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of increasing Small Business Rate Relief for businesses in London.

Jane Ellison:

The Government announced at Budget 2016 a £6.7 billion business rates reduction package benefitting all ratepayers, and recommitted to this at Autumn Statement 2016. This package includes permanently doubling and increasing the thresholds of Small Business Rate Relief from April 2017.

These reforms mean businesses, including those in London, with a property with a rateable value of £12,000 and below will receive 100% relief. Businesses with a property with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 will receive tapered relief.

■ Occupational Health

Neil Coyle: [53298]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers have claimed exemptions from tax charges on payments made to support employees to return to work after a health-related absence since his Department announced that measure in March 2013.

Neil Coyle: [53299]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the cost of offering employers exemptions from tax charges on payments made to support employees return to work after a health-related absence since his Department announced that measure in March 2013.

Neil Coyle: [53300]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employees have benefited from exemptions offered to employers from tax changes on payments made to support employees to return to work after a health-related absence since his Department announced that measure in March 2013.

Jane Ellison:

The information requested on those using and benefiting from the exemption is not available. Employers do not report any information to HM Revenue and Customs when they use the exemption for recommended medical treatment. This ensures there is no increased administrative requirement for employers who help their employees return to work after a period of absence due to illness or ill health.

The most recent assessment of the Exchequer cost of the exemption was published in Table 2.2 of the Budget 2014 report under the measure name "Tax relief: health interventions", and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-2014-documents>

■ PAYE

Stephen Timms: [53970]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when HM Revenue and Customs plans to publish its post-implementation review of Real Time Information.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs is working with stakeholders to finalise the review and expects to publish in the first quarter of 2017.

■ Pensions: Public Sector

Alex Chalk: [53211]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of changing the remit of the public sector pension cap in order to harmonise its application on all areas of the public sector.

Mr David Gauke:

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 provided for an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of public service pension schemes remain sustainable in the future. The mechanism provides that the cost to the employer of providing pension benefits is kept within defined margins, thereby protecting the taxpayer from unforeseen cost risks.

Where the cost cap is breached, it is for the responsible authority to agree, in consultation with employers and members, or their representatives, appropriate changes to bring costs back within the defined margins. There are no plans to prescribe that a particular action must be taken to rebalance costs, but each scheme is required to set out the default change that will be made in the event agreement cannot be reached.

■ State Retirement Pensions: EU Countries

Naz Shah: [53492]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information (a) his Department and (b) HM Revenue and Customs holds on the number of UK pensioners who receive state pensions from other EU member states.

Jane Ellison:

HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs do not hold information on pension entitlements administered by other EU countries. Whilst taxpayers need to report such payments, reporting is combined with certain other forms of foreign income, notably payments from foreign private pensions.

■ **Taxation: Ivory**

Pauline Latham: [\[53507\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the revenue accrued by HM Treasury through tax on ivory artworks and objets d'art in each of the last five years; and if his Department will make an estimate of the potential cost to the public purse of a ban on the ivory trade in the UK in the next five years.

Jane Ellison:

The information requested is not available. HM Revenue and Customs does not collect data on VAT and Customs Duty from traders to this level of detail.

■ **Treasury: Procurement**

Tim Farron: [\[53202\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times his Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Jane Ellison:

The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ **Treasury: Social Networking**

Andy Slaughter: [\[53235\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Simon Kirby:

In respect of media management and campaign communications, the Treasury's communications team monitors relevant publicly available social media content to evaluate the effectiveness of Government campaigns. The Treasury follows Government Communications Service (GCS) Standards using the GCS Evaluation Framework <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation/tools-and-resources/>

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Antisemitism

Karl McCartney:

[907445]

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church of England is taking to tackle anti-semitism.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

The Church of England takes anti-Semitism very seriously and is supporting the work of the Chief Rabbi and the Holocaust Memorial Trust to counteract the increase in reported anti-Semitic incidents over the last year. Last week, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi launched 'In Good Faith', a twinning arrangement between rabbis and priests in local neighbourhoods around the country. It is in its early stages, but it will involve a commitment to work together to counteract anti-Semitism.

■ Church of England: Peterborough

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[53954]

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2016 to Question 52646, for what reason no timetable is in place to expedite the sale of Phase 2 at Paston Reserve, Peterborough; and if she will make a statement.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

Pursuant to the answer of 16 November, no timetable is currently available since the transaction remains the subject of further due diligence between the disposing and acquiring parties, the outcome of which remains unclear as matters stand. The matter is the subject of intensive communication and action between the parties concerned, and their advisors, in a bid to resolve all outstanding issues and complete the transaction in respect of Phase 2 as soon as practicably possible.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing: Newham

Stephen Timms:

[53966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of affordable homes to rent in (a) East Ham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Newham since 2010.

Gavin Barwell:

The information is not available at constituency level. Statistics on the numbers of private registered provider and local authority dwellings by local authority district are published in the department's Live Table 100 at the link below', The totals include social, intermediate and affordable rent.

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

■ Combined Authorities

Mr Christopher Chope: [52954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if the Government will bring forward legislative proposals to enable the establishment of combined authorities which have the power for extending their functions beyond those initially authorised; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Percy:

[Holding answer 18 November 2016]: When enacting the Cities and Local Government Act 2016, Parliament agreed the process for conferring powers on a combined authority, including conferring powers on an established combined authority, and there are no plans to seek any change to this.

■ Communities and Local Government: Procurement

Tim Farron: [53193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many times his Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I can confirm that according to all data held the Department for Communities and Local Government has not terminated any contracts, imposed penalties on any contracts nor denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

■ Communities and Local Government: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [53221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Mr Marcus Jones:

DCLG uses social media analytic tools to evaluate communications campaigns.

■ Fracking: Lancashire

Mark Menzies: [54032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to his decision to reopen the planning inquiry into the highways safety aspects of Cuadrilla Resources' appeal against Lancashire County Council's decision to refuse planning permission to build shale gas wells at its Roseacre Wood site, whether the analysis

supporting his decision differs from that of the inspector concerned on any matter of fact mentioned in or otherwise material to a conclusion reached by that inspector in that case; and what new evidence or new matter of fact he has taken into consideration on the highways safety aspects of that case that has informed his decision to reopen the planning inquiry.

Gavin Barwell:

Full reasons for the Secretary of State's decision are set out in the decision letter that was published on 6 October 2016.

In reaching his decision, the Secretary of State took into account the wide range of relevant issues that were raised and evidence that was put forward in this appeal, as well as the detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Planning Inspector who held a public inquiry.

The decision letter and the Inspector's Report are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovered-appeals-cuadrilla-bowland-ltd-and-cuadrilla-elswick-ltd-refs-3134386-3130923-3134385-and-3130924-6-october-2016>

■ **Homelessness: Newham**

Stephen Timms:

[53967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of statutory homeless households since 2010 in (a) East Ham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Newham.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Homelessness acceptances remain less than half the 2003-4 peak, but one person without a home is still one too many. That is why we have protected £315 million for local authority homelessness prevention funding, and secured £139 million central government funding in this Parliament. From 2010/11 to 2016/17, the London Borough of Newham received £5,104,774 in Homelessness Prevention funding.

We have a strong homelessness safety net, but we want to go further by putting prevention at the heart of our approach to tackling homelessness. That is why we are supporting Bob Blackman MP's Private Members' Bill. The Homelessness Reduction Bill will significantly reform England's homelessness legislation, ensuring that more people get the help they need earlier to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

Homelessness statistics are not recorded at constituency level. Statistics on homelessness acceptances for each local authority in England can be found in live table 784:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#homelessness-summary-local-authority-level-tables>

■ Housing: Construction

Fiona Bruce: [53476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department plans to take to promote the construction of modern, high-quality prefabricated housing.

Gavin Barwell:

Government wants to see a significant increase in the number of new homes being built of all types and tenures.

To increase housing supply, we need a diversified housing market where all firms embrace innovation to build homes more quickly and deliver a better product to the consumer.

The use of modern methods of construction, including offsite techniques, has the potential to improve productivity and speed up the supply of high-quality, high-performance homes.

We are encouraging modern methods of construction through our housing and planning programmes including our Affordable Homes 2016-21, Build to Rent and Housing Zones programmes and through our National Planning Practice Guidance.

In October the Secretary of State launched the £3 billion Home Building Fund, which aims to deliver 225,000 homes. £1 billion of this fund will contribute to projects that will directly deliver housing in this Parliament, increasing supply by providing support to builders using modern methods of construction, in addition to custom builders, small and medium-sized builders and new entrants to the market.

We will also continue to promote the Build Offsite Property Assurance Scheme (www.bopas.org), which seeks to provide assurance to mortgage lenders about the quality and durability of offsite systems.

We will announce further measures in the Housing White Paper.

■ Local Government: Procurement

Ms Harriet Harman: [53906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he has taken to ensure that local authorities in London promote diversity and equality in their procurement strategies.

Mr Marcus Jones:

In January 2013, government published guidance setting out how the public sector should meet the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when conducting public procurement activities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-01-13-public-sector-equality-duty>

■ Non-domestic Rates

Henry Smith:

[53475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on 100 per cent business rate retention; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We recently conducted a consultation on our approach to the implementation of 100% Business Rates Retention. There were over 450 responses from local authorities, businesses interests and other organisations. My officials are currently considering these and we will publish a summary of the responses and our proposed way forward in due course. In the meantime, we will continue close collaboration with local government in taking this work forward, including through the Business Rates Retention Steering Group, which is jointly chaired by the Local Government Association and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Steering Group was established to consider the mechanisms needed to set up and run the new business rates system, as well as the timetable and implementation of the reforms. It oversees the work of a set of technical working groups, each looking at particular aspects of the reforms. The Group meets on a regular basis and has done so on 6 occasions since April 2016. All papers for meetings are published here:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/business-rates>

■ Planning Permission

Mark Menzies:

[54078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many times the power he has under section 17(7) of the Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000/1624 to reopen a planning inquiry has been exercised by him and his predecessors to allow an appellant to adduce further evidence in their favour since the introduction of those rules.

Gavin Barwell:

The Secretary of State has the power to re-open a public inquiry as he thinks fit, for example if he considers that would be the best way to allow parties to put forward any further evidence and for parties to respond to any such evidence. No records are kept of how frequently that has occurred.

■ Private Rented Housing: Carbon Monoxide

Graham Evans:

[53393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what his policy is on requiring landlords to install carbon monoxide alarms in all private rented sector properties with gas appliances.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government has taken steps to protect tenants in the private rented sector from death and injury arising from carbon monoxide poisoning in their homes.

Since October 2015, private rented sector landlords are required to have a carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation where a solid fuel burning appliance is used, as these appliances have the highest risk of accidental poisoning. The landlord must make sure that these alarms are in working order at the start of each new tenancy.

In addition, the gas safety regulations require landlords to maintain gas systems in a safe condition and carry out annual gas safety checks.

Public Houses: Non-domestic Rates

Graham Evans: [53270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the effect on pubs of a rise in the small business rate relief threshold.

Mr Marcus Jones:

From 1 April 2017 we are permanently doubling the level of small business rate relief. Eligible properties with a rateable value of £12,000 and below will benefit from 100% relief. This means that 600,000 small businesses will pay no business rates at all. Eligible businesses with a property with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 will be subject to tapered relief. From 1 April, around 17,000 pubs may be eligible for small business rate relief, depending on the rateable value of other property used by the business, with around 13,000 potentially eligible for 100% relief, compared to around 4,000 now.

Social Rented Housing: Newham

Stephen Timms: [53968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many new homes for social rent were started in each year since 2010 in (a) East Ham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Newham.

Gavin Barwell:

The information is not available at constituency level. Data on social rent starts in 2015/16 by local authority are published at the following link: [Tables 1006 to 1009: additional social rent and affordable rent dwellings](#); sheet "Live Table 1006S"

Data on social rent completions are available for period requested at following link: [Tables 1006 to 1009: additional social rent and affordable rent dwellings](#) ; sheet "Live Table 1006C"

■ Starter Home Initiative

Julian Sturdy:

[\[53566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of how many starter homes the Government's starter home scheme will deliver by 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government is committed to its manifesto pledge to build starter homes to help young first- time buyers into home ownership. We have made strong progress on delivery, through the Housing and Planning Act, planning reforms, and working through the Homes and Communities Agency to deliver the first starter homes. We are working on a White Paper to set out our future plans for housing, including starter homes.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Big Lottery Fund: Olympic Games

Natalie McGarry:

[\[53902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to repay, with interest, funds diverted from the Big Lottery Fund to National Lottery distributors in 2007 to finance the Olympic Games in London in 2012.

Tracey Crouch:

As agreed from the outset, repayments to the National Lottery Distribution Fund will come from land development and sales in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Payments are expected to start in the early 2020s, and distributors will receive payments pro-rata to their contribution. The BLF's share of this money is £425m. This is set out in a legal agreement between DCMS SoS and the Greater London Authority (GLA) from 2012, which I attach.

Attachments:

1. DCMS-GLA agreement [Annex B - SoS-GLA Agreement (and full Counterpart) 290312.pdf]

■ Broadband

Calum Kerr:

[\[53948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the number of premises which will be eligible for the broadband Universal Service Obligation in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland.

Matt Hancock:

The independent telecoms regulator Ofcom has been commissioned to provide detailed analysis on the key factors that will help inform the design of the broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) and to publish their findings by the end of this year. Their report will identify the number of premises likely to be within the USO footprint on a

UK-wide basis. They are also expected to provide a breakdown for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Calum Kerr: [\[53949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of premises in (a) the UK, (b) England, (c) Wales, (d) Scotland and (e) Northern Ireland (i) will have access to superfast broadband and (ii) are forecast to have signed up to receive superfast broadband by the end of 2017.

Matt Hancock:

The government is aiming for superfast broadband coverage to reach 95% of UK premises by the end of 2017. This will include delivery from the government's Superfast Broadband Programme and further commercially funded delivery. The precise locations of this delivery are not known.

Calum Kerr: [\[53950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of the average amount of public funding provided per property under the Broadband Delivery UK scheme.

Matt Hancock:

So far BDUK led projects have passed 4,168,739 premises to the end of Sept 2016. To reach this figure we have paid £924,334,422 in cash terms comprising £497,656,699 BDUK contribution and £426,677,723 local body/devolved contribution.

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Procurement

Tim Farron: [\[53194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many times her Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Matt Hancock:

None.

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [\[53222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Matt Hancock:

No.

■ Football

Jim McMahon:

[\[53714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to allow football fans to have a greater say on the running of the football clubs they support.

Tracey Crouch:

We are continuing to work with the football authorities to fully implement the Government's Expert Working Group's report on Football Supporter Ownership and Engagement, published in January 2016.

Changes to English Football League rules to help Supporters Trusts to bid for insolvent clubs are already in place, as is the requirement from this season that all professional football clubs must meet with a representative group of fans at least twice a year to discuss matters of strategic importance to the running of the club.

■ Leisure: Facilities

Julie Elliott:

[\[53791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has for further investment in local facility infrastructure to increase activity levels.

Tracey Crouch:

Government's Sporting Future strategy is clear that access to the right facilities is a crucial part of getting more people active.

In December 2016, Sport England is launching a Community Asset Fund - with £7.5m available in the first Phase - to support the running, maintenance and development of local sports facilities, including support for community groups that want to use sport and physical activity to make a difference in their local area.

In January 2017, Sport England will publish its facilities investment guide, to provide more information on the type of projects that will be supported through the new facilities investment. Organisations are already able to apply for investment in major capital projects through Sport England's Strategic Facilities Fund, details of which are provided on the Sport England website.

■ National Lottery

Jim McMahon:

[\[53699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she has made an assessment of the relationship between the proportion of National Lottery funding on projects in each English region compared to the proportion of ticket sale income generated in those regions.

Tracey Crouch:

National Lottery good cause money is allocated by expert bodies at arm's length from Government, taking account of their own priorities and the need for equitable

distribution. It is not linked to sales distribution and Government does not collate this information.

Data on ticket sales is a matter for Camelot, the National Lottery operator. Camelot releases detailed national sales information which can be found online at: <http://www.camelotgroup.co.uk/about-us/reporting>. Camelot does not release more granular sales data due to its commercially sensitive nature.

Information on projects in receipt of a Lottery award can be found on the National Lottery Grants Database at the following link; <http://www.lottery.culture.gov.uk> and from Lottery Distributors' own websites.

■ Small Businesses: East Midlands

David Mackintosh: [53864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of the finding of the 2016 Lloyds Business Digital Index report, published in October 2016, that (a) 35 per cent of small businesses in the East Midlands have no basic digital skills and (b) 69 per cent of small businesses still need to invest in cyber security.

Matt Hancock:

The Government is working closely with industry (Including SMEs), education and training bodies and charity organisations to understand and reduce our current skills gaps. We have committed, through the Digital Economy Bill, to introduce legislation which will mean publicly-funded basic digital skills training being offered by providers will be free of charge to adults who need it. We also supported a number of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Growth Hubs to provide advice at local level for businesses and deliver a network of local support to help businesses develop the skills they need to do more online. The Government also funds Tech City UK which provides an online tool (Digital Business Academy) providing digital business skills training.

The Government is also fully aware of the need for all businesses - including small businesses - to improve their cyber security, which is why ensuring the cyber security of the economy and society is a key feature of the recently published National Cyber Security Strategy. The strategy sets out how an investment of £1.9 billion and the opening of the National Cyber Security Centre will help make the UK one of the safest place to live and do business online. The Government offers a range of free cyber security guidance, training and support for small businesses on www.gov.uk, including the Cyber Essentials scheme to protect against the most common cyber attacks.

■ Tourism: Low Incomes

Mr Barry Sheerman: [53799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to make major tourist attractions affordable for children from lower income families.

Tracey Crouch:

We are working with key stakeholders through the Tourism Industry Council to see how best Government can support the industry to make tourism as accessible as possible.

This government remains committed to free access for all to permanent collections of National Museums and galleries.

■ Yahoo!: Cybercrime

Jim McMahon:

[\[53704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department's cyber security department investigated the recent hacking of Yahoo in order to inform its policies; and whether the Government plans to introduce a mandatory reporting requirement for breaches of that type.

Matt Hancock:

The cyber security of the UK is a top priority for the Government, which is why we are investing £1.9bn in our five year National Cyber Security Strategy. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is the Government's centre of expertise in cyber security, providing a unified source of advice, guidance and support, including the management of cyber security incidents. When a significant cyber security incident occurs, the NCSC works collaboratively with Government agencies, departments and industry to assist the victim and ensure any lessons learned from serious incidents are actively communicated to the sector affected and fed into policymaking. A full investigation into the Yahoo security breach is taking place in the US, UK and Ireland.

The forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation will introduce a system of mandatory breach reporting. The Government is working with the Information Commissioner's Office and industry on how best to implement these changes.

DEFENCE

■ Apache AH-64 Helicopter

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[53859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to maximise the UK workshare in the AH-64E Apache programme.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[53860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the workshare of the AH-64E Apache programme is fulfilled by UK-based companies.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[53919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on employment in the UK of awarding the AH-64E Apache programme contract to Boeing.

Harriett Baldwin:

The new AH-64E Apache helicopters will allow UK and US forces to work together more closely in training and on operations. As we can take advantage of existing US production arrangements and economies of scale, replacing our fleet with the off-the-shelf standard AH-64E also represents best value for money for the UK taxpayer.

There are significant opportunities for UK industry involvement in the Apache AH-64E programme. At least five UK companies have so far been successful in securing sub-contracts from Boeing, representing around 5% by value of the global Apache programme. Support of the new helicopters will also bring further opportunities for UK industry; we anticipate the nature and scale of UK employment will be broadly similar to that required to support the current Apache AH Mk1 fleet.

■ **Armed Forces: Credit Unions**

Gareth Thomas: [\[54081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will (a) name the company providing payroll services to his Department and (b) publish details of that company's charge to his Department of payroll deductions for members of the armed forces who join a credit union; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Lancaster:

The company providing payroll and pension payment services to the Ministry of Defence for Armed Forces personnel is Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) the Department's strategic partner for Armed Forces Personnel systems.

The details of the charge made to the Ministry of Defence for payroll and pension is commercially sensitive and to release it would prejudice commercial interests.

■ **Germany: Armed Forces**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[53591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on running British Forces Germany in each year since 2010.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the former Minister for Personnel, Welfare and Veterans (Anna Soubry) on 24 November 2014 to Question 21463, which shows the cost broken down by financial year from 2010-11 to 2013-14.

The cost of running British Forces Germany for 2014-15 and 2015-16 was as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL£ MILLION
2014-15	367
2015-16	281

Costs include military and civilian personnel, administration, IT, training, healthcare, Service Children's Education, contracted services, Pay As You Dine, laundry, accommodation stores, housing and utility costs.

Figures are based upon Top Level Budget approximates and are rounded to the nearest million.

Attachments:

1. 214613 - WQnA extract on Germany [Hansard Extract 24 November 2014 HOC 214613.docx]

■ **Guided Weapons**

Mrs Flick Drummond: [\[53477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to replace the capability of the Harpoon missile after it leaves service in 2018.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Royal Navy (RN) continuously reviews the capabilities required to deliver their tasking. As part of this process the RN is working alongside other areas of the Ministry of Defence to consider options for Harpoon replacement.

I am withholding further detail as its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ **Iran: International Military Services**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what information his Department holds on whether the legal and contractual issues between International Military Services Ltd and the Republic of Iran have been resolved.

Harriett Baldwin:

This issue is subject to commercially sensitive negotiations between International Military Services Limited (IMS) and the Iranians.

The UK Government does not dispute the outcome of court hearings on this matter. The current EU sanctions against the Iranian Ministry of Defence remain in force.

■ **Iraq Historic Allegations Team**

Sir Henry Bellingham: [\[53391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions Ministers of his Department have had with the Head of the Iraq Historic Allegations Team on the use of covert surveillance on serving and former service personnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

As the Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) neither confirm nor deny the use of covert surveillance it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on this matter.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[53920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions his Department has had with the US Department of Defense on the System Development and Demonstration phase of the F-35 Lightning II programme.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[53921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the time taken for Block 3F testing of the F-35 Lightning II programme on the UK's planning Initial Operating Capability.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[54027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy of the Memorandum from the US Director of Operational Test and Evaluation to the US Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, on the Director's concerns regarding progress and readiness of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Programme for initial operational test and evaluation.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence remains in regular dialogue with the US Department of Defense on all aspects of the F-35 programme. The System Development and Demonstration phase is currently progressing well.

The role of the US Director Operational Test & Evaluation (OT&E) is to provide independent analysis and make recommendations regarding the readiness of the F-35 to begin the formal phase of initial OT&E. The US Joint Program Office has reviewed his latest reports and the issues identified are being addressed. The F-35 Programme Executive Officer has recently affirmed his intent to begin initial OT&E in early 2018, and initial operating capability for the UK F-35B, at Block 3F standard, remains on schedule for the end of 2018.

■ Middle East: Military Aid

Jim Shannon: [\[53495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assistance his Department has provided to the Jordanian and Turkish armies for the training of new recruits.

Mike Penning:

The Ministry of Defence does not provide training to the Turkish army. We have a British Loan Service presence in the Jordanian Officer Academy acting in an advisory capacity, but otherwise have no involvement in training new recruits to the Jordanian Armed Forces.

■ Ministry of Defence: Capita

Danny Kinahan:

[\[54025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding the Capita-led consortium receives from the public purse to manage the defence estate annually.

Mark Lancaster:

The Capita-led consortium (known as the Strategic Business Partner (SBP)) is responsible for leading and managing the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), the business unit within the Ministry of Defence that manages the majority of the defence estate.

As set out in the NAO Report "Delivering the defence estate" dated 15 November 2016, fees payable to the SBP for the period June 2014 to July 2016 totalled £90.2 million as follows:

2014-15 £33.3 million

2015-16 £55.2 million

2016-17 £1.7 million

Total £90.2 million

In the period to 30 September 2016 further fees of £7.3 million have become payable. The majority of the fees payable to the SBP are based on them delivering savings to the MOD that can be reinvested in Defence.

As the SBP is incentivised to achieve savings in the delivery of DIO's outputs and the fee payable in future years is, therefore, dependent on the level of savings delivered.

■ Syria: Military Intervention

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[54038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish on a weekly basis information on Russian and Syrian air assets engaged in attacking civilian targets in Syria; if he will publish the identity of the officer in the chain of command under which those air assets operate; and if he will make such information available to his EU counterparts with responsibility for sanctions policy.

Mike Penning:

The information available to the UK Government on Syria originates from a variety of intelligence and other sources, which it would not be appropriate to publish. The UK will, however, with our US and EU allies, continue to seek means of highlighting the responsibilities of the Syrian Regime and Russia for the humanitarian crisis in Syria and on seeking means to resolve it, including through maintaining EU resolve on sanctions.

■ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Tom Brake:

[\[53491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Joint Declaration for the Export and Subsequent Use of Armed or Strike-Enabled Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, whether

the Government plans to engage in discussions on international standards for the export and use of armed drones with other signatory countries.

Mike Penning:

Yes, we expect the UK to participate in multi-lateral discussions with other Signatories.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices

Peter Kyle:

[53955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether Trailblazer groups which develop new apprenticeship standards will continue to be known as Trailblazer groups once the Institute for Apprenticeships has begun operating in April 2017.

Robert Halfon:

The term “Trailblazer” has been used since 2013 to describe groups of employers leading on developing new apprenticeship standards and, as such, has become synonymous with our apprenticeship reform programme. However, whether or not the term officially continues to be used in this context after April 2017 will be a matter for the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Peter Kyle:

[53956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, who is responsible for carrying out the end point assessment for an apprenticeship standard when there is no approved organisation in place to do so.

Robert Halfon:

All end-point assessments must be carried out by an independent assessment organisation on the Skills Funding Agency’s Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations to ensure they are high-quality.

The assessment market has been adjusting rapidly for most new apprenticeship standards. 61% of all apprentice starts on standards have an end-point assessment organisation available to them, whether they are close to needing end-point assessment or not. This rises to 94% of all apprentice starts, including those who are expected to reach their gateway within the next 12 months, where an organisation is very close to being put on the register.

There is, however, a small number of standards where there are starts and an assessment organisation has not yet been confirmed. We are taking action to address this, including examining those lower volume and specialist apprenticeships where the market may not adjust quickly enough, to determine whether further steps are needed to ensure there is always end-point assessment provision by the time apprentices complete their apprenticeship. This includes working with trailblazer groups and potential assessment organisations to fill gaps in provision and put contingency plans in place.

■ Arts: GCSE

Julian Sturdy:

[\[52977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students have studied at least two arts subjects at GCSE level in York in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The requested information is given in the table below:

Number of pupils at the end of KS4 entering at least two arts ¹ subjects at GCSE (incl. equivalents) in York LA

YEAR ²	PUPILS ENTERING AT LEAST TWO ARTS SUBJECTS AT GCSE
2011/12	176
2012/13	171
2013/14	215
2014/15	232
2015/16	174

SOURCE: KS4 PERFORMANCE TABLES NOTES: INCLUDES: APPLIED ART & DESIGN, ART & DESIGN, DRAMA, PERFORMING ARTS, MEDIA/FILM/TV STUDIES, MUSIC AND DANCE. DOES NOT INCLUDE HISTORY OF ART AND CREATIVE WRITING. DATA IS PROVISIONAL FOR 2016, ALL OTHER YEARS ARE FINAL.

Julian Sturdy:

[\[52978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many GCSE entries for arts subjects there were from students in York in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is given in the table below:

Number of entries in arts¹ subject GCSEs (incl. equivalents) from pupils at the end of KS4 in York LA

YEAR ²	NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN GCSE ARTS SUBJECTS
2012	1,013
2013	992
2014	1,113
2015	1,182

YEAR ²	NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN GCSE ARTS SUBJECTS
2016	1,023

SOURCE: KS4 PERFORMANCE TABLES NOTES: INCLUDES: APPLIED ART & DESIGN, ART & DESIGN, DRAMA, PERFORMING ARTS, MEDIA/FILM/TV STUDIES, MUSIC AND DANCE. DOES NOT INCLUDE HISTORY OF ART AND CREATIVE WRITING. DATA IS PROVISIONAL FOR 2016, ALL OTHER YEARS ARE FINAL.

■ Children: Health

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to ensure that children who do not attend registered early years settings meet the physical and emotional development standards outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

Caroline Dinenage:

All three- and four-year-olds and eligible two year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free childcare per week and registered providers offering this early years provision are required to meet the standards of learning and care in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Take up of the free entitlements is high with 95% of three and four year olds accessing the entitlement. Of the 97% of four year olds accessing provision, the majority will be in a reception class, where in the summer term every child is assessed against the Early Learning Goals as part of the EYFS Profile. In 2016 almost 70% of children reached a good level of development.

For children who do not attend a registered early years setting, there is no requirement for the parent or carer to meet any of the requirements in the EYFS Stage statutory framework. In 2015-16, the Department ran pilots in seven local authorities to offer the benefits of the Integrated Review to children not in formal childcare. The pilots evaluated how best to work with parents of two year-olds not in registered childcare settings, so that their children can also benefit from an Integrated Review. The results of this pilot are being considered.

■ Children: Internet

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to update its guidance to early years providers on online safety for children.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to ensure that parents with children under the age of five receive guidance on how to keep their children safe online.

Caroline Dineneage:

Early years providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), statutory guidance for schools including nursery classes in England, sets out that all children have the right to learn in a safe environment. KCSIE is a living document and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis so that the guidance it contains is relevant to current issues and safeguarding concerns. It was last updated on 5 September 2016 and contains information for schools and colleges on teaching safeguarding, including online and the use of appropriate filtering and monitoring. KCSIE can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf.

As children increasingly work online, it is essential that they are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The Department for Education worked closely with the UK Safer Internet Centre and has provided links within KCSIE to further information to support schools and colleges to keep their pupils safe online. KCSIE sets out that governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), a multi-stakeholder forum which brings together government, industry, law enforcement, academia, charities and parenting groups to work in partnership to help to keep children and young people safe online, has published a practical guide for providers of social media and interactive services (including gaming). The guide has examples of good practice from leading technology companies and advice from NGOs and other online child safety experts. Its purpose is to encourage businesses to think about "safety by design" to help make their platforms safer for children and young people under 18.

The Government has also published a guide for parents and carers of children using social media. The guide includes practical tips about the use of safety and privacy features on apps and platforms, as well as conversation prompts to help families begin talking about online safety. It also contains pointers to further advice and support. Both these guides can be accessed at: www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis.

■ Children's Centres: Greater Manchester

Jim McMahon:

[53736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of reductions in local authority funding to children's centres in Greater Manchester on educational attainment of children since 2010.

Caroline Dineneage:

Due to the wide range of services that affect educational outcomes for young children, it is not possible to draw a causal link between children's centre services and a child's educational attainment.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) results show that the proportion of young children achieving a good level of development at age 5 has increased across all local authorities in Greater Manchester since 2010. EYFSP results from 2009-10 to 2015-16 are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-early-years-foundation-stage-profile>.

Local authorities have the freedom to determine how to fund other services delivered via their networks of children's centres, including via the Business Rate Retention Scheme. Local authorities have the freedom to decide what children's centre services are appropriate to meet local needs and statutory duties.

■ Department for Education: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [\[53224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department's small social media team within the communications directorate is responsible for the management of the Department's social media channels. One part of this team's role includes manually monitoring content that is publicly made available on social media – including our partners, stakeholders, individuals and our own channels. Monitoring can also be undertaken by other members of the Department, such as analysts, digital/web specialists and policy leads.

■ Faith Schools: Admissions

Ian Austin: [\[52884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Schools that work for everyone Government consultation, published in September 2016, page 7, paragraph 10, what the evidential basis is for the statement that the 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions does not achieve inclusivity.

Nick Gibb:

The effectiveness that capping faith admissions has had in schools in terms of promoting inclusivity and community cohesion is questionable. For example, in open free schools designated for minority faiths in the English school system (Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism) the intake has been predominantly of pupils from similar ethnic backgrounds.

The data showing this effect can be found in the table on page 32 of the consultation document, [Schools that work for Everyone](#).

■ Free Schools

Frank Field: [\[51766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2016 to Question 47153, if she will list each faith included in the category other faith designations given in that answer.

Edward Timpson:

The table below provides the breakdown requested. Please note the Christian schools have not specified a denomination.

	HINDU	SIKH	CHRISTIAN	JEWISH	GREEK ORTHODOX
2010	1	1	0	2	0
2011	1	1	3	1	0
2012	0	3	6	3	1
2013	0	2	6	0	0
2014	0	2	9	0	0
2015	0	1	5	1	0
2016	2	0	4	0	0

■ Grammar Schools: Disadvantaged

Lucy Powell: [\[52946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in receipt of free school meals attend each grammar school in each local education authority area with a fully or partially selective system.

Nick Gibb:

Information about the number and proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in each individual school, along with the school's admissions policy and the local authority area can be found in the underlying data accompanying the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2016' statistics[1] publication.

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

■ Grammar Schools: Special Educational Needs

Dawn Butler: [\[47852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what equality impact assessment has been carried out on the consequences of selective education, as outlined in the Schools that work

for everyone consultation document on the right for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities pupils to be in mainstream education.

Nick Gibb:

This Government is committed to ensuring all children, including those with SEND, have the opportunity to achieve their potential and make a successful transition to adult life.

The Admissions Code and the Equality Act 2010 apply to all schools – both selective and non-selective - meaning they must make admission decisions over those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) fairly.

The Department is having, and will continue to have, due regard to equalities impact, both in the study of responses to the consultation document and throughout any development of policy areas, following the consultation.

■ Japanese Language

Mr Jamie Reed:

[\[53353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will take steps to encourage schools to teach Japanese as a foreign language.

Nick Gibb:

Since September 2014, maintained primary schools in England must teach a modern or ancient foreign language to pupils at Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11). Maintained secondary schools must teach a modern foreign language to pupils at Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14). Schools can choose which languages to teach.

The Government is committed to increasing the proportion of the population gaining language qualifications at Key Stages 4 and 5, including Japanese. As a result of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), the number of students in state-funded mainstream schools studying a language at GCSE has increased from 40% in 2010 to 49% in 2016.

In August we confirmed that EBacc entry would become a headline measure in school performance tables from this year, alongside EBacc achievement. This will encourage schools to enter more pupils for the EBacc and for languages in future, which should increase the pool of potential people studying languages at A level and beyond.

The Government also supports the efforts of the Japan Foundation to help schools teach Japanese. The Japan Foundation encourages and offers support to schools by providing teacher training, resources and financial assistance of up to £3,000 for schools wanting to develop Japanese teaching.

■ Lifelong Learning

Peter Kyle:

[\[53689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to paragraph 1.102 of Budget 2016, HC 901, what progress her Department has made on reviewing the gaps in support for lifetime learning.

Robert Halfon:

In the 2016 Budget, the Government announced that it would conduct a review into the gaps in support for lifetime learning, including for flexible and part-time study.

The review is ongoing. The Department is currently speaking to businesses, learners and educational groups about ways of removing the barriers to people undertaking training and education throughout their working lives.

Furthermore, this Government is committed to supporting adult learning. By 2020, if we include the Adult Education Budget, 19+ Apprenticeship funding and the Advanced Learner Loans, more funding will be available for supporting adult FE participation than at any time in England's history. It will have increased by 30% in real terms compared with 2015-16.

■ Modern Greek Language: Qualifications

Catherine West: [\[52920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Modern Greek in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Italian in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Turkish in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Mandarin Chinese in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Bengali in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Modern Hebrew in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Polish in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[52927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Urdu in each of the last five years.

Catherine West:

[\[52928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students took (a) a GCSE and (b) an AS/A2 Level in Panjabi in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

It is not possible to identify pupils entered for Mandarin Chinese from data held by the Department. The Department does hold information on the number of entries into GCSE Chinese which includes Mandarin Chinese and other Chinese subjects, including Cantonese.

The time series for the number of GCSE entries in Italian, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew, Bengali, Chinese, Turkish, Urdu, Polish and Panjabi for the last 5 years in England is given in the table below.

GCSE language subjects

GCSE ENTRIES	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bengali	961	1,002	1,025	902	796
Chinese	2,307	2,341	2,830	3,286	3,700
Italian	3,851	4,080	4,068	4,004	4,104
Modern Greek	308	366	466	478	479
Modern Hebrew	440	372	500	437	528
Panjabi	683	733	795	800	855
Polish	2,748	2,944	3,948	4,075	4,726
Turkish	1,277	1,326	1,535	1,570	1,621
Urdu	3,704	4,093	4,111	4,185	4,013
Pupils at the end of key stage 4	620,617	632,397	618,437	611,024	603,203

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

1. Discounting has been applied where pupils have taken the same subject more than once and only one entry is counted in these circumstances. Only the first entry is counted, in all subjects, in line with the early entry guidance (see SFR main text).

2. 2015/16 figures are provisional, all other years are final.

3. In 2013/14, two major reforms were implemented which affect the calculation of key stage 4 performance measures data: i) Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education recommendations which: restrict the qualifications counted; prevent any

qualification from counting as larger than one GCSE; and cap the number of non-GCSEs included in performance measures at two per pupil, and ii) an early entry policy to only count a pupil's first attempt at a qualification, in subjects counted in the English Baccalaureate.

4. In 2014/15 and 2015/16, early entry policy, under which only a pupil's first attempt at a qualification is counted in performance measures, is extended to all subjects (see SFR main text).

The time series for the number of AS and A level entries in Italian, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew, Bengali, Chinese, Turkish, Urdu, Polish and Panjabi for the last 5 years in England is given in the table below.

AS level language subjects

AS LEVEL ENTRIES	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bengali	27	26	33	23	33
Chinese	1,125	1,183	1,209	1,083	1,001
Italian	695	800	800	850	739
Modern Greek	49	51	59	37	48
Modern Hebrew	29	35	44	42	45
Panjabi	76	79	76	83	76
Polish	362	456	475	471	519
Turkish	270	326	425	435	397
Urdu	390	324	318	299	264

Source: 16-18 attainment data

A level language subjects

A LEVEL ENTRIES	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bengali	28	33	25	34	34
Chinese	2,738	2,665	2,549	2,592	2,443
Italian	710	682	685	730	790
Modern Greek	71	77	98	87	97
Modern	41	34	46	42	46

A LEVEL ENTRIES	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Hebrew					
Punjabi	101	98	92	81	87
Polish	644	623	700	776	782
Turkish	342	393	407	467	520
Urdu	458	424	343	344	318

Source: 16-18 attainment data

Notes:

1. Covers examination results of students aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August 2015.
2. Figures for 2016 are provisional, figures for all other years are final.
3. From 2016, for A level, accountability purposes results are allocated to the provider where the student has enrolled to take their main programme of study, recorded in the school census or Individual Learner Record (ILR). The ILR has been used as additional data source from 2016, and this leads to very small differences in the student exam results included.

■ Music: GCSE

Julian Sturdy:

[\[52979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students studied music at GCSE level in York in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The requested information is given in the table below:

Number of pupils at the end of KS4 who studied music at GCSE (incl. equivalents) in York LA

YEAR ²	PUPILS ENTERING MUSIC AT GCSE
2011/12	163
2012/13	166
2013/14	179
2014/15	207
2015/16	148

SOURCE: KS4 PERFORMANCE TABLES NOTES: INCLUDES: MUSIC AND MUSIC TECHNOLOGY. DATA IS PROVISIONAL FOR 2016, ALL OTHER YEARS ARE FINAL.

■ Pre-school Education: Southwark

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[53907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the change in the early years funding formula on the number of places in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in the London Borough of Southwark.

Caroline Dinenage:

Maintained nursery schools make a very important contribution to social mobility. That is why, as we introduce new funding arrangements in the early years, we are providing local authorities with supplementary funding of £55m a year for their maintained nursery schools for at least two years. This will provide maintained nursery schools with stability by maintaining their current funding, and is part of our record investment in childcare – £6 billion per year by 2020.

We will say more about the funding of maintained nursery schools shortly in our response to the consultation on an Early Years National Funding Formula. We will also consult the sector on the future of maintained nursery schools, including on what happens after this two year period, in due course.

■ Pre-School Education: Standards

Caroline Lucas:

[\[53509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of trends in the rates of early years development; how many and what proportion of children are reaching expected standards in language development by age five; what discussions she has had with Ofsted on the standard and extent of its assessment of quality of teaching and learning outcomes of early years provision; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government wants all children, regardless of their background, to have access to high quality early education and childcare, as we know the difference this can make to child outcomes.

The most recent 2015-16 EYFS Profile results show that overall the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is continuing to increase - 69.3% compared with 66.3% in 2015. The results also show that 81.6% of children are reaching the expected level of development in communication and language skills by age five. The number of children achieving at least expected in all 17 early learning goals continues to increase – 67.3% achieved at least expected compared to 64.1% in 2015.

The Department works closely with Ofsted to ensure that the regulatory system drives improvement in line with Government policy.

Ofsted latest statistical release published on 15 November shows that the proportion of providers on the Early Years Register judged to be good or outstanding has increased to 91% as at 31 August 2016. This represents a five percentage point increase on the position at 31 August 2015.

■ **Primary Education: Sports**

Julie Elliott:

[\[53790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to make funding for the Primary PE and Sport Premium available to provide activity opportunities for children during school holidays.

Edward Timpson:

We want all pupils to be healthy and active. Since 2013, we have provided over £450million of ring-fenced funding to improve PE and sport in primary schools, and have committed to doubling the primary PE and sport premium to £320million a year from September 2017 using revenue from the soft drinks industry levy.

Schools have the freedom to decide how best to use the funding based on the needs of their pupils, and some schools may elect to provide extra-curricular activities for pupils during school holidays. However, this is a decision for the school, based on their local circumstances.

In addition to providing funding through the premium, there are also a number of initiatives underway across Government to improve levels of physical activity in children. This includes a new £40million investment from Sport England into projects which offer opportunities for families with children to get active and play sport together outside of school.

■ **Schools: Equality**

Dawn Butler:

[\[48273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will undertake an impact assessment on the compatibility of the Schools that Work for Everyone green paper consultation document with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 on public sector equality duty.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is having, and will continue to have, due regard to equalities impact, both in the study of responses to the consultation document and throughout any development of policy areas, following the consultation.

■ **Schools: Rural Areas**

Danny Kinahan:

[\[52366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the presumption against closure of rural schools in England contained in the Education and Inspections Act 2006; and what assessment she has made of the effect of that provision on rural communities.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises the importance of rural schools and the need to maintain access to a local school in rural areas. Often these schools are at the heart of their community. This is why the Government is supportive of the presumption against closing rural maintained schools. The Government is also introducing a new 'double lock' to provide additional protection against the closure of rural academies, to ensure that both local authorities and the Department for Education have a role in such closures.

The Government has committed £7 billion to create new school places between 2015 and 2021, in addition to our investment in 500 new free schools, to support LAs in meeting this duty.

Schools: Staff**Lucy Powell:**[\[53141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many citizens of other EU countries in each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK work as (i) teachers, (ii) teaching assistants and (iii) school support staff.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the nationality of teachers, teaching assistants and school support staff is not centrally collected.

Social Mobility**Tristram Hunt:**[\[53568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2016 to Question 50295, what methodology her Department plans to use in selecting the next four opportunity areas; and when she expects an announcement to be made on the location of those areas.

Tristram Hunt:[\[53569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2016 to Question 50295, how her Department plans to assess the effectiveness of opportunity areas in improving social mobility; and what performance measures such an assessment will include.

Tristram Hunt:[\[53625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £60 million social mobility funding announced by her Department on 4 October 2016 will be spent on (a) early years funding, (b) the Government's 30 hours free childcare policy and (c) frontline education.

Nick Gibb:

We are considering options for selecting further Opportunity Areas from amongst those areas that face these particular challenges. Details will be available in due course.

We are finalising the performance measures, following initial discussions with key partners in each area. We also plan to assess the implementation process in the first year of delivery so we can learn from this for future developments. In addition, we will be commissioning a full programme of evaluation so we can understand the effectiveness of opportunity areas in transforming outcomes for children, young people and adults in these areas.

We are considering options for how to most effectively distribute the £60 million social mobility funding over the next three years and we will say more in due course.

Work has commenced with each area to draw together the key stakeholders to fully understand the unique issues and challenges being faced in those areas, and discuss how the support available to Opportunity Areas can be best utilised. Tailored delivery plans will be developed in partnership with Opportunity Areas for rapid improvement, making best use of the funding available. This funding will be in addition to funding already announced for early years, childcare and frontline education.

■ Special Educational Needs: Hearing Impairment

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[\[53096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children for whom hearing impairment is a primary need and who attended a grammar school achieved five GCSEs including English and mathematics at grades A* to C in 2015-16.

Nick Gibb:

The number of pupils for who have a hearing impairment as a primary need, attended a selective school and achieved 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics in 2014/15 was 43.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[\[53097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children for whom hearing impairment is a primary special educational need attended a grammar school in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The table below shows the number of children with hearing impairments who have attended a grammar school in each of the last five years:

PUPILS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT AS THEIR PRIMARY SEN TYPE IN GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BY YEAR

January 2012 - 2016

England

. Grammar Schools

Year	Total Pupils	Total pupils with Hearing Impairment as their Primary SEN Type
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		Number	% (1)
2012	161,012	177	0.1
2013	161,482	186	0.1
2014	162,629	202	0.1
2015	164,149	297	0.2
2016	166,517	327	0.2

Source: School Census

(1) Percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.1.

■ STEM Subjects: Females

Gordon Marsden:

[\[53833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how (a) her Department's plans for post-16 education, (b) the Post-16 Skills Plan and (c) the apprenticeship levy will provide improved support for women to (i) take up and (ii) continue participating in STEM subjects.

Robert Halfon:

The reforms set out in the Post-16 Skills Plan will ensure that both women and men have better and clearer options to pursue education and training that matches their ambitions. In addition to the already well-respected academic option of pursuing a range of STEM subjects, there will be a new high-quality technical track that will prepare individuals for skilled employment. This track will cover a wide range of STEM occupations that require both a substantial body of technical knowledge and a set of practical skills. A new framework of 15 technical education routes will include areas such as engineering and manufacturing, health and science, and digital, with a strong STEM focus.

Apprenticeships also play an important role in addressing the gap in skills within the STEM workforce. There are an increasing number of STEM apprenticeships, such as in construction, advanced engineering, engineering environmental technologies, energy and utilities, and space engineering. As set out in the funding guidance published on 25 October 2016, we are delivering a funding system that increases the quality and the quantity of apprenticeships in England overall, ensuring that the system is clear, works for all employers and supports high-quality training. This includes additional funding for STEM apprenticeships to recognise their higher cost and value.

The establishment of new National Colleges to address skills gaps in sectors critical to the economy and the drive for higher-quality apprenticeships will also provide more opportunities for people to acquire the advanced technical skills that industries need.

We are also raising awareness amongst children of the range of careers that science and technical qualifications offer, and providing stimulating scientific activities to increase their interest in STEM subjects. This includes the STEM Ambassadors programme, a nationwide network of over 29,000 volunteers, 40% of whom are women, from science, engineering and technical companies or academia, who work with schools across the UK. We are also committed to increasing the number of people taking STEM A-levels by improving the quality of teaching of those subjects and providing support to schools to increase the proportion of girls' A-level entries in mathematics and science.

■ Written Questions: Government Responses

Rosie Cooper: [\[51343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to Answer Questions 49159, 49160, 49203 and 49204.

Edward Timpson:

Parliamentary questions 49159, 49160, 49203 and 49204 were answered on 11 November 2016.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Conor McGinn: [\[53340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many applicants for common agricultural policy payments from (a) St Helens North constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK were awaiting payment by the March 2016 payment deadline.

George Eustice:

As at the end of March 2016, in addition to claims which the Rural Payments Agency cannot pay due to legal reasons such as probate, there were 13,531 English claimants still awaiting a BPS Payment. Of these 54 applicants were in Merseyside and 25 in St Helens North. The RPA does not hold the information for the UK as payments in Scotland and Wales are made by their respective governments.

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[53351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many farmers had not received money due from the Rural Payments Agency under the 2015 Basic Payment Scheme by the end of 16 November 2016 in (a) England, (b) Cumbria and (c) Copeland parliamentary constituency.

George Eustice:

By 16 November, in addition to claims which the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) cannot pay due to legal reasons such as probate, all but 6 claimants had received a payment,

and of those 6 none are in Cumbria or the Copeland constituency. This figure is an increase of 1 compared to the previously reported figure because the agency is completing routine final checks on nil value claims.

The RPA said it would investigate BPS 2015 claims where there is a discrepancy between the claim information and that held on the Rural Payments Service through a planned reconciliation process. This started after the BPS 2016 application window and looked at an initial stock of 13,607 claims for England. The agency continues to review new queries and has identified 1,200 claims relating to common land, of these 386 are in Cumbria and 73 are in the Copeland constituency.

John Glen:

[\[907461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure timely payments from the Rural Payments Agency.

George Eustice:

The RPA has improved the Rural Payments service for 2016 and over 80% of BPS claims were submitted online this year.

This means the RPA has been able to focus on processing claims as quickly as possible in order to make payments to claimants from the opening of the payment window next month. They are aiming to pay 90% of claimants their BPS 2016 payment by the end of the year.

■ Complementary Medicine

James Duddridge:

[\[53320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to relax laws and restrictions imposed by the EU on homeopathic medicines, herbs, vitamins and mineral supplements after the UK exits the EU.

George Eustice:

The Veterinary Medicines Regulations are in place to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of veterinary medicines.

No distinction is made between homeopathic medicines, herbs, vitamins and mineral supplements if they are marketed as having a beneficial effect on health, make medicinal claims or if they contain certain ingredients that exert a pharmacological effect on the target animal. They require a marketing authorisation to be sold in the UK.

Defra has no immediate plans to review the regulation of homeopathic medicines, herbs, vitamins and mineral supplements once we have left the EU. The Government's intention is to repatriate the laws and restrictions into British law via a proposed repeal Bill. Following our exit, this bill will afford us all the time we need to review each piece of inherited legislation and decide which parts to preserve in new UK law and which parts to discard.

■ Dairy Farming

Martyn Day: [\[53565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations her Department has received from the dairy industry since the March 2016 publication of the revised Eatwell Guide.

George Eustice:

I hold a quarterly meeting with DairyUK, NFU and AHDB Dairy to discuss key issues and opportunities for the UK dairy sector.

Further information on Ministerial meetings with organisations is available on Gov.UK, as part of the quarterly transparency information.

The Eatwell Guide is produced by Public Health England.

■ Dairy Farming: Animal Feed

Helen Hayes: [\[53216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect of zero-grazing on the welfare of dairy cows; and what steps she is taking to discourage zero-grazing in the dairy sector.

George Eustice:

The Department has not made a direct comparative assessment of the animal welfare, environmental and human health benefits of grass-fed against grain-fed diets, although we are aware of various research reports and industry initiatives which support the view that grass feeding can have benefits for animal welfare and the environment, and play a part in determining meat quality.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Procurement

Tim Farron: [\[53196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many times her Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

George Eustice:

The Public Contracts Regulations (2015) include a mandatory requirement for contracting authorities to exclude companies from public contracts where they have been convicted of certain criminal offences including conspiracy, corruption, bribery and fraud. Potential bidders may also be excluded from participating in the tender process on certain grounds at the discretion of the contracting authority. These grounds include circumstances where they have been convicted of an offence (not attracting mandatory exclusion) relating to the conduct of his business or profession; or been found guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means that the contracting authority can demonstrate

Defra has terminated five contracts since 1 November 2015 for the reasons of savings, renegotiation of contract, change of supplier name and consolidation of several contracts into one.

Defra does not impose penalties but uses service credits to ensure compliance of contracts. The majority of contracts are monitored by Defra's operation teams. Consequently it is not possible to determine how often these measures are employed.

No potential supplier has ever identified themselves as being guilty of gross professional misconduct during the tendering process so there has been no necessity to deny permission to tender on those grounds.

■ Environment Protection: Public Consultation

Kerry McCarthy: [\[53904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has for members of the public to contribute to the consultation on its 25 year plan for the natural environment.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The first step towards developing the plan will be to publish soon the framework which will be open to all to contribute. We will use the feedback from this to help develop the full plan itself next year.

■ Floods: Costs

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[53825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the cost of flood damage as a result of Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank to (a) national park authorities, (b) county councils, (c) borough councils, (d) fire and rescue authorities, (e) police and crime authorities and (f) parish councils.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government does not routinely hold or collect data at these levels.

The Lake District National Park Authority estimated £10m worth of flood damage was caused to access infrastructure in the Lake District National Park as a result of Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank.

■ Ivory: Imports

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[53336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the level of ivory imports to the UK in the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Import permits for bringing ivory into the UK are managed on behalf of Defra by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. The number of permits issued in the last five years is shown below:

IVORY TYPE	IMPORT TYPE	NUMBER OF PERMITS ISSUED
Raw tusks	Hunting trophies	33
Raw tusks	Personal use	7
Raw tusks	Educational use	2
Carvings	Commercial use	1203
Carvings	Personal use	60
Carvings	Exhibitions	163
Carvings	Educational use	3
Ivory pieces	Enforcement	1

The figures supplied above refer to permits that have been 'returned used', which is a confirmed import to the UK and will be different from the 'permits issued'. It is not uncommon for permits to be issued and never returned either 'used' or 'un-used'.

■ Low Emission Zones

Paul Blomfield: [\[907463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will introduce an air quality national framework for low emission zones.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is not intending to introduce a national framework for Low Emission Zones but will introduce one for Clean Air Zones, the consultation for which was launched on 13 October. Clean Air Zones encompass the Low Emission Zone approach. They discourage the more polluting vehicles from entering the zone but they also focus wider action to improve air quality and accelerate the transition to a low carbon, low emission economy.

■ Natural Disasters

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[54010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2016 to Question 52825, what estimate she has made of the level of funding support received from HM Treasury for response and recovery activities relating to emergency events in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Following the extreme flood events of the winters of 2013/14 and 2015/16, HM Treasury provided the following exceptional additional funding to meet costs of responding to the flooding; and repairing, restoring and maintaining critical flood defences:

2013/14 - £30m

2014/15 - £180m

2015/16 - £85m

■ Sheep Dipping: Organophosphates

Jessica Morden:

[\[907462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the sheep dip sufferers support group on organophosphate poisoning.

George Eustice:

I met the Sheep Dip Sufferers Group in November last year. The concerns of the Sufferers Group were discussed in detail and we committed to providing information to the group, including the Government's rationale for ending compulsory sheep dipping.

This information was provided to Tom Rigby (co-ordinator of the Sheep Dip Sufferers Group) in May of this year.

■ Waste Disposal: Dudley

Ian Austin:

[\[54012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions her Department has had with the Environment Agency on removal of the mound of rubbish at the site operated by Rowan Oak Waste on Shaw Road, Dudley.

Ian Austin:

[\[54013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information her Department holds on whether the Environment Agency plans to impose penalties on the operators of the Rowan Oak Waste site on Shaw Road, Dudley, for failing to dispose of waste.

Ian Austin:

[\[54014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information her Department holds on the steps taken by the Environment Agency to remove the mound of rubbish at the site operated by Rowan Oak Waste on Shaw Road, Dudley.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency has taken enforcement action against Rowanoak Waste Services Limited following poor compliance, including the exceedance of their legal waste quantities. On 29 April 2016 their environmental permit was revoked, preventing them from moving more waste to the site.

The revocation notice also required the removal of all waste on the site by 16 September 2016. Rowanoak Waste Services Limited failed to comply with this and the Environment Agency is now preparing to take further action against the company for non-compliance.

The Environment Agency always looks to take prosecution action against an operator who is found to have committed a criminal offence and will always seek to ensure that it remediates any environmental impact caused by its illegal activity.

The Environment Agency is working with the landowner, Dudley Borough Council and the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service to minimise pollution and fire risk at the site and to have it cleared as soon as possible.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Jim McMahon: [53514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what estimate he has made of the potential cost to the public purse of the Government's appeal to the Supreme Court on triggering Article 50.

Mr David Jones:

In line with other Government Departments, the Department for Exiting the European Union will pay its legal costs from its budget. As the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union said in his statement to the House on 7 November 2016, all those figures will be published in due course.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [53226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Mr David Jones:

In respect of media and campaign communications, DExEU's communications team monitors relevant publicly available social media content to evaluate the effectiveness of government campaigns.

The Department follows the Government Communications Service (GCS) Standards using the GCS Evaluation Framework

<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation/tools-and-resources/>.

■ Nigel Farage

Mr Jamie Reed: [53301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what (a) discussions and (b) meetings he has had with Nigel Farage since 23 June 2016.

Mr David Jones:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 16 November 2016 to the Question 52723.

Details of Ministerial meetings will be published in the Department's Quarterly Transparency Returns, which will be made publicly available on GOV.UK.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Andargachew Tsege

Sir Henry Bellingham:

[\[53800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many times the UK Ambassador to Ethiopia has raised with the Ethiopian government the case of Andargachew Tsege; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Ambassador takes every opportunity to lobby on Mr Tsege's case at the highest levels in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government are in no doubt over our concern for Mr Tsege and the priority we place upon his wellbeing.

■ Cyprus: Politics and Government

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[53382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of progress in the Cyprus peace talks in Mont Pelerin; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We welcome the courageous leadership of President Anastasiades and Mr Akinci on the Cyprus Settlement negotiations, and the efforts of the two sides in their recent talks in Mont Pelerin. As the UN has commented, despite their best efforts, the Leaders were not at this stage able to reach the necessary further convergences on the criteria for territorial adjustment while in Switzerland. We continue to believe that with courage and compromise on both sides a deal is achievable. The UK will continue its steadfast support for a just and lasting settlement, and we stand ready to help bring the process to a successful conclusion.

■ Dominican Republic: Floods

Will Quince:

[\[53909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support his Department is providing to the Dominican Republic to assist with the flooding in that country.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The UK has monitored the situation since heavy persistent rain started falling in parts of the Dominican Republic on 7 November and stands ready to offer assistance if requested by the Government of the Dominican Republic.

■ Female Genital Mutilation

Helen Goodman: [53296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has received reports on other countries' ambassadors to the UK having arranged female genital mutilation for their relatives.

Sir Alan Duncan:
No.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Departmental Responsibilities

Julie Elliott: [53398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what role his Department will have in negotiations on the UK's exit from the EU.

Sir Alan Duncan:
The Department for Exiting the European Union is the lead department for such matters. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DExEU are working closely together to get the best possible deal for the British people.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Procurement

Tim Farron: [53197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many times his Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Sir Alan Duncan:
Our records show no such instances since November 2015.

Due to devolved contractual authority central FCO records cover only UK let contracts of a value of £80k or more.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [53227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Alok Sharma:
In line with the Foreign Office social media guidance [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fco-social-media-guidance] published online, the Department encourages all staff to make full use of the opportunities provided by social media to help deliver the Department's objectives. This includes, but is not limited to, monitoring social media:

- to respond to relevant enquiries on FCO social media channels

- to monitor the effectiveness of government campaigns using the Government Communications Service Evaluation Framework
<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation/tools-and-resources/>
- around events - to collect information and identify influential accounts
- responses to consultations and crowd sourcing exercises that can be used in the formulation of policy

FCO staff are expected to use social media for research: following discussions, keeping track of news and building networks as part of their day to day work. This may involve setting up an account with a third-party monitoring tool.

■ Hong Kong Legislative Council: Membership

Catherine West:

[59324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the banning of Yau Wai-ching and Baggio Sixtus Leung from taking office in the Hong Kong Legislative Council by the Chinese government on the Sino-British Joint Declaration; and if he will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

The status of Yau-Wai-ching and Sixtus Leung is for the Hong Kong' Courts to decide. This issue is still the subject of legal proceedings in Hong Kong. The Joint Declaration and the Basic Law underpin the implementation of 'One Country, Two Systems' and remain the foundations for the high degree of autonomy of Hong Kong and the rights and freedoms of its people.

■ Ilois: Finance

Henry Smith:

[53323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Written Statement of 16 November 2016, WS260, how he plans to use the £40 million offered in support of the Chagos Islands community over the next 10 years (a) generally and (b) to benefit the UK Chagossian population in Crawley constituency.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Government is determined to address the aspirations of Chagossians for better lives and for a continued connection to the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). Accordingly, the Government is creating a significant and ambitious support package to provide Chagossians with better life chances and is developing an increased visits programme. This will be used to address the most pressing needs of Chagossians, notably adequate health and social care, improved education access and employment opportunities. The package will now be worked up fully in discussion with all those with an interest, including the Chagossian community.

■ Iran: Christianity

Jim Shannon: [\[54091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will raise the case of the seizure of the retreat centre in Mohammadshahr in Karaj belonging to the Council of Assemblies of God Churches with his Iranian counterparts.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK regularly raises human rights cases with the Iranian government including the continued persecution of religious minorities. We are aware of restrictions on translating Christian texts in Iran. We condemn these restrictions alongside reports of Christian property being seized and reports of theological schools being closed. We call on Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to allow freedom of religion to all Iranians.

Jim Shannon: [\[54092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has received representations on the banning of the publication of bibles and Christian literature in Farsi.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK regularly raises human rights cases with the Iranian government including the continued persecution of religious minorities. We are aware of restrictions on translating Christian texts in Iran. We condemn these restrictions alongside reports of Christian property being seized and reports of theological schools being closed. We call on Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to allow freedom of religion to all Iranians.

Jim Shannon: [\[54093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports his Department has received on the closure of (a) church-owned theological schools and (b) leadership development programmes in Iran.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK regularly raises human rights cases with the Iranian government including the continued persecution of religious minorities. We are aware of restrictions on translating Christian texts in Iran. We condemn these restrictions alongside reports of Christian property being seized and reports of theological schools being closed. We call on Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to allow freedom of religion to all Iranians.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Craig Tracey: [\[53694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for the viability of successful peace talks between the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority of the Palestinian Authority naming schools after terrorists who have killed Israelis.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

While we have not made any assessment on this specific issue, we absolutely condemn the glorification of terrorism and all incitement to commit violence, whichever side it comes from. We regularly urge the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships to refrain from or prevent any actions that could threaten the viability of a two-state solution, including violence, incitement and settlement expansion. We continue to support the reinstatement of the Tripartite Committee on Incitement as the appropriate channel to deal with allegations of incitement from either side, and continue to press the Palestinian Authority regularly on the importance of their swift condemnation of violent attacks.

■ Kamal Foroughi and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**Tom Brake:**[\[53286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will meet the families of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Kamal Foroughi to update them on steps the Government has taken to date on those cases.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have been supporting the families of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Kamal Foroughi since we were notified of their arrests and remain in regular contact with them. I have met them personally to assure them that we will continue to do all we can.

Tom Brake:[\[53287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will ensure that the cases of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Kamal Foroughi are raised in all discussions with the government of Iran.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Since we were made aware of the arrests of Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Mr Kamal Foroughi, Ministers and officials have raised their cases repeatedly, at all levels, with the Iranian Government. Most recently, The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) raised these cases with their Iranian counterparts during the UN General Assembly in September. The Prime Minister followed up her concerns in writing to President Rouhani on 3 October. We will continue to raise these cases with the Iranian Government at every available opportunity.

Tom Brake:[\[53303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the UN statement of 7 October 2016 calling for the immediate and unconditional release of British Iranian dual nationals, if he will make public representations to the government of Iran calling for that release.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Ministers and officials regularly make representations to the Iranian Government on all our consular cases. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) raised our dual national cases with Iranian President Rouhani in person on 20 September, and followed up by letter on 3 October. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) also raised our cases with Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif on 22 September, and followed up by letter on 4 November.

■ Libya: Freezing of Assets**Lady Hermon:**[\[54396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations within the UN to amend the UN Resolution governing the freezing of Libyan assets in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Government has no plans to amend the UN Resolution governing the freezing of Libyan assets in the UK. The UN Security Council affirmed by their resolution 1973 (2011) its determination to ensure that assets frozen pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall, at a later stage, as soon as possible be made available to and for the benefit of the people of Libya. UN Security Council resolution 2278(2016) reaffirmed the Security Council's intention in this respect and affirmed the Security Council's readiness to consider changes, when appropriate, to the asset freeze at the request of the Government of National Accord.

■ Libya: Terrorism**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[53440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for what reasons the matter of compensating UK victims of Gaddafi-sponsored IRA terrorism was not discussed at the recent tripartite meeting between him, Secretary of State John Kerry and Prime Minister Serraj.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Prime Minister Serraj and a Libyan delegation visited London in order to attend an international Ministerial meeting aimed at making progress on the Libyan economic track. During his visit, the Foreign Secretary met Prime Minister Serraj for a bilateral meeting and raised the matter of compensation for UK victims of IRA terrorism.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[53482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to help facilitate a meeting between the Cross-Party Parliamentary Support Group campaigning for compensation for UK victims of alleged Gaddafi-sponsored IRA terrorism and representatives of the Libyan Government of National Accord.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Government of National Accord is aware of the importance we attach to this matter. As Mr Ellwood noted in the 13 September debate in Westminster Hall, we will discuss the possibility of a meeting between victims' representatives and the Libyan Government once a Libyan Minister of Justice has been appointed.

Lady Hermon:

[54395]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has sought recent legal advice in relation to the espousal of compensation claims by the UK victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK Government position remains that it is not able to negotiate with the Libyan Government on individual compensation claims, as these are not government-to-government claims. These are private matters best pursued directly with the Libyan authorities. The FCO does provide facilitation support to campaign groups, where it has been requested and is appropriate.

■ **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**

Catherine West:

[53899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to (a) write to and (b) meet his Iranian counterpart to discuss the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe following reports of her deteriorating health.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I have asked our Ambassador in Tehran to urgently raise our concerns about reports of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's deteriorating health with the Iranian authorities, and to request she has appropriate access to medical treatment. Our Ambassador regularly raises Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case with the Iranians including President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), most recently wrote to his Iranian counterpart on 4 November to raise our concerns on all our consular cases.

Catherine West:

[53900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart on the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Since we were made aware of the arrest of Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe Ministers and officials have raised the case repeatedly, at all levels, with the Iranian government. Most recently, The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), and The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), raised Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case with their Iranian counterparts during the UN General Assembly in September. The Prime Minister followed up her

concerns in writing to President Rouhani on 3 October. We will continue to raise these cases with the Iranian Government at every available opportunity.

Catherine West: [\[53901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports he has received on the health of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Following recent reports about Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's health we are urgently seeking information from the Iranian authorities to raise our concerns. Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case remains a top priority and our Ambassador in Tehran and Embassy officials are in regular contact with the Iranians on this matter. We shall continue to lobby them at the highest level at every opportunity.

■ **Nigel Farage**

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[53302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) discussions and (b) meetings he has had with Nigel Farage since 23 June 2016.

Sir Alan Duncan:

I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Ochil and South Perthshire of 16 November (written PQ 52754).

Details of all FCO Ministers' external meetings are published on the gov.uk website on a quarterly basis.

■ **Occupied Territories: Demolition**

Heidi Allen: [\[53342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the demolitions in Khan Al Ahmar.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK is gravely concerned by Israeli proposals to relocate the Bedouin population from the E1 area, which the United Nations have said could constitute forcible transfer. These plans could have a devastating impact on the communities concerned and will likely open the way for further settlement expansion – endangering the viability of the two-state solution.

We have been clear about our concerns with the Israeli authorities and we regularly raise this through our Embassy in Tel Aviv. On 3 November, I met Abu Khamis, leader of the Khan al Ahmar Bedouin community, and an official from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to discuss the situation of the Bedouin living in the E1 Zone of the West Bank.

■ Occupied Territories: Housing

Helen Hayes: [\[53306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to review the full breadth of UK financial transactions with illegal Israeli settlements.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

There are no plans to review UK financial transactions with illegal Israeli settlements. Ultimately it is the decision of an individual or company whether to operate in settlements in the Occupied Territories, but the British Government neither encourages nor offers support to such activity.

Helen Hayes: [\[53307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to publish up-to-date guidance to businesses and banks on investment links with illegal Israeli settlements.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We routinely update our guidance to British businesses on the Overseas Business Risk website. Our guidance about Israel was last refreshed in September 2016. We advise British businesses to bear in mind the British Government's view on the illegality of settlements under international law when considering their investments and activities in the region. When approached by businesses, we set out the UK's clear position on Israeli settlements, and share with them our online guidance. This is voluntary guidance to British businesses on doing business in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Natalie McGarry: [\[53815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will seek compensation for the demolition of UK or EU-funded buildings by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are concerned by the large increase in the rate of demolitions since the start of 2016, compared with the rate in 2015. The EU has not sought compensation from Israel for demolition of EU projects in the West Bank and no decision has been made yet about whether to claim compensation in the future. The UK is focused on preventing these demolitions from happening in the first place, and supporting those affected.

■ Palestinians: Recognition of States

Mr George Howarth: [\[53321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what criteria his Department plans to use in order to decide whether to recognise Palestine statehood.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time most helpful to the peace process. We judge that a negotiated end to the occupation is the most effective way for Palestinian aspirations of statehood to be met. We continue to be one of the principal supporters of

Palestinian state building efforts, assisting them to tackle poverty, build institutions and boost their economy.

■ **Palestinians: Schools**

Craig Tracey: [\[53695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the implications are for his Department's assessment of the Palestinian Authority's level of adherence to the principle of non-violence set out in the memorandum of understanding between the Palestinian Authority and the UK of the Palestinian Authority naming a new school after a terrorist who planned the Munich Olympics massacre.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

While we have not made any assessment on this specific issue, we absolutely condemn the glorification of terrorism and all incitement to commit violence, whichever side it comes from. We regularly urge the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships to refrain from or prevent any actions that could threaten the viability of a two-state solution, including violence, incitement and settlement expansion. We continue to press the Palestinian Authority regularly on the importance of their swift condemnation of violent attacks.

■ **Russia: Warships**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[53379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the recent decision by the Spanish government to refuel Russian warships.

Sir Alan Duncan:

None. Russia withdrew its request to refuel at the port at Ceuta on 26 October.

■ **Syria: Military Intervention**

Tom Brake: [\[53288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the Government's presence is on the UN's Internal Board of Inquiry into the attack on the UN aid convoy in Syria on 19 September 2016.

Tom Brake: [\[53289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what funding the Government has given to the UN's Internal Board of Inquiry into the attack on the UN aid convoy in Syria on 19 September 2016.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK welcomes the establishment of an internal and independent United Nations Board of Inquiry into the incident involving an aid convoy in Syria on 19 September and fully supports its investigation. It is fundamental that humanitarian workers who are risking their lives to deliver badly needed aid across Syria can operate in safety. The UN

inquiry is wholly independent. The UK does not provide funding and there is no UK Government presence on the Board.

■ Turkey: Students

Tom Brake: [\[53304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Turkish government on students who are being held in prison for lengthy periods without charge.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has raised concerns with the Turkish Government over the period of pre-charge custody under the current State of Emergency. We have urged a proportionate response to the coup and respect for freedom of expression, including academic freedom.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Keith Vaz: [\[53758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to parties involved in the conflict in Yemen on the safety and kidnapping of journalists.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) requires parties to conflict to respect and protect civilians. The unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2222 on the protection of journalists in May 2015 provided recognition, not only of the contribution that journalists make through the unique role they play, but also in the increased dangers they face as a consequence of working in challenging situations. We continue to raise the importance of respect for human rights law with all parties and we have been clear with all parties that they should act in accordance with IHL.

Keith Vaz: [\[53760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what UK representation was involved in John Kerry's negotiations on the conflict in Yemen during his visit to Oman on 14 November 2016.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I spoke to John Kerry on 20 October to discuss his visit and next steps in political negotiations. The UK continues to work with key partners to support the work of UN Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and his tireless efforts in working with all parties to bring about peace in Yemen.

HEALTH■ **Autism: Children****Fiona Bruce:**[\[53960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to promote and facilitate the diagnosis of autism in children between the ages of two and four years.

David Mowat:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline 'Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: recognition, referral and diagnosis' recommends that an assessment for autism is begun within three months of referral and includes information on signs and symptoms of possible autism in pre-school children.

Early-years providers must have arrangements in place to identify children with special educational needs or disabilities, including autism. In addition when a child is aged between two and three, early years practitioners must review progress and provide parents with a short written summary of their child's development, focusing in particular on communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

Earlier this year, NHS England, supported by the Department and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, initiated a series of visits to clinical commissioning groups and local authorities aimed at a better idea of the challenges in securing timely autism diagnosis across all ages. To support the effective development of diagnostic services for autism, the Department is working with NHS Digital and system partners to ensure data on autism is included in future requirements for the Mental Health Services Data Set.

■ **Blood: Contamination****Diana Johnson:**[\[53951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will guarantee stage 2 payments to people with stage 1 hepatitis C who are co-infected with HIV from 2017-18 rather than requiring those people to apply through the special category mechanism.

Nicola Blackwood:

Those co-infected with HIV and hepatitis C stage 1 already have higher payments than those with either only HIV or hepatitis stage 1 or stage 2 in recognition of their condition.

The Department is working with a reference group of experts on the criteria for introducing a fair and equitable appeals process for those Stage 1 registrants who consider their hepatitis C virus infection, or treatment for it, affects them in the same way that conditions suffered by Stage 2 registrants affect them. These reforms are designed to ensure those most seriously affected continue to get a high level of support.

This is to be established in time for when a new scheme administrator is in place in 2017/18.

As soon as the criteria are confirmed, the Department will publish it and will give guidance as to how the process will be made and how to apply for the increased annual payments.

Diana Johnson:

[\[53952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the reformed English support scheme for those affected by contaminated blood, whether allocated funds not spent on beneficiaries (a) in each fiscal year to and (b) at the end of the Spending Review period in 2020-21 will be given back to HM Treasury.

Nicola Blackwood:

Funds allocated to the infected blood payment schemes for the current spending review have been designated from Department central budgets and not from an additional Treasury funding stream. Therefore, it is our intention that any unspent monies from these payments will be recycled for health care purposes within each financial year rather than being returned to the Treasury.

Diana Johnson:

[\[53971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will extend the deadline to apply for £10,000 lump sum payments for the widows and widowers of people who died at least partially as a result of HIV and hepatitis C infection from contaminated blood, beyond 1 March 2017.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Government has not yet formally announced the opening of applications for this payment as officials are still working with experts and the current scheme administrators on the policy details for this new payment. As soon as the policy is confirmed, the Department will publish it and will give guidance as to who is eligible and the deadline for responses.

Diana Johnson:

[\[53972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish the documentation his Department has received from hepatologists and other medical professionals on the potential proportion of applications to the special category mechanism from people who contracted hepatitis C from contaminated blood which will be successful.

Nicola Blackwood:

The special category mechanism is still being developed. As this is policy in development it would not be appropriate to release any information that is being gathered to inform the policy.

■ Breastfeeding

Alison Thewliss:

[\[53959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will respond to the recommendations of the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative UK Report 2016, published in November 2016.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department has no immediate plans to publish a response to recommendations of the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative Report 2016.

However, the Government is committed to supporting breastfeeding through the Healthy Child Programme. Breastfeeding is also included in the Public Health Outcomes Framework so that improvements can be tracked, and action taken as needed.

The Department is working with key partners UNICEF, Institute of Health Visitors, NHS England, Public Health England and Royal College of Midwives, to promote local, regional and national initiatives to improve breastfeeding support. Support and information is currently available to health professionals and parents through NHS Choices, the National Breastfeeding Helpline, UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative and local peer support programmes.

■ Compulsorily Detained Mental Patients

Luciana Berger:

[\[54084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people detained under section 13 of the Mental Health Act 1983 were held in police cells in (a) Liverpool, Wavertree constituency, (b) Liverpool, (c) the Liverpool City Region and (d) England in each in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Section 13 is not a detaining power, it puts a duty on Approved Mental Health Professionals to assess and if appropriate make an application for hospital detention if asked to do so by a Social Services Department. It does not relate to the police and the use of police cells.

■ Department of Health: Procurement

Tim Farron:

[\[53198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many times his Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department does not hold detailed information centrally on contract terminations, penalties, or denied permissions for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct.

The Commercial Division, who would be involved with the majority of such activity, is unaware of any instances of termination or permission being denied for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since 2015.

To obtain details across all contracts within the Department for each aspect of the request would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Doctors

Andrew Selous:

[\[54083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the reasons are for the difference in the number of sessions required for different geographical areas for doctors to remain on the National Performers List.

David Mowat:

The National Performers List is held and managed by NHS England. The Performers Lists Regulations do not specify how many hours or sessions a general practitioner is required to work to remain included on the English Medical Performers List.

There is no policy that requires NHS England to remove a doctor if they have worked less than a given number of sessions.

■ Down's Syndrome

Jim Shannon:

[\[54094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what support his Department provides to women who are (a) expecting and (b) have given birth to a baby with Down's syndrome.

Mr Philip Dunne:

If testing during pregnancy indicates the baby will be born with Down's syndrome, the parents should be offered genetic counselling to allow them to discuss the impact of the diagnosis. They may also be offered an appointment to meet a doctor or other health professional who works with children with Down's syndrome, who can also tell them more about the condition and answer any questions they may have. This may include information on the support available.

We know around 750 babies a year are born with Down's syndrome. For many this will involve an early intervention programme, which is a special programme that aims to help a child with learning disabilities develop, as well as provide support to the family, from health visitors and midwives.

An early intervention programme can include:

- speech and language therapy – to help with any problems communicating or feeding;
- physiotherapy – to help with any muscle weakness or movement difficulties; and
- individual home teaching programmes.

Related health conditions, such as heart disorders, and thyroid conditions, are supported by paediatric services and other secondary care.

More detailed information for parents is also available from NHS Choices.

■ Health Professions: Working Hours

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[53350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the average number of hours worked by (a) nurses, (b) junior doctors and (c) consultants in each year for which records are available.

Mr Philip Dunne:

To support contract reform, estimates have been made of the number of hours worked by junior doctors and consultants. The estimated average hours worked by junior doctors was 46 hours and for consultants it was estimated that they work an average 11.5 programmed activity (PA) sessions per week. A PA is four hours long if worked Monday to Friday between 7am and 7pm and three hours long if worked outside those hours.

Although the Electronic Staff Record does collect data on the number of hours worked it does not clearly show the full extent of additional work carried out by National Health Service staff, therefore in respect of nurses the question cannot be answered, as nurses also work via bank arrangements.

Information is not available on an annual basis for any of these groups.

■ Heart Diseases

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[53383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the Congenital Clinical Reference Group which advised the Clinical Advisory Panel leading the NHS Review into congenital heart disease services advised that the co-location of paediatric services should reflect the availability of services and that those could be co-located on different, by closed sites.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The new standards for congenital heart disease services were initially drafted by the Standards Group, which was convened for that purpose, and not by the Clinical Reference Group (CRG). This was because work on the standards started before the formation of NHS England and the CRG system.

The draft standards, prepared by the Standards Group and considered by the Clinical Advisory Panel, listed fewer paediatric specialties in the category that 'must' be co-located on the same hospital site with paediatric cardiac services and more in the category that 'should' be co-located on the same hospital site than in the final standards as agreed by the NHS England Board.

The Standards Group did not advise the Clinical Advisory Panel that the standards should reflect the existing availability of services. It has always been recognised that the standards should describe how services should ideally be set up rather than how they currently exist.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[53384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether meetings relating to the proposed re-configuration of congenital heart disease services will be (a) open to the public and (b) minuted; whether papers relating those meetings will be published; and within what timescale those papers will be published.

Mr Philip Dunne:

As part of the consultation on NHS England's proposed changes to congenital heart disease (CHD) services, it is working with partners, including hospitals that provide these services, CHD charities and patient support groups, to develop a full programme of meetings and events which will be open to the public. The events will be designed to provide a direct contribution of views and help to ensure that attendees are aware of NHS England's proposals and to encourage participation in the consultation. The notes of these events will be made available to the independent analysts who will analyse all consultation responses on behalf of NHS England.

The table below provides the information requested on the other meetings associated with NHS England's review of CHD.

MEETING	OPEN TO THE PUBLIC	MINUTED	MEETING PAPERS PUBLISHED	TIMESCALE FOR PUBLISHING MEETING PAPERS	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
NHS England board meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Papers are published one week in advance and minutes are published once agreed.	
NHS England Business meetings	No	No	No. In line with organisational policy.		
Clinical Reference Group	No	Yes	No. In line with organisational policy.		There are three patient and public members.
National Panel	No	The outcome of these meetings will be reflected in a report that will be published before the	No		There are three patient and public members.

MEETING	OPEN TO THE PUBLIC	MINUTED	MEETING PAPERS PUBLISHED	TIMESCALE FOR	
				PUBLISHING MEETING PAPERS	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
		launch of consultation.			

■ Hip Replacements: Physiotherapy

Jim Shannon:

[54095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his Department's policy is on providing physiotherapy to patients who have had hip replacement operations.

David Mowat:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that people with hip fractures are offered a physiotherapist assessment the day after surgery and exercises to promote movement, strength and recovery at least once a day, unless there are medical or surgical reasons for this not to occur. The relevant guidance can be found at the following address:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs16/chapter/quality-statement-9-physiotherapy-and-mobilisation>

NICE clinical guidelines are advisory. Health care and other professionals in the National Health Service are, however, expected to take account of them when exercising their professional judgement.

There is no specific guidance on the timing and amount of physiotherapy in relationship to hip replacement. This is a matter of clinical judgement and for each unit, with the input of physiotherapists, to devise a preoperative education and postoperative rehabilitation plan suitable for individual patients.

■ Mental Health Services

Ben Howlett:

[53333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many referrals to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme started each type of therapy offered by the programme in each clinical commissioning group area in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Data on the number of referrals to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme are published by NHS Digital. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) replaced primary care trusts on 1 April, 2013 and data related to this Parliamentary Question started to be reported by CCG from 2014/15.

The dataset does not report on referrals starting a type of therapy. It reports on the number of referrals finishing a course of treatment by type of therapy (this is the last therapy the service users received and does not mean that other therapies were not

used earlier in the course of treatment). These data are only available at CCG level for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

In 2014/15 and 2015/16 the number of referrals who finished a course of treatment were reported by CCG and problem descriptor in Table 1 and Table 2 which are attached.

As 2016/17 has not yet completed there is no Annual Report. However monthly data can be found in the "Monthly Activity Data Files" which can be accessed via the links under "Monthly Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Dataset Reports" at:

<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/iaptreports>

Attachments:

1. PQ53333 table 1 201415 [PQ53333 table 1 201415.xlsx]
2. PQ53333 table 2 201415 [PQ53333 table 2 201415.xlsx]

Ben Howlett:

[53335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many referrals to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme were classified as ended by problem descriptor in each clinical commissioning group area in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

The number of referrals to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme who finished a course of treatment is reported by NHS Digital at clinical commissioning group (CCG) level and by problem descriptor in 2014/15 and 2015/16. For 2015/16, data on referrals received, entering treatment, and finishing a course of treatment by problem descriptor and CCG area are reported in Table 1. For 2014/15, referrals who finished a course of treatment reported by problem descriptor and CCG are in Table 2.

The number of referrals entering treatment (rather than those finishing treatment) reported by problem descriptor and CCG is available for 2013/14 in Table 3. The above tables are attached.

Data by CCG is not available prior to 2013/14 as CCGs replaced primary care trusts on 1 April 2013.

As 2016/17 has not yet completed there is no Annual Report. However monthly data can be found in the "Monthly Activity Data Files" which can be accessed via the links under "Monthly Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Dataset Reports" at:

<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/iaptreports>

Attachments:

1. PQ53335 table 1 201415 [PQ53335 table 1 201415.xlsx]
2. PQ53335 table 2 201415 [PQ53335 table 2 201415.xlsx]
3. PQ53335 table 3 201415 [PQ53335 table 3 201415.xlsx]

■ Mental Health Services: Males

Luciana Berger: [\[54085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many mental health community outreach programmes focussed on traditional male environments have been set up to engage with men in each local authority area in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not held centrally. Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for commissioning mental health services which meet the needs of their population.

■ Mental Health Services: Southwark

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[53908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has taken to improve access to mental health services for black and ethnic minority people in the London Borough of Southwark.

Nicola Blackwood:

This is a matter for the local National Health Service.

NHS England has advised that during 2015 Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Southwark Council focused on engaging with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community at a number of events to identify which groups are affected by inequality of access and support. Learning from the events informed Southwark's Joint Mental Health Strategy. Key areas of focus included:

- Access to community services, as Southwark inpatient services are used by more black African/Caribbean men due to psychosis than the general population;
- Access to interpreters where there may be possible language barriers;
- Staff understanding of behaviour in the context of cultural and religious beliefs; and
- What can Southwark do to ensure more BAME residents use community based mental health services.

We understand that following the review recommendations to focus for future mental health services for BAME and marginalised services will include:

- Information and Advice;
- Peer Support;
- Community Networks;
- Self Management;
- Befriending; and
- Social Inclusion.

There will also be a strong focus on:

- ensuring services are personalised so that they meet specific cultural needs of individuals, including through the provision of personal budgets;
- support to carers, enabling families to support their relatives in a culturally appropriate fashion;
- promotion of employment; and
- ensuring crisis and place of safety services are appropriate. Additional Place of Safety mental health suites are due to open at King's College Hospital.

Further, the CCG is working with South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust to develop and transform mental health services. The aim is to commission more community based services supporting people within their homes wherever possible. There are no plans to increase bed capacity, but the CCG is looking at how bed utilisation can be improved, by reducing length of stays and reviewing step down arrangements.

The CCG has also established a Home Treatment Team in recent months which is managing complex cases within the community, avoiding the need for hospital admissions.

■ NHS England

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[54009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the change in the level of NHS England's administration costs since the introduction of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Mr Philip Dunne:

"Total Administration Costs" spending outturns are reported each year in NHS England's own Annual Report and Accounts. The following table confirms the figures reported in those accounts:

	£ MILLION
2013-14	1,898
2014-15	1,780
2015-16	1,649

Therefore, the change in these costs equates to £249 million, a decrease of 13% in cash terms over the three completed financial years.

■ NHS Property Services: Staff

Dr Poulter:

[R] [53963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many staff are employed by NHS Property Services in (a) the UK and (b) each region and constituent nation.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Property Services' staff are distributed between the Company's nine operational zones in England as set out in the following table. The Company does not operate or have staff outside England.

REGION/ZONE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Central Zone	257
East Zone	347
London Zone	536
North Central Zone	449
North East Zone	421
North West Zone	810
South East Zone	309
South West Zone	95
West Midlands Zone	201
Total	3,425

Dr Poulter:**[R] [53964]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many qualified surveyors are employed by NHS Property Services in (a) the UK and (b) each region and constituent nation.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Property Services' surveyors are distributed between the Company's eight operational zones in England as set out in the following table. The Company does not operate or have staff outside England.

REGION/ZONE	TOTAL
London Zone	43
East Zone	4
North Central Zone	5
North East Zone	2
North West Zone	7

REGION/ZONE	TOTAL
South East Zone	3
South West Zone	6
West Midlands Zone	3
Total	73

■ NHS: Buildings

Dr Poulter: [R] [53961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what funding his Department makes available to support NHS providers in renovating, maintaining and developing properties that form part of the NHS estate.

Mr Philip Dunne:

In addition to funding capital expenditure programmes from their own income sources, NHS Providers can apply for a range of financing from the Department for projects which may require funding over a number of years. Capital loans are the default form of finance for foundation trusts and National Health Service trusts.

The Department has published guidance on the financing available to NHS trusts and foundation trusts. This can be found at the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365134/OfS_Finance_Guidance_under_Section_42A.pdf

Dr Poulter: [R] [53962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an estimate of the number of properties that form part of the NHS estate that are not used for clinical purposes.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information requested is not collected centrally. Data is collected annually in the Estates Return Information Collection from the National Health Service on the occupied floor area that is classified as Clinical and Non-clinical by NHS trusts and is publicly available at:

<http://hefs.hscic.gov.uk/ERIC.asp>

NHS trusts decide locally how to provide their Clinical and Non-clinical services to make best use of their properties. This includes holding detailed information on the usage of their estate to allow such decisions to be made effectively.

Dr Poulter: [R] [53965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many properties owned by NHS Property Services in (a) the UK and (b) each region and constituent nation are (i) vacant, (ii) partially occupied and (iii) fully occupied.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information on the numbers of properties owned by NHS Property Services in the United Kingdom and each region and constituent nation which are vacant, partially occupied and fully occupied, is set out in the following table. The Company does not operate outside England.

CATEGORY	EAST	LONDON	NORTH CENTRAL	NORTH EAST	NORTH WEST	SOUTH EAST	SOUTH WEST	WEST MIDLANDS	GRAND TOTAL
100% vacant	11	18	9	3	10	21	11	12	95
50 to 100% vacancy. Partially vacant	13	15	4	7	8	7	3	4	61
10 to 50% vacancy	38	27	23	16	45	31	3	11	194
0 to 10% vacancy. Fully occupied	141	135	139	83	170	176	105	116	1,065
Grand Total	203	195	175	109	233	235	122	143	1,415

Note: Property list matching the following criteria:

- Freehold or Long-Leasehold Tenancies Only; and
- Live Interests Only

■ **Suicide**

Luciana Berger:

[\[53957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to reduce access to high-lethality means of suicide; and what such steps have been taken to reduce the availability of helium gas.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department constantly monitors suicide data to identify trends in methods of suicide, including new and emerging methods such as self-poisoning from gases and noxious substances.

The Department works with partners, stakeholders, experts and industry to explore ways in which we can reduce access to means of particularly lethal methods of suicide. For example, regulations since 1998 to reduce the size of paracetamol packs and limiting the quantity that can be purchased in a single transaction have been successful in reducing access to means for a common method of suicide.

There was a sharp increase in the number of suicides relating to helium since 2007 from around one each year to over 60 in 2013. Figures have remained fairly stable since then. In response, the Department has worked with the British Compressed Gases Association, academics and other experts to explore possible action to reduce availability and are currently considering with industry next steps.

HOME OFFICE

■ Detention Centres: Renfrewshire

Gavin Newlands: [\[53914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to appeal Renfrewshire Council's decision to refuse planning permission for a short-term immigration detention facility.

Gavin Newlands: [\[53915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Renfrewshire Council's refusal of planning permission for a short-term immigration detention facility, whether the Government still plans to close Dungavel Detention Centre.

Gavin Newlands: [\[59323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to build another short-term detention facility in Scotland as a result of the decision by Renfrewshire Council to refuse planning permission for a short-term immigration detention facility.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Following Renfrewshire Council's refusal of planning permission for a short term holding facility near Glasgow airport the Government is considering its position in relation to the right of appeal.

The intended closure of Dungavel immigration removal centre is dependent upon a successful planning application for a new short term holding facility.

■ Free Movement of People

Tom Brake: [\[53517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on maintaining visa free, free travel to EU countries after the UK leaves the EU.

Tom Brake: [\[53518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that visa free travel to EU countries is maintained after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

At every step of the negotiations to leave the EU we will work to ensure the best possible outcome for the British people.

■ Home Office: Procurement

Tim Farron: [\[53199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times her Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Sarah Newton:

The Home Office has terminated one (1) contract since November 2015. This contract was terminated by mutual agreement with the supplier not because of poor performance but because a different replacement contract was required to support the change in project requirements.

The Department is not aware of any providers being denied opportunities to bid as a result of grave misconduct.

■ Immigration Enforcement Directorate

Robert Ffello: [\[53856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to publish her Department's Immigration and Enforcement Business Plan 2016-17.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Immigration Enforcement Business Plan will be published in due course.

■ Immigration: Appeals

Paul Blomfield: [\[53355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many tribunal users of the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) had permission to work in the UK for each of the last four years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information on how many tribunal users of the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) who had permission to work in the UK is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost as we would have to conduct a manual data trawl across different IT systems to enable us to match the information.

■ Radicalism

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[53895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the status is of the report of the inquiry into overseas funding of extremism in the UK.

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[53896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the planned publication date is of the report of the inquiry into funding of extremism in the UK.

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[53897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the terms of reference are for the inquiry into funding of extremism in the UK.

Sarah Newton:

The review into the funding of Islamist extremism in the UK was commissioned by the former Prime Minister, with the aim of improving government's understanding of the nature, scale and sources of funding for Islamist extremism in the UK.

The Government's response, including publication of the review, will be a decision for the Prime Minister.

■ Tickets: Touting

Tom Watson: [\[53898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of the misuse of bots for the harvesting of event tickets through primary ticketing platforms have been reported to the police under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office does not hold any data or statistics on the number of these incidents.

■ Vetting: EU Nationals

Diana Johnson: [\[52811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) Dutch and (b) Latvian nationals applying to work with (i) adults and (ii) children failed the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks during the EU check pilot that ran from November 2015 to April 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Regardless of the nationality of the applicant, the provision of criminal record information is intended to support an employer's safer recruitment process. An enhanced check is not a pass or fail assessment. It is the responsibility of a potential employer to ensure that the applicant is suitable to work with adults and children. This may include seeking information from other countries, including EU member states.

The Government is constantly seeking ways to support employers in obtaining this information, including how prospective employees can evidence their suitability for

employment through the ACRO Criminal Records Office as the UK Central Authority for the European Exchange of Criminal Records.

■ Visas

Paul Blomfield: [\[53344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of visitor visa applications have been refused in each of the last five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested for the last 5 calendar years is published in table vi_01_q (visa data tables volume 1) in 'Immigration Statistics, April - June 2016', available from the Home Office website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2016/list-of-tables#visas>

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ House of Commons: Nurseries

Gavin Newlands: [\[907449\]](#)

To ask the Rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, if the Commission will take steps to provide crèche services for the children of hon. Members, staff and visitors.

Tom Brake:

The House of Commons operates an onsite nursery, available to Members, their staff and staff of each House. Based on consultation with Members, the facility was specifically set up as a nursery, rather than a crèche, to meet the needs of Members and their children, some of whom might be facing long hours in a stranger's care, reflecting Members' work pressures.

Professor Sarah Childs' report, ' *The Good Parliament* ', includes a recommendation for a crèche as well as a nursery. The recommendations in this report are being explored further under the auspices of the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection

Greg Mulholland: [\[53841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has a methodology for ranking countries and regions on the adequacy of care and treatment that is available to fight HIV and AIDS in those countries and regions.

James Wharton:

DFID's assessment of progress on the HIV response is drawn from reports and data produced by UNAIDS and other partners such as the World Health Organisation and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, along with reviews by DFID in-country health advisers.

Greg Mulholland:

[\[53842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which international summits and conferences on tackling HIV and AIDS Ministers of her Department plan to attend in the next 12 months.

James Wharton:

DFID Ministers regularly attend international summits and conferences where their presence can underline the UK's high level commitments.

For example, the Minister of State, the Rt Hon The Lord Bates, will be opening the STOPAIDS World AIDS Day conference on 30 November 2016.

Greg Mulholland:

[\[53850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts on changes in the level of international donor funding for tackling HIV and AIDS between 2014 and 2015.

James Wharton:

The UK was the second largest international funder of HIV prevention, treatment and care between 2014 and 2015 and remains committed to helping end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

HIV funding was discussed with international counterparts as part of the dialogue on the recent Global Fund Replenishment. The UK Government supports calls for shared responsibility and global solidarity in the response to HIV to achieve the Global Goal target. We strongly believe countries should commit according to their ability to contribute.

■ Dominican Republic: Floods

Will Quince:

[\[53910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to the Dominican Republic to assist with the flooding in that country.

James Wharton:

The UK has monitored the situation since heavy persistent rain started falling in parts of the Dominican Republic on 7 November and stood ready to offer assistance if required.

The Government of the Dominican Republic have not requested international assistance.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Department for International Trade: Social Networking**

Andy Slaughter: [53232]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Greg Hands:

This department regularly uses social networking sites such as Twitter to communicate our policy to the public and our key stakeholders. As part of this, DIT monitors engagement on our channels and with our campaigns by looking at interaction numbers – click-throughs, video/graphic views, hashtag usage, retweets and replies – to make sure we are tailoring content to reach our target audiences. Departmental communications teams are encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of their communications following Government Communications Service (GCS) Standards using the GCS Evaluation Framework <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation/tools-and-resources/>.

JUSTICE■ **European Convention on Human Rights**

Liam Byrne: [50960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether it is her policy to sign protocol 16 of the European Court of Human Rights, as set out after the Brighton Declaration.

Liam Byrne: [51086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the implications of adopting advisory status of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights for UK membership of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Protocol 16 to the European Convention on Human Rights creates an optional system by which the highest national courts can choose to seek advisory opinions on the interpretation of the rights and freedoms under the Convention from the European Court of Human Rights. It will come into force once it has been ratified by ten High Contracting Parties to the Convention, and will apply only to those countries that have ratified it. It has so far been ratified by six countries.

The Brighton Declaration on the reform of the Strasbourg Court covered a range of important measures and was a proud achievement for the United Kingdom. The Government of the day expressed its pleasure that it could help secure agreement for an optional system on advisory opinions in the Brighton Declaration for those States wishing to pursue the idea. However, the Government then and now has been clear that it is unconvinced of the value of advisory opinions, particularly for addressing the

fundamental problems facing the Court and the Convention system. The Government therefore plans neither to sign nor ratify Protocol 16 at this time. If and when Protocol 16 comes into force, we shall instead observe how the system operates in practice, having regard particularly to the effect on the work load of the Court, and to how the Court approaches the giving of opinions.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Migrant Workers**

Mr Chuka Umunna: [\[51000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many citizens of non-UK EU countries work in her Department, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies.

Dr Phillip Lee:

I refer the Hon Member to my response to PQ47590.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Sick Leave**

Norman Lamb: [\[53073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many working days were lost due to mental illness in her Department in each of the last three years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The total working days lost for the past three financial years due to Mental Health related sickness absence is included in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL DAYS LOST
2015 – 2016	167288
2014 – 2015	171543
2013 - 2014	152019

This data includes staff employed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Headquarters, HM Courts and Tribunals Service, National Offender Management Service, Legal Aid Agency, Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority and Office of the Public Guardian.

The MoJ is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all of its employees and to reducing sickness absence levels. The department's wellbeing strategy, which was launched in November 2015, was designed specifically to reflect the primary causes of sickness absence including mental health. It contains reference to support available to both employees and managers. To coincide with the launch, Directors General in NOMS and MoJ HQ were appointed as senior advocates for attendance management and wellbeing in MoJ.

■ Trials

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [53913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many trials were (a) effective, (b) cracked, (c) ineffective and (d) vacated in each year from 2010.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The data for each year from 2010 is included in Table C2 of the Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly publication, covering annual data from 2010 to 2015 and quarterly data up to Q2 2016: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2016>

TRANSPORT

■ Cycling and Walking

Ruth Cadbury: [53652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy tackles the barriers to children, women, older people and people with disabilities cycling and walking.

Andrew Jones:

The draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published for consultation in March 2016. Question 4 asked for views on how to increase cycling and walking in under-represented groups. We are assessing responses to the consultation and we will set out our position in a Government Response.

■ Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Expert Committee: Public Appointments

Ruth Cadbury: [53656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the reasons are for the time taken to appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Expert Committee.

Andrew Jones:

We remain committed to establishing a Cycling and Walking Expert Committee, as set out in the draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

We have extended the recruitment campaign for the positions of Chair and deputy Chair while we take a closer look at applications to ensure requirements for these key roles are fully met and that we have fully tested the market.

■ Cycling: Greater London

Sir Nicholas Soames: [53385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of cycle lanes on traffic in London.

Andrew Jones:

No assessments have been made. The management of the Transport for London Road Network (or London's "red routes"), including decisions on how much road space to allocate to cycle lanes and the impacts of that on other traffic, is a matter for the Mayor of London. The management of all other London roads is a matter for individual London boroughs.

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[53386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of cycle lanes on traffic flows between Parliament Square and the City of London.

Andrew Jones:

No assessment has been made. Cycle superhighways on the Transport for London Road Network are the responsibility of the Mayor of London. The design of parts of the East-West cycle superhighway which runs from the City to Parliament Square was modified following public consultation in order to reduce its impacts on other road users. Transport for London will be monitoring these impacts carefully, but as the cycle superhighway in question has been operational for less than a year it is too early to reach any definitive conclusions on this.

■ **Cycling: Tax Allowances**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[53651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on options for incentivising cycling through the tax system in order to double the number of cycling journeys.

Andrew Jones:

The Secretary of State for Transport has had no discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on options for incentivising cycling through the tax system.

■ **Dartford-Thurrock Crossing**

Gareth Johnson:

[\[53774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 18 April 2016 to Question 33141, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the removal of the tollbooths at the Dartford Crossing on air quality in Dartford.

Mr John Hayes:

The Dartcharge Post Opening Project Evaluation (POPE) report, which will include an assessment of air quality, will be completed in Spring 2017.

Gareth Johnson:

[\[53844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the level of the toll that is levied on HGVs using the Dartford Crossing during peak hours.

Mr John Hayes:

My Department consulted on options for revising the charging regime at the Dartford-Thurrock River Crossing in 2011. This considered the impacts on Heavy Goods Vehicle flows during the peak hours. The impact assessment is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/dartford-thurrock-river-crossing-charges-consultation>

Gareth Johnson: [54098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of foreign-registered vehicles using the Dartford Crossing in the last 12 months.

Mr John Hayes:

The number of crossings recorded and identified as made by non UK vehicles, in the 12 month period between 18 November 2015 and 17 November 2016 was 2,098,241.

■ Department for Transport: Procurement

Tim Farron: [53201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times his Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Mr John Hayes:

The Public Contracts Regulations (2015) include a mandatory requirement for contracting authorities to exclude companies from public contracts where they have been convicted of certain criminal offences including conspiracy, corruption, bribery and fraud. Potential bidders may also be excluded from participating in the tender process on certain grounds at the discretion of the contracting authority. These grounds include circumstances where they have been convicted of an offence (not attracting mandatory exclusion) relating to the conduct of his business or profession; or been found guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means that the contracting authority can demonstrate.

There have been no instances since November 2015 where it has been necessary to trigger these specific provisions in the Public Contracts Regulations.

■ Department for Transport: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [53234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Mr John Hayes:

The department and its Agencies (Maritime & Coastguard Agency, Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency, and Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency) use a mixture of free and paid for tools to monitor online discussion and content publicly available on a variety of social networking sites. The content monitored stems from a variety of sources including professional news organisations, stakeholders and partner channels. Monitoring is

carried out to enable the Department and its Agencies to better serve their customers and users of their services.

The Vehicle Certification Agency do not monitor content on social networking sites.

In respect of media management and campaign communications, department communications teams monitor relevant publicly available social media content to evaluate the effectiveness of government campaigns. Departments are encouraged to follow Government Communications Service (GCS) Standards using the GCS Evaluation Framework <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation/tools-and-resources/>.

■ Heathrow Airport

Grant Shapps: [53953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will negotiate to fast-track the public national policy statement consultation on Heathrow Airport expansion in order to deliver that project more quickly.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government believes it is important that the public, business and other interested parties across the UK have their chance to comment on the Government's draft Airports National Policy Statement supporting Heathrow expansion. We will launch a consultation of an appropriate duration as soon as possible in the New Year.

Grant Shapps: [53973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the date at which physical work to construct the extensions of Heathrow Airport will commence.

Mr John Hayes:

The start date for construction of the Heathrow Northwest Runway scheme will depend on a number of factors, including timings of the Government designating an Airports National Policy Statement and, assuming its application is successful, Heathrow Airport being granted development consent. The Government expects the Heathrow Northwest Runway to be operational by around 2026, and no later than the 2030 timetable set out by the Airports Commission for needing a new runway in the South East.

Grant Shapps: [53974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the likelihood of judicial review delaying the Heathrow Airport construction timetable.

Mr John Hayes:

A third runway at Heathrow is expected to become operational by around 2026 subject to the Government's consultation on a draft National Policy Statement and the planning process. We are confident that our process for decision-making is robust and will strongly defend any challenges with a view to maintaining this timetable.

Grant Shapps: [\[53975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the likelihood of the planning inquiries phase of Heathrow Airport expansion being (a) extended and (b) delayed.

Mr John Hayes:

Following designation of an Airports National Policy Statement, Heathrow Airport would need to submit a development consent application to the Planning Inspectorate. Under the Planning Act 2008, the examining authority should complete its examination within six months and report to the Secretary of State within a further three months, and the Secretary of State should then decide whether to grant development consent within three months.

Alex Cunningham: [\[54079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Government will take steps to ensure that the expansion of Heathrow Airport supports job creation and economic growth in the Tees Valley.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department has undertaken an economic assessment of the impact of a new runway at Heathrow at a national level, taking account of all regions. People from the North East, including from the Tees Valley, can expect to be able to take advantage of new destinations, extra seats and increased frequency of service created by increased capacity at Heathrow.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Christian Matheson: [\[53773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the chart entitled HS2 Review Phase 1 Target Schedule on page 10 of the High Speed 2 Plus supporting slides, published by HS2 Limited on 17 March 2014, if he will update that chart so that it provides the latest contribution schedule for High Speed 2 Phase One.

Andrew Jones:

HS2 Ltd remain committed to a target date of December 2026 for the introduction of services for Phase One of the project.

Graham Evans: [\[53793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with local authorities to encourage coordination between local transport plans and High Speed 2.

Andrew Jones:

Working with the Department for Communities and Local Government, my Department has regular discussions with Local Authorities to support the development of their local growth strategies. These strategies set out their plans to catalyse the growth and regeneration benefits of HS2 in their area and can include details on how the benefits of HS2 will be aligned with the local transport plan ambitions.

Graham Evans:

[53794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that will be created in (a) Cheshire and (b) the North West as a result of High Speed 2.

Andrew Jones:

High Speed 2 Limited estimate that HS2 will support up to 100,000 jobs around HS2 stations. The western leg of Phase 2b is estimated to support 30,000 to 43,600 of these jobs. The government has not made an estimate of jobs created in Cheshire. Other organisations have produced their own estimates and ambitions for jobs supported by HS2. For example, the Northern Gateway Development Zone in Cheshire and Staffordshire have plans to help create 120,000 new jobs by 2040. They are currently preparing an HS2 Growth Strategy on how HS2 will contribute to supporting this number of new jobs in the area.

High Speed 2 Limited also estimate that around 25,000 private sector employment opportunities are expected to be generated in the process of building the HS2 railway, with a further 3,000 jobs to operate it once finished.

Christian Matheson:

[53798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of construction jobs that are likely to be created through each construction contract as part of High Speed 2 Phase One in each year.

Andrew Jones:

High Speed 2 Limited estimate that around a total of 25,000 private sector employment opportunities will be generated in the process of building the HS2 railway, with a further 3,000 jobs to operate it once finished. The London-West Midlands Environmental Statement (Volume 3, Route-Wide Effects, November 2013) estimated that the equivalent of 14,600 full time employment opportunities would be generated in the construction of Phase One. The government has not made an estimate of the number of construction jobs created through each construction contract in each year.

Christian Matheson:

[53813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what definition will be used for the term local workers in relation to recruitment policies introduced for the construction phase of High Speed 2.

Andrew Jones:

The steps taken to promote the recruitment of local workers (as well as disadvantaged and under-represented groups) are set out at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509181/G4 - Approaches to Training and Employment v1.4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509181/G4_-_Approaches_to_Training_and_Employment_v1.4.pdf)

Christian Matheson:

[53814]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to promote the recruitment of local workers for the construction and operation of High Speed 2 (HS2) in (a) London, (b) Birmingham and (c) the rest of the HS2 Phase One route; and what reporting

requirements he is placing on HS2 contractors with regard to (i) local labour recruitment, (ii) spending with local suppliers and (iii) recruitment from disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

Andrew Jones:

The steps taken to promote the recruitment of local workers (as well as disadvantaged and under-represented groups) are set out at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509181/G4 - Approaches to Training and Employment v1.4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509181/G4_-_Approaches_to_Training_and_Employment_v1.4.pdf)

Measures to help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and local businesses from across the UK access supply chain opportunities are also included in the major works contracts. HS2 Ltd require every procurement to be fair, transparent and competitive and to maximise the opportunities for SMEs to provide the works.

Mrs Cheryl Gillan:

[53911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Privacy Notice on data collection on the HS2 website was removed; and what the reasons for that removal were.

Andrew Jones:

A privacy notice was published on HS2 Ltd's website in 2015 that set out the kinds of data that HS2 Ltd could seek to hold and how it could be used. The document included a broad list of data, including examples of data which HS2 Ltd have not and do not ever intend to collect from individuals.

The privacy notice was compliant with the Data Protection Act and was reviewed prior to publication by HS2 Ltd's external legal advisers.

HS2 Ltd withdrew the Privacy Notice on Friday 18th November 2016 as it does not reflect how the company handles information. HS2 Ltd are undertaking a review and will publish a revised Privacy Notice shortly.

■ Large Goods Vehicles

Christian Matheson:

[53840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2016 to Question 52862, if he will make representations to (a) the Home Secretary and (b) Chief Officers of Police to put in place measures to enforce the ban on coloured decorative lights on HGV vehicles.

Mr John Hayes:

The road enforcement of road traffic law is an operational matter for individual Chief Police Officers, and their officers can issue verbal warnings, fixed penalty notices or report the driver for formal prosecution.

■ M25: Speed Limits

Gareth Johnson: [\[53837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average speed was on vehicles travelling between junction 2 and junction 31 of the M25 on weekday evenings between 4pm and 7pm in August (a) 2008, (b) 2012 and (c) 2016.

Gareth Johnson: [\[53845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average speed of vehicles travelling between junctions 3 and 2 on the M25 on weekdays between 4pm to 7pm in August (a) 2008, (b) 2012 and (c) 2016.

Gareth Johnson: [\[53846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average speed of vehicles travelling between junctions 4 and 3 on the M25 on weekdays between 4pm to 7pm in August (a) 2008, (b) 2012 and (c) 2016.

Gareth Johnson: [\[53847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average speed of vehicles travelling between junctions 2 and 3 on the M25 on weekdays between 8am to 9am in August (a) 2008, (b) 2012 and (c) 2016.

Gareth Johnson: [\[53848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average speed of vehicles travelling between junctions 3 and 2 on the M25 on weekdays between the hours of 8am to 9am in August (a) 2008, (b) 2012 and (c) 2016.

Gareth Johnson: [\[53849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average speed of vehicles travelling between junctions 4 and 3 on the M25 on weekdays between the hours of 8am to 9am in August (a) 2008, (b) 2012 and (c) 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

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

■ M3

Royston Smith: [\[53696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the level of progress of the work to upgrade the M3 motorway.

Mr John Hayes:

The estimated completion date for the M3 junction 2-4a smart motorway scheme, which is currently in construction, is June 2017. Work on the further M3 smart motorway scheme between Junctions 9-14 is expected to start in 2019/20 and complete by 2021/22. Both are in line with Highways England's delivery plan and are currently on target.

■ Railways: Expenditure

Ian C. Lucas:

[\[53218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Government funding has been allocated to rail capital investment projects in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland in (i) cash and (ii) real terms in each of the last 10 years.

Paul Maynard:

Government capital expenditure on rail from 2006-07 to 2015-16 for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is shown in the tables below.

Table 1. Government capital expenditure on rail by country

Figures are in £000's

	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	NORTHERN IRELAND	UK
2006-07	4,509,356	612,948	113,618	1,579	5,237,501
2007-08	4,521,593	674,355	95,782	27,372	5,319,102
2008-09	5,353,780	502,012	148,576	39,050	6,043,418
2009-10	4,893,167	530,574	195,917	35,722	5,655,379
2010-11	4,850,424	444,991	185,986	-1,400	5,480,001
2011-12 ¹	5,865,380	461,923	209,568	92,066	6,628,937
2012-13	6,165,214	445,936	221,883	41,106	6,874,139
2013-14	6,275,501	453,321	209,579	16,228	6,954,629
2014-15	7,191,562	584,511	238,269	26,701	8,041,043
2015-16 ²	10,154,191	199,705	320,379	39,422	10,713,697

Notes:

1. Local Government capital expenditure (made up mostly of Crossrail Ltd.) was introduced into the statistics from 2011-12, which caused a substantial increase in the overall spending level.

2. The step change in capital spending between 2014-15 and 2015-16 is mainly due to a change in the reporting of Network Rail finances following its reclassification as a public body. The allocation of Network Rail expenditure has also changed following its reclassification as a public body, resulting in a series break in 2015-16. As a result, expenditure by country in 2015-16 is not directly comparable with previous years.

Table 2. Government capital expenditure on rail by country;

2015-16 prices*Figures are in £000's*

	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	NORTHERN IRELAND	UK
2006-07	5,253,001	714,030	132,355	1,840	6,101,225
2007-08	5,142,734	766,992	108,940	31,132	6,049,799
2008-09	5,928,161	555,870	164,516	43,239	6,691,787
2009-10	5,344,582	579,522	213,991	39,018	6,177,112
2010-11	5,202,742	477,314	199,495	-1,502	5,878,049
2011-12 ¹	6,205,251	488,689	221,711	97,401	7,013,053
2012-13	6,388,318	462,073	229,912	42,594	7,122,897
2013-14	6,397,092	462,104	213,640	16,542	7,089,379
2014-15	7,223,269	587,088	239,319	26,819	8,076,495
2015-16 ²	10,154,191	199,705	320,379	39,422	10,713,697

Real terms figures are the nominal figures adjusted to 2015-16 prices using GDP deflators from the Office for National Statistics (released 30 September 2016).

Notes:

1. Local Government capital expenditure (made up mostly of Crossrail Ltd.) was introduced into the statistics from 2011-12, which caused a substantial increase in the overall spending level.

2. The step change in capital spending between 2014-15 and 2015-16 is mainly due to a change in the reporting of Network Rail finances following its reclassification as a public body. The allocation of Network Rail expenditure has also changed following its reclassification as a public body, resulting in a series break in 2015-16. As a result, expenditure by country in 2015-16 is not directly comparable with previous years.

■ Roads: Accidents

Mike Kane:

[\[53691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department is undertaking market research to improve its estimates on the number of incidents relating to truck and bus wheel loss.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department is not currently undertaking market research on the number of incidents relating to truck and bus wheel loss. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

continues to investigate reports of safety-related vehicle defects and its examiners also carry out large numbers of vehicle safety inspections.

■ **Taxis: Guide Dogs**

Tom Pursglove: [\[53903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward an accessibility action plan to improve access to taxis and private hire vehicles for guide dogs and their owners.

Andrew Jones:

The Department is committed to developing an Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) which will allow disabled people to access education, to get to work, see family and friends and to enjoy leisure activities.

The needs of assistance dog owners, including those who work with guide dogs, have informed the development of the actions which we intend to include in the AAP.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) has advised the Department on the broad content and scope of the AAP.

We aim to consult on the draft document by the end of the calendar year with the intention of publishing a final version by mid-2017.

Tom Pursglove: [\[54007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to promote best practice amongst licensing authorities on the use of taxis and private hire vehicles by guide dog owners.

Andrew Jones:

The Department has previously issued guidance to licensing authorities on the application of the law regarding the carriage of guide and assistance dogs in taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs), including their role in responding to allegations of non-compliance.

The Department is currently reviewing existing Best Practice Guidance on the licensing of taxis and PHVs, with a view to consulting stakeholders on a revised version in 2017. This will include strengthened recommendations relating to the training of drivers in disability awareness and equality.

■ **Transport: West Sussex**

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[53438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for future investment in the (a) West Sussex and (b) Mid Sussex transport network.

Andrew Jones:

Local transport funding is directed at highway authority level, in this case West Sussex County Council, which includes Mid Sussex District Council. The Government is investing over £95m on local road maintenance and small scale transport schemes in the County up to 2021. In addition, West Sussex benefits from access to £238m Local Growth

Funding (LGF) over the same period which has been secured by the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Examples of this LGF funding include £17m towards the A3200 Burgess Hill Link Road and £13m towards a scheme to realign the A29 in Bognor Regis. The Department is also addressing missing links on the A27 by undertaking substantial improvements at Chichester, Arundel and Worthing.

On the rail network, the Department is working with stakeholders to develop options for the redevelopment of Gatwick Airport station. In addition, the Thameslink Programme is delivering significant benefits to the Brighton Main Line which serves Mid Sussex.

Investment in new trains, London Bridge station and the Thameslink core means that from 2018, the Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) franchise will be able to deliver a major improvement to rail services.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Government Equalities Office: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter:

[\[53228\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department's small social media team within the communications directorate is responsible for the management of the Department's social media channels. One part of this team's role includes manually monitoring content that is publicly made available on social media – including our partners, stakeholders, individuals and our own channels. Monitoring can also be undertaken by other members of the Department, such as analysts, digital/web specialists and policy leads.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Neil Coyle:

[\[53314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) people with arthritis and (b) musculoskeletal conditions and employers are aware of the Access to Work scheme.

Neil Coyle:

[\[53315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department has taken to increase awareness of the Access to Work scheme among people with a disability or a long-term health condition to assist their return to work.

Penny Mordaunt:

We are committed to investing in Access to Work to overcome disabled people's barriers to employment including those with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions. As part of

our plans to raise numbers supported by Access to Work by 25,000 by the end of the Parliament, we have recently launched an online application process.

We have promoted Access to Work as part of Disability Confident and will continue to do so. We are also undertaking further marketing and promotion of the Access to Work programme. This includes working with stakeholders and partners such as Arthritis support organisations, Chartered Society of physiotherapists, British association of occupational therapists and employer associations to raise awareness through communications to their customers. We are also ensuring that advisers who work with potential customers, including Jobcentre Plus, health professionals and advisory groups, have the information and tools to act as advocates.

■ Children: Disadvantaged

Mr David Burrowes: [\[54080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the review, entitled What works to enhance inter-parental relationships and improve outcomes for children, published in March 2016, what steps his Department is taking to support the training of the future workforce to deliver the expert couple interventions.

Caroline Nokes:

The Early Intervention Foundation review showed that children exposed to frequent, intense and poorly resolved conflict between their parents are at risk of poorer long term outcomes. Our new approach to relationship support responds to this evidence.

Since April 2016 we have doubled the funding available for relationship support for the remainder of this Parliament. From 2017/18 we will be contracting for relationship support services which will include help targeted at the most disadvantaged families experiencing relationship distress. As part of this approach we will be working to build the capability of key professionals on the frontline to identify conflict within the family and to provide first line help as well as effective referral. We will also continue to build on our work with local authorities to embed proven interventions into local service design. This means more families will have access to programmes with stronger evidence of impact.

■ Children: Maintenance

Mr David Nuttall: [\[53562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of changing the level of historic income in a non-resident parent's salary within the Child Support Maintenance Calculation Regulations 2012 in order to allow for a more recent updated calculation of maintenance payments to be made.

Mr David Nuttall: [\[53563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what process or procedure a non-resident parent can use to request an updated salary figure to be used if it has changed by less than 25 per cent from historic income records for the purpose of calculating child maintenance.

Caroline Nokes:

My Department has no plans to change its current approach to assessing income. Information obtained from HMRC, for use in calculating maintenance, is for the most recent year for which they hold a complete tax record.

In cases where a parent provides evidence that the income figure used is not the most recent tax year for which HMRC have complete information, for example because the client's tax record is clerical, there is an escalation process which allows HMRC either to confirm the information already provided as correct, or to provide an updated Historic Income figure.

If at any point an individual's income changes by at least 25 per cent, the Department may make a new assessment based on current earnings information provided by the paying parent. Setting the threshold at 25 per cent helps to provide stability in the financial arrangements for both the parent with care and non-resident parent. The Department has no plan to review this threshold. At annual review, there is no threshold and the calculation will be amended to reflect the latest income information received from HMRC.

Kate Green:[\[53614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2016 to Question 52442, how much has accrued to the public purse from (a) the £20 fee charged for applications to the Child Maintenance Service (CMS), (b) the 20 per cent collection fee for paying parents using CMS collect and pay service, (c) the four per cent collection fee for receiving parents using the CMS collect and pay service and (d) enforcement fees levied on paying parents in the financial year to date.

Caroline Nokes:

The information provided in the Written Answer of 16th November 2016 [52442] reflects the information to March 2016 audited by National Audit Office as part of the 2015/16 Audit.

Information on fees in the financial year to date will not be available until audit of the 2016/17 Client Funds Account has been completed.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Procurement**Tim Farron:**[\[53203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times his Department has (a) terminated a contract, (b) imposed a penalty and (c) denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct since November 2015.

Caroline Nokes:

We are not aware of any cases where DWP has terminated a contract, imposed a penalty or denied permission for a company to tender on the grounds of grave professional misconduct.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Social Networking

Andy Slaughter: [\[53236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department is monitoring content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques.

Caroline Nokes:

DWP does monitor content that is publicly available on social networking sites using overt monitoring techniques. We do not, however, take on false identities in order to monitor publicly available content available on social networking sites online.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Luciana Berger: [\[53958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, (a) how many and (b) what proportion of employment support staff employed by his Department have undergone training to help them identify and support people who may be at risk of suicide or self-harm.

Damian Hinds:

All DWP staff undertaking customer-facing roles go through a programme of learning and development to equip them to support vulnerable people who access our services.

This includes a learning product called "Supporting Customers with a Vulnerability", which covers how to respond to an individual threatening suicide or self-harm, and which staff undertake as part of their foundation learning for a role where they interact directly with DWP customers.

There are additional learning modules on supporting claimants with mental health conditions for telephony staff, and for those who work face-to-face with customers

■ Employment Schemes: Musculoskeletal Disorders

Neil Coyle: [\[53316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people with a musculoskeletal condition who require support to return to work in order to meet the Government's objective of halving the disability employment gap.

Neil Coyle: [\[53317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people with a disability who require support to return to work in order to meet the Government's objective of halving the disability employment gap.

Penny Mordaunt:

We know that musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions affect around 3.7 million working age disabled people in the UK and that 2 million of these people are out of work.

We want to provide a system that better supports disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to enter, return to or remain in employment. This will help towards the ambition of halving the disability employment gap.

Halving the gap requires a collaborative approach with input from employers, the welfare system, the health service and wider society.

The recent Work and Health Disability Green Paper 'Improving Lives' explores a range of ways to improve the lives of disabled people including those with musculoskeletal conditions. This includes proposals for exploring new ways of providing holistic support and improving access to treatment.

■ Employment: Disability

Kate Green:

[\[53589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what accreditation process he plans will be used for the training received by the work coaches described in his Department's publication entitled, Improving Lives: The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper, Cm 9342; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

Our work coach accreditation programme consists of Level 2, 3 and 4 working toward a City and Guilds Certificate in Managing the Quality of Services to Customers.

Accreditation is not about adding to what we are already doing with our induction and learning route-ways, but building upon it to continuously improve. It aligns the Work Coach learning journey with a meaningful accreditation route-way, future proofing our learning and development journeys and making greater, more efficient use of technology to enrich the learning experience.

This City and Guilds externally recognised accreditation provides a strong focus on Customer Service delivery, the Labour Market and Digital from day one, and provides our Work Coach and Work Coach Manager Community with a clear understanding of the expectations we place on them in delivering a professional customer service.

In addition to accreditation, Work coaches will also be better supported by an extra 300 Disability Employment Advisers, who will work alongside them to provide additional professional expertise and local knowledge on health issues, and around 200 new Community Partners with disability expertise and local knowledge.

■ Occupational Pensions

Mark Menzies:

[\[54016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason provisions on the long service cap within the Pensions Act 2014 have not yet come into force.

Richard Harrington:

Before the provisions could be brought into force certain changes to secondary legislation were required to ensure the cap works as intended in all situations.

I have now completed the consultation on these changes and am considering the responses. It is my intention that the long service cap will be implemented from April 2017.

■ Pensioners: British Nationals Abroad

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[53851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many UK pensioners live in (a) other EU countries, (b) Commonwealth countries and (c) the rest of the world; and how many of those people have an address in Bristol West constituency as their most recent UK residence.

Richard Harrington:

The table below shows the number of pensioners in receipt of the UK State Pension living in the country groupings requested. Please note that residents in Cyprus and Malta appear in both the European Union and Commonwealth totals.

COUNTRY GROUP	NUMBER OF UK STATE PENSIONERS
European Union (excluding UK)	474,130
Commonwealth (excluding UK)	565,770
Rest of the world	218,580

Source: DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study May 2016.

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

The information in relation to those who reside overseas and previously lived at an address in Bristol West constituency is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Social Security Benefits

Johnny Mercer: [\[53978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants transferring from disability living allowance to personal independence payments have had their claim disallowed due to non-attendance at an assessment appointment.

Penny Mordaunt:

As at July 2016, of the 466,400 Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) reassessment clearances, 10,600 had been disallowed for failure to attend an assessment consultation without good reason.

Notes to the figures: Data has been rounded to the nearest 100.

■ Social Security Benefits: South West

Johnny Mercer: [\[53977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many appointments for claimants transferring from disability living allowance to personal independence payments have been rearranged or cancelled at the request of a person other than the claimant in (a) Plymouth and (b) the South West in the last 12 months.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his previous question UIN [52915](#).

■ Social Security Benefits: Telephone Services

Chris Stephens: [\[53596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants made calls longer than (a) one and (b) two hours on non-Freephone lines relating to their claim for benefit for each Departmental benefit in the last year; and what the duration of the 50 longest telephone calls to each Departmental telephone line in the last five years was.

Caroline Nokes:

The information is not available and can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Up-rating

Sir Hugo Swire: [\[53946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information his Department holds on the number of pensioners whose contributions were paid prior to 1997 who are not receiving annual increases to their private pension payments which are in line with the retail price index.

Sir Hugo Swire: [\[53947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the potential cost to providers of requiring all private pension payments, including to those pensioners whose contributions were paid prior to 1997, to increase in line with the retail price index.

Richard Harrington:

The Department for Work and Pensions does not currently hold the information to answer either of these questions. The Department is not able to provide this information or make an estimate of potential costs as the information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Universal Credit

Frank Field: [\[54008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposed changes to work allowance on the incomes of working households in receipt of universal credit.

Damian Hinds:

The work allowance changes announced in the 2015 Summer Budget were implemented as of April 2016.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Pre-Council Written Ministerial Statement – Competitiveness Council 28-29 November

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Joseph Johnson): [\[HCWS280\]](#)

The Competitiveness Council is taking place in Brussels on 28-29 November. Baroness Neville-Rolfe will be representing the UK on 28 November (internal market and industry). I am expecting to represent the UK on 29 November (research and innovation).

Britain will in due course be leaving the EU. While we remain a member of the EU we will continue to participate in Competitiveness Council discussions and vote on legislative proposals, in line with our rights and obligations as a Member State.

The Slovak Presidency has yet to finalise the agenda for the Council. However we expect the following items to be discussed:

Day One

The Commission will be seeking a general approach on a proposed Regulation to address geo-blocking and other forms of nationality-based discrimination. The UK will support the Commission's initiative to end unjustified discrimination against consumers. There will also be a first reading of legislation on the approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles and trailers, enforcement of consumer protection laws, and three legislative proposals on Copyright in the Digital Single Market.

There will be a discussion on skills as part of the regular competitiveness 'check-up' which will be followed by an exchange of views; a stock-take on the single market strategy; and; an exchange of views on the Unitary Patent and Unified Patent Court (UPC).

We expect a number of items to be presented to the Council for information including a notice from the Commission on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions; the SME Envoy's report; and; a report from the Slovak presidency on the outcome of the conference 'Collaborative Economy' held in Brussels on 15 November.

The Hungarian delegation will present information on the competitiveness aspects of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The German delegation has asked to present information on the significance of industrial policy in the Commission's 2017 Work Programme.

Finally, the Maltese Presidency will present information on their Work Programme.

Day Two

The Commission will present the Space Strategy for Europe. The strategy is a good fit to UK priorities for growing the space sector and the UK will be supportive.

The UK will support the draft Council Conclusions on early stage researchers, which recognise the importance to Europe's future global competitiveness of nurturing the next generation of researchers and scientists.

The final substantive agenda item is the Commission's report on the implementation of the strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation. The UK has been actively engaged in promoting the important role of scientific diplomacy in this context and is encouraged to see this agenda progressing.

AOB items will include: presentations on Open Science; the Quantum Technologies Flagship; information from the Presidency on the High Level Conference on European Bio-economy held in Bratislava on 17th October; and; information from the Portuguese delegation on the development of a European infrastructure to promote North-South cooperation.

The day will conclude with information from the Maltese delegation on the work programme of the incoming Presidency.

HOME OFFICE

■ Justice and Home Affairs: Post-Council statement

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS281\]](#)

I attended the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 17 and 18 November in Brussels.

On the evening of 17 November, the Presidency hosted a meeting for Ministers, focused on migration. The main focus of discussion was the future of the Common European Asylum System and "effective solidarity", which included discussions on moving away from relocation being considered the only way for Member States to demonstrate solidarity. Ministers agreed to take forward further work on developing solidarity, although this is not relevant to the UK as the Government has already decided not to opt in to the new Dublin IV Regulation, and on upstream engagement with third countries. I reiterated that UK does not take part in the EU's relocation and resettlement schemes.

The Council on 18 November began with the Presidency inviting the Commission to set out its new proposal on a European Travel and Information Authorisation System (ETIAS). The Commission indicated that the proposal aims to provide for greater security and border management by increasing the amount of information on non-visa nationals entering the Schengen area. Negotiations on the proposals will be taken forward by the relevant official-level Council working groups. As the UK is not in Schengen, we will not participate in this measure.

The Council continued with a focus on IT and data sharing measures related to border management. All Member States agreed to continue implementation of the Dutch Data-Sharing Roadmap agreed at the June JHA Council. The Commission set out its future priorities for work in this area, including: better training; improving data quality; and upgrading existing systems. The Commission also indicated that it would be bringing forward two legislative proposals, one in December and one in June 2017, to upgrade the Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). The Commission's priorities for

upgrading SIS II include finger- or palm-print alerts, facial recognition, counterfeit documents and effective Europol and European Border and Coast Guard access. I reiterated the need for progress on systematic sharing of criminal information, building on the excellent work in the joint UK-Latvia-Netherlands Serious Offending by Mobile European Criminals (SOMECE) report on mobile criminality, and improving data quality.

Ministers then discussed the Fight Against Terrorism, taking note of progress in implementing existing EU Council Conclusions on this issue, and ongoing activities to prevent and disrupt terrorist activity in the EU, particularly around travel for terrorist purposes.

The Commission set out a number of principles that support EU efforts to fight terrorism. These included the need for secure borders, information exchange between Member States, and implementation of the Passenger Name Record (PNR), Counter Terrorism and Firearm Directives. I stressed the UK's role as leader in PNR implementation within the EU and our willingness to share lessons learnt with partners. I also reminded Member States of the importance of aviation security and the need to build on the momentum of UN Resolution 2309 with the adoption of a European strategy.

In relation to the EU Internet Forum, Ministers discussed how to increase collaboration between industry and Member States to prevent radicalisation by means of the internet, ahead of a Ministerial meeting of the Forum in December.

In a break in the plenary session Ministers discussed how to ensure effective co-operation between the non-EU Counter Terrorism Group (CTG) and Europol.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Foreign Affairs Council for Development November 2016

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (James Wharton): [\[HCWS279\]](#)

On the morning of 28 November, I will attend the Foreign Affairs Council for Development in Brussels. The meeting will be chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The UK is a global leader in international development and this is demonstrated by our commitment to meeting the UN aid target of 0.7% gross national income. I look forward to using this opportunity to push the EU to do more to deliver the ambitious development agenda set out in the Global Goals.

The UK is leaving the EU. While we remain a member we will continue to play a full role in line with our rights and obligations and represent the interests of the people of the United Kingdom.

European Consensus on Development

European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, will present the European Commission proposal on a new European Consensus on Development. The Consensus is the comprehensive EU policy framework for development assistance and is being updated to be aligned with the main themes of Agenda 2030 and the Global Goals. I

will highlight the UK's broad support for a comprehensive and integrated approach to development and push for better coherence across development and humanitarian assistance.

Post-Cotonou

Commissioner Mimica will present the European Commission's Impact Assessment and Policy document on the future framework for EU cooperation with the African, Pacific and Caribbean countries; an initial exchange of views from Member States will follow. This is an initial discussion on revising the Cotonou Agreement treaty that will expire in 2020. I will use this discussion to encourage the EU and member states to consider a differentiated approach towards partner countries at different levels of development.

Migration and Development

HRVP Mogherini will present an update on the state of play on the proposed External Investment Plan. Ministers will also discuss follow-up to the Valetta Summit as part of the EU's migration agenda and planned events, including the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa Steering Committee. The UK continues to work with European partners on migration, including assessing ways to better address protracted crises and coordinating approaches to other drivers of unmanaged flows.

Energy and Development

Maroš Šef

čović, Vice President of the European Co

Union, will join for a substantive discussion on energy and sustainable development. This will build on agreed Council Conclusions on the same topic and look to focus on progress made through the EU-Africa Energy Partnership in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Other Agenda Items

Ministers will adopt Council Conclusions on mainstreaming digital solutions and technologies in EU development policy, the Court of Auditors report on humanitarian aid to the Great Lakes region, energy and development, and the EU common position for the 2nd High Level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.