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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

■ Abortion: Prosecutions

Diana Johnson: [\[46456\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, on how many occasions, and on what dates, the Crown Prosecution Service has decided to prosecute medical professionals for abortion-related offences since 1997-98.

Jeremy Wright:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not hold offences data prior to 2004-2005. Between the years 2004-2005 and 2015-2016, the CPS commenced prosecutions of 71 abortion related offences. However, it is not possible to disaggregate the data to report the occupation of the defendant, whether a medical professional or otherwise. This information could only be obtained by examining each of the CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Sentencing: Appeals

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[46370\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether there are plans to review the nature and type of offences that are capable of referral to the Court of Appeal on the grounds of leniency of sentencing.

Robert Buckland:

The Government has committed to extending the scope of the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme and is carefully considering its approach.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Animal Experiments

Patrick Grady: [\[46676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will issue a response to Early Day Motion 400, on applying the results of experiments on animals to human patients, tabled on 5 September 2016.

Joseph Johnson:

The Government considers that the carefully regulated use of animals in scientific research remains a vital tool in improving the understanding of how biological systems work and in the development of safe new medicines, treatments and technologies.

At the same time, the Government believes that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and it actively supports and funds the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in

research (the 3Rs), in particular through funding for the National Centre for the Replacement Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), and also through ongoing UK-led efforts to encourage greater global uptake of the 3Rs.

Advances in biomedical science and technologies – including stem cell research, in vitro systems that mimic the function of human organs, imaging and new computer modelling techniques – are all providing new opportunities to reduce reliance on the use of animals in research.

As part of this, Innovate UK, the NC3Rs, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the Medical Research Council have produced a Non-animal Technologies Roadmap for the UK.

The Roadmap offers an approach for the UK to develop, exploit and deploy new non-animal technologies for long-term economic and societal benefit. Integral to this strategy have been two Innovate UK industry-led competitions which have awarded approximately £7m in grant funding; “Developing non-animal technologies” and “Advancing the development and application of non-animal technologies”.

EU and UK law requires safety testing on animals before human trials for new medicines can begin and animal research still plays an important role in providing vital safety information for potential new medicines.

The Early Day Motion (EDM 400) rightly draws attention to the UK life science sector’s Concordat on openness in animal research which was launched in 2014, and provides new opportunities for transparency and debate in this area.

■ ARM

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[46184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received from (a) employees of and (b) agencies connected with ARM Holdings plc on the takeover of that business; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

I have not received any such representations.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Consultants

Margaret Hodge: [\[44322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a list of all secondees to his Department from (a) PwC, (b) Deloitte, (c) Ernst and Young, (d) KPMG and (e) other consulting firms in the last three financial years; and what the role was of each of those secondees.

Joseph Johnson:

This response covers the former Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and former Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC):

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-09-02/44322>

Margaret Hodge: [44342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times his Department has used the services of (a) PwC, (b) Deloitte, (c) Ernst and Young, (d) KPMG and (e) other consulting firms in the last three financial years; and what (i) work was undertaken and (ii) the cost to the public purse was on each such occasion.

Joseph Johnson:

The information requested for this PQ is publicly available. Since BEIS has recently been created through a machinery of government change the data is available through separate weblinks.

The ex-DECC link is: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/departmental-spend-over-500>. This contains all monthly transactions in excess of £500.

The ex-BIS link is: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bis-spending-totals>. This contains all monthly transactions in excess of £500.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Public Expenditure**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [45185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of his Department's budget in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

Joseph Johnson:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility on 18 July 2016, UIN [43020](#).

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

Nic Dakin: [46321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45149, how many climate change experts are employed by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department's activity to tackle climate change cuts across the work of various teams and is undertaken by officials across a number of professions, including policy advisors, scientists, engineers and economists. In addition the Department has access to a range

of experts from outside the Department including academia and organisations such as the Met Office Hadley Centre. Consequently, it is not possible to provide an exact number of officials who could be called climate change experts.

■ **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Reorganisation**

Paul Blomfield: [\[46435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 43629, what plans he has to review the aspects of the BIS 2020 programme that do not relate to staff posts and office locations in the light of the restructuring of government departments.

Joseph Johnson:

As part of the recent Machinery of Government changes, over the coming months we will be considering how to bring together the reform agendas of BEIS's two predecessor Departments.

■ **Department of Energy and Climate Change: Staff**

Barry Gardiner: [\[46365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many officials of the Department for Energy and Climate Change have not transferred to work at his Department; and what the cost has been to date of redundancy payments to such staff resulting from the changes to the machinery of government.

Joseph Johnson:

Following the appointment of my rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 14 July 2016 all employees of the Department of Energy and Climate Change became part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on that date.

There have been no redundancies made since the 14 July as a result of the machinery of government change.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Matthew Pennycook: [\[46038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to publish an updated cost-benefit analysis of the smart meter rollout programme.

Jesse Norman:

The Government intends to publish an updated cost-benefit analysis for the rollout of smart meters in due course.

■ Farepak

Jessica Morden: [\[46149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with HM Treasury on the use of Farepak unclaimed funds in 2019.

Margot James:

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, has not held discussions with HM Treasury on the use of Farepak unclaimed funds in 2019; Farepak creditors will still be able to make claims for monies they are owed when they are handed over where the claims were accepted as valid by the joint liquidators.

Jessica Morden: [\[46150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the current value is of Farepak unclaimed funds.

Margot James:

The current value of Farepak unclaimed funds is £1,007,267.41.

The agency will hold the funds for the next six years, people can however continue to claim indefinitely. The Insolvency Service has liaised with media outlets and the matter has been covered by BBC Moneybox, MoneySaving Expert and BBC Watchdog, to draw attention to any unpaid creditor or has yet to come forward.

■ Financial Services: Regulation

Barry Gardiner: [\[46611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the Financial Reporting Council's ability to work with other financial regulators in the UK to address the systematic financial risk of climate change.

Margot James:

Although the Financial Reporting Council's remit does not extend to the systemic financial risks of climate change, I am confident of its ability to collaborate effectively with any financial regulators, as required, within whose remit such risks fall.

■ Gratuities

Paula Sherriff: [\[46587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish his response to the results of his Department's consultation on tips, gratuities, service and cover charges that closed in June 2016.

Margot James:

The Government launched its consultation on tips, gratuities, service and cover charges to gain views on proposed actions towards tipping abuse. We are analysing submissions to this exercise and will announce further action in due course.

■ Hinkley Point C Power Station

Caroline Lucas: [\[46335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will lay a revised departmental minute detailing the most recent estimate of costs of Hinkley Point C before Parliament; and if he will lay such a minute at least 14 days in advance of signing any binding contract for that project.

Jesse Norman:

A summary of the value for money analysis will be published alongside the contract and associated agreements when they have been entered into.

Barry Gardiner: [\[46693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether EDF will incur a penalty in the event that Hinkley Point C starts to generate electricity by 2025.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 10 October 2016]: Under the contract for difference, if Hinkley Point C does not start generating electricity four years after 2025 then there will be reductions to the contract term. This means that for every day that Hinkley is late, the period of time where EDF is getting increased certainty on the price of electricity generated from Hinkley is reduced. If neither reactor at Hinkley is generating electricity by 2033, there is an option to cancel the contract.

■ Hinkley Point C Power Station: Security

Barry Gardiner: [\[46692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his oral statement of 15 September, how the measures announced in that statement will increase security at the Hinkley C project.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 10 October 2016]:

As announced on 15 September, following the comprehensive review of the Hinkley Point C project, my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State announced new safeguards for future foreign investment in critical infrastructure.

In respect of Hinkley Point C, the Government is able to prevent the sale of EDF's controlling stake prior to the completion of construction. This agreement has been confirmed in an exchange of letters between the Government and EDF.

■ Infrastructure: Sales

Barry Gardiner: [\[46695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the company annual turnover threshold is for government intervention to block any sale or transfer of the

ownership of critical infrastructure; on what occasions that threshold has been crossed; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is able to intervene on public interest grounds in transactions which are subject to merger control either within the UK or at the EU level. The turnover thresholds for such public interest interventions depend upon which of the two relevant competition bodies has jurisdiction.

The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has jurisdiction to review mergers and takeovers when:

- the annual UK turnover of the target business exceeds £70 million, or
- the merger creates a 25%, or greater, share in a market in the UK.

The European Commission has jurisdiction to review mergers and takeovers when:

- the combined aggregate worldwide turnover (in the preceding financial year) of all the undertakings concerned exceeds EUR5,000 million; and
- the aggregate EU-wide turnover of each of at least two of the undertakings concerned exceeds EUR 250 million; or
- the aggregate worldwide turnover of all the undertakings concerned is more than EUR 2,500 million; and
- the aggregate turnover of all the undertakings in each of at least three member states is more than EUR 100 million;
- in each of the same three member states, the aggregate turnover of each of at least two of the undertakings involved is more than EUR 25 million; and
- the aggregate EU-wide turnover of each of at least two of the undertakings involved is more than EUR 100 million.

Unless each of the undertakings concerned achieves more than two-thirds of its aggregate EU-wide turnover within a single Member State (then the Commission does not have jurisdiction).

If none of these jurisdictional thresholds is met, the Secretary of State can still intervene in defence industry mergers, if at least one of the enterprises concerned is a relevant government contractor; or where the merger involves a supplier or suppliers of at least 25% of any description of newspapers or broadcasting in the UK.

In all cases, public interest interventions can only be made on the grounds of national security, financial stability (or prudential rules in an EU case) or media plurality.

The number of times the CMA's jurisdiction thresholds are met is not recorded. The European Commission does not record merger notifications by country of transaction.

■ Innovate UK

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[46355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans Innovate UK has to develop a business plan across the UK for liaison with universities on the promotion of greater innovation in private sector small and medium-sized enterprises.

Joseph Johnson:

Innovate UK published its 2016/17 Delivery Plan in April 2016. This sets out measures to nurture high-growth potential SMEs and to work with universities and the research base across the UK to turn scientific excellence into economic impact. It includes joint programmes to promote collaboration between SMEs and the academic sector.

■ Insolvency Service: Advertising

Jessica Morden: [\[46148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many advertisements the Insolvency Service has placed (a) in newspapers, (b) in magazines, (c) on television, (d) on social media, (e) on transport and (f) on radio since November 2014.

Margot James:

In the period from November 2014 to August 2016, inclusive, the Insolvency Service has placed 3,907 newspaper advertisements and 44,452 notices were placed in the London Gazette. All of these were in the performance of statutory functions by official receivers in relation to the administration of bankruptcies of individuals and the compulsory liquidation of companies. The Insolvency Service has not placed any advertisements through any of the other types of outlet listed in the question.

■ Retail Trade: Insolvency

Jessica Morden: [\[46332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he will respond to the Report of the Law Commission Consumer Prepayments on Retailer Insolvency HC543, published on 13 July 2016.

Margot James:

The Government is considering the recommendations of the Law Commission and will respond in due course.

■ Sahaviriya Steel Industries UK: Redcar

Anna Turley: [\[46082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that unspent financial resources from the Redcar Taskforce are spent in the local community.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has provided £50 million to the Redcar Task Force to support individuals directly affected by the SSI liquidation and to boost economic development

across Tees Valley. £43 million of that funding has already been approved, with more than £30 million paid out to accountable local authorities and colleges. Task Force members continue to work closely with officials in the Department in delivering the remainder of the support package.

■ Solar Power: Subsidies

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[46185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of the report, Seeing through the gloom, UK solar seeks stability after subsidy cut, published in July 2016.

Jesse Norman:

Solar in the UK has been a success story with 11 gigawatts deployed, over 99% of which has been delivered under Conservative-led Governments since May 2010.

Changes to the Feed-in Tariff scheme were introduced in 2016 to manage costs and ensure value for money. We note the efforts that the solar industry is making to adapt to the revised scheme. We have received the report 'Seeing through the gloom' and noted its findings.

■ Space Technology

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[44431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the vote to leave the EU on the UK's (a) space sector and (b) role in the European Galileo satellite navigation system project.

Joseph Johnson:

There are a number of factors that the Government will need to consider when developing our strategy for negotiating our withdrawal from the European Union. The Department is working closely with businesses to understand their concerns and I will be working with colleagues across Government to make sure we understand all of the potential risks and opportunities across the economy. This will continue to inform our approach as we seek to shape our future relationship with Europe.

■ Technology: Research

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[46547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to prevent the loss of technologies being developed in the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

Joseph Johnson:

The UK has a long and strong history in science, research and innovation, and a world-leading reputation, being ranked third in the Global Innovation Index in 2016. We have protected the science resource budget in real terms from its 2015/16 level of £4.7 billion for the rest of the parliament. Looking ahead, we want to ensure that the excellent

work being done by our researchers, universities and innovative businesses continues. The Government has committed to underwrite payment of EU research funding for specific projects even when they continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU.

■ **Universities: EU Grants and Loans**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[46427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the extent to which UK universities are being excluded from joint funding applications to EU funding bodies by other EU universities.

Joseph Johnson:

The European Commission has made it clear that while the UK remains a member of the EU, proposals from, or including, UK applicants must be treated in the same way as applications from other Member States including for collaborations under Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.

In addition, the HM Treasury announcement on 13th August brought clarity on continuity of research funding by stating that competitively bid for projects applied for before the UK departs the EU would be underwritten by the Treasury for the life of the project.

The Government is vigilant and will continue to monitor any problems in this area. To aid this we have set up a mailbox where specific instances should be sent: research@beis.gov.uk.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Apprentices: Government Departments**

Stephen Timms: [\[46658\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many apprenticeships each government department will contribute to the Government's target of three million apprenticeships by 2020.

Ben Gummer:

It is the responsibility of individual departments to project their workforce, including apprenticeships.

The Civil Service implemented a single apprenticeship target of a minimum 2.3% of the workforce in England as apprenticeships starts from 1 January 2016. To meet this, departments have agreed to achieve 2.3% of their workforce in England as apprenticeship starts. This is an annual target that will be measured by financial years based on headcount at the start of that reporting period.

We estimate that there will be at least 30,000 apprenticeship starts in England by the end of the Parliament.

■ Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Expenditure

Tom Watson:

[\[46602\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the estimated annual annual cost to the public purse is of the Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Ben Gummer:

The costs related to the Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will be accounted for in the usual way in the Cabinet Office Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Civil Servants

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[46360\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has made an estimate of overall headcount and spending on civil servants across all Departments over the next five years.

Ben Gummer:

Workforce planning is primarily the responsibility of each department to determine based on their individual operational and policy requirements. Each department has their own spending agreement with HM Treasury for this Parliament and are responsible for ensuring they have the right workforce and capability in place to deliver their commitments.

Earlier this year, departments published their Single Departmental Plans, setting out the key programmes of work required to deliver the Government's Manifesto commitments. Departments have been developing plans to ensure they have the workforce required to deliver their Single Departmental Plans.

The Civil Service constantly reviews its capabilities in order to deliver the Government's agenda. Cabinet Office is working with all departments across the Civil Service to better understand their capacity and capability requirements over this Parliament following the decision to exit the EU, but it is too early to make a detailed assessment at this stage.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[46361\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is his Department's policy to reduce the overall civil service headcount in the current Parliament.

Ben Gummer:

There is no central Cabinet Office policy to reduce the overall Civil Service headcount in the current Parliament. Workforce planning is primarily the responsibility of each department to determine based on their individual operational and policy requirements. Each department has their own spending agreements with HM Treasury for this Parliament and are responsible for ensuring they have the right workforce and capability in place to deliver their commitments.

Earlier this year, departments published their Single Departmental Plans, setting out the key programmes of work required to deliver the Government's Manifesto commitments.

Departments have been developing plans to ensure they have the workforce required to deliver their Single Departmental Plans.

■ Cybercrime

Tom Watson: [46600]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many officials of his Department have responsibilities for cyber security.

Ben Gummer:

Transparency data on Cabinet Office staffing can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-staff-and-salary-data-as-at-31-march-2016>

■ Electronic Government

Chi Onwurah: [46677]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department plans to publish the Codes of Practice for Part 5 of the Digital Economy Bill.

Ben Gummer:

The Digital Economy Bill provides that Codes of practice in relation to Part 5 of the Bill should be consulted upon with the Information Commissioner, the Commissioners for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the devolved administrations before being issued. The Government intends to make illustrative versions of the Codes available shortly.

■ Government Departments

Richard Burden: [46376]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department takes to ensure that government projects are delivered on time and within budget.

Ben Gummer:

All projects are ultimately the responsibility of individual government departments. However, with £400 billion in the Infrastructure Pipeline and £400 billion in the Major Projects Portfolio, the Cabinet Office has a central team, the Infrastructure Projects Authority (IPA), to support departments to deliver on time and within budget. The IPA provides expertise and practical help, a supportive environment to enable major projects to succeed, and manages an independent assurance process to ensure projects are delivered to time and within budget.

- IPA deploys expert commercial, financial and delivery support
- IPA delivers independent high quality assurance and oversight
- IPA develops standards, insights and tools, developing the project leadership and project finance professions
- IPA delivers key finance schemes (PF2 & guarantees) to enable key projects to proceed

The IPA works with all partners in infrastructure and major projects - government departments, project teams, HMT, Cabinet Office, and the private sector - to do this. The IPA reports jointly to HMT and Cabinet Office Ministers.

■ Government Departments: Data Protection

Tom Watson: [\[46601\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to improve the clarity of advice to government departments on protecting data.

Tom Watson: [\[46669\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his assessment is of the implications for the Government's policies on data protection of the findings of the NAO report, Protecting information across the government, published in September 2016.

Ben Gummer:

The Government's [Security Policy Framework](#) has clear requirements on Information Assurance which are mandatory for departments. They include a range of measures including the [Classification Policy](#) which set out expectations of how government will protect the wide variety of information that it generates, collects, processes, stores and exchanges appropriately and effectively. As the NAO report acknowledges, the UK government is acknowledged as a world leader in this area.

However, we are conscious that these policies and structures have grown organically over time and need to keep pace with Government's digital transformation plans. So the Cabinet Office conducted its own review of Government security in early 2016 and many of the findings are consistent with the NAO report. We are already starting to implement the recommendations in the review.

For example, we are already well underway in strengthening oversight of information security by bringing together nine separate central teams into just two. We have also appointed the Government's first ever Chief Security Officer to bring together all disciplines of government security under central leadership. As part of this work Cabinet Office is working with GCHQ and the Government Digital Service to rationalise and clarify the guidance to departments on information security and protecting data. The National Cyber Security Centre which is due to stand up in the autumn will also play a lead role in advising departments on cyber security.

But we can and will do more and we will respond fully to this report in due course.

■ Ministerial Policy Advisers

Mr Douglas Carswell: [\[46562\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department plans to publish a list of its special advisers in post.

Ben Gummer:

A full list of Government special advisers will be published in due course, in the usual way.

■ Older People

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[46354\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate has been made of the forecast change in the number of people aged 80 and over between 2015 and 2035.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter to Member - People aged 80 and over [PQ46354 V0.4.pdf]

■ Pay

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[46102\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people earning less than £11,000 per year are full-time employees.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response to 46102 [PQ 46102 v.02.pdf]

■ Service Industries: EU Nationals

Tim Farron: [\[46308\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the hospitality industry workforce in (a) Cumbria and (b) Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency was born in another EU country.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Hospitality Industry [PQ46308 v.02.pdf]

TREASURY

■ Annuities

Steve McCabe: [\[46535\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department is making on the implementation of the proposed secondary market for annuities.

Steve McCabe: [\[46536\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the length of time between the publication of his Department's planned consultation on a proposed secondary market for annuities and the planned introduction of that market for the pensions industry to prepare for that introduction; and if he will make an assessment of the effect of that period on the effective introduction of that market.

Steve McCabe: [\[46537\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to postpone the introduction of the secondary market for annuities until 2018 to ensure adequate time for the pension industry to plan for the introduction of that market.

Steve McCabe: [\[46568\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will postpone the proposed implementation date of the secondary market for annuities in April 2017 until an appropriate tax code for pensioners is finalised.

Simon Kirby:

To date, the Government has published the following consultation documents in relation to the secondary market in annuities policy:

Creating a secondary annuity market – March 2015

Creating a secondary annuity market: response to the call for evidence – December 2015

Creating a secondary annuity market: tax framework – April 2016

Creating a secondary market for annuities – secondary legislation – April 2016

These consultations have now closed. The Government will respond shortly.

■ Child Tax Credit

Gavin Robinson: [\[46181\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effect on children of the suspension of child tax credit when investigations are carried out.

Jane Ellison:

In most cases, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not suspend the payment of tax credits payments during checks on tax credit awards. It only does this where information held indicates that this is a reasonable step to prevent payments being made in error. In these circumstances, making further payments would therefore result in increased overpayments of tax credits overall which the customer would have to repay. Nevertheless, if a customer demonstrates that the claim is correct, HMRC reinstates payments immediately.

HMRC has not carried out research into the specific aspect of the tax credits system related to suspension of Child Tax Credits.

■ Concentrix

Louise Haigh: [46422]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to section A8.1 of the Benefits and Credits, Error and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNnex-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, what the profiling techniques are that are used to identify non-compliance.

Jane Ellison:

Information about the use of profiling techniques can be found within the Concentrix contract at Annex A10.2 and A22.1:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/85d1b730-5e4e-4be8-ae4c-3ac1f359afc7>

Mr Jim Cunningham: [46494]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have had their tax credits stopped and subsequently reinstated by Concentrix in each of the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

On 16th September I responded to a number of parliamentary questions on the number of mandatory reconsiderations requested by tax credit claimants this year.

Where a discrepancy is detected, claimants are given 30 days to contact HMRC or provide the relevant information. If after 30 days HMRC has had no contact, tax credit payments are either suspended or reduced. HMRC then gives the claimant a further 30 days to contact HMRC before making a decision on the tax credits award using all the available information.

Gloria De Piero: [46649]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in (a) Ashfield constituency and (b) Nottinghamshire have had a tax credit claim stopped by Concentrix; and how many such claims were subsequently reinstated by HM Revenue and Customs.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not hold the data broken down specifically by constituency areas. HMRC are able to obtain data by geographical areas but this would only be available at disproportionate cost.

■ Credit

Yvonne Fovargue: [46388]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many high-cost, short-term credit firms have (a) been fully authorised and (b) had their authorisation denied by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[46390\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the change in the (a) volume and (b) value of high-cost, short-term loans has been since January 2015.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[46392\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many high-cost, short-term credit firms are operating with interim permissions.

Simon Kirby:

This question has been passed on to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The FCA will reply to directly to the Honourable member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[46389\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people employed in the UK by the high-cost, short-term credit sector.

Simon Kirby:

The information requested is not centrally held.

■ Fuels: Taxation

Martyn Day: [\[46652\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits to the economy of reducing both fuel duty and VAT on all fuels.

Jane Ellison:

Fuel duty was frozen for its sixth successive year at Budget 2016, saving the average driver £75 every year compared to the pre-2010 fuel duty escalator plans. Like all taxes, the government keeps fuel duty under review, with all options considered and announcements made at fiscal events. Under the current legal framework there is no scope to apply a reduced rate of VAT to all fuels.

■ Income Tax: Scotland

Ian Murray: [\[46421\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with HM Revenue and Customs and Ministers of the Scottish Government on changes to the rates and bands of income tax in Scotland.

Jane Ellison:

The UK Government has regular conversations with the Scottish Government about a wide range of economic policies, both at a ministerial and official level.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury met with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, Derek Mackay MSP, on 19 September and will continue to work with the Scottish Government to implement the Scotland Act and the Scottish Government's fiscal framework.

From April 2017, it will be for the Scottish Parliament to set the income tax rates and thresholds that will apply to Scottish taxpayers' non-savings, non-dividend income, such as that from employment and pensions.

■ **LIBOR: Fines**

Ms Gisela Stuart: [46398]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has (a) collected in Libor fines since May 2015 and (b) expects to collect in Libor fines in each of the next three years.

Simon Kirby:

1. In this Parliament the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has transferred £511 million of LIBOR fines to the Treasury. The Treasury is unaware of any potential future receipts, which are a matter for the FCA.

■ **National Insurance Fund**

Tim Loughton: [46560]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the surplus/deficit in the National Insurance Fund is.

Jane Ellison:

There are two separate National Insurance Funds (NIF) one for Great Britain and a significantly smaller Northern Ireland Fund.

The balance on the GB NIF as at 31 March 2015 was £20.9bn and the Northern Ireland NIF was £0.5bn. These balance can be found in the accounts which were published on 29 October 2015, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-insurance-fund-accounts>.

The NIF accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016 are currently in the process of being audited prior to publication.

■ **Public Sector Debt**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [46106]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether public sector net debt will fall by the end of financial year 2016-17 in line with his Department's published estimates.

Jane Ellison:

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) publishes the official forecasts for the level of public sector net debt as a share of gross domestic product. The next OBR forecast will be published in November 2016 in its Economic and Fiscal Outlook document.

■ **Welfare Tax Credits: Fraud**

Mrs Madeleine Moon: [46393]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average time taken was to complete an investigation into the alleged presence of an unreported adult in the household of a tax credit claimant in the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

Between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016, the average time taken to complete a tax credit undeclared partner investigation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) from the point at which they first write to the customer to closure, was 51.27 days. During the same period, Concentrix acting on behalf of HMRC took an average of 65.34 days.

Where an alleged presence of an unreported adult occurs, claimants are given 30 days to contact HMRC or provide the relevant information. If after 30 days HMRC has had no contact, tax credit payments are either suspended or reduced. HMRC then gives the claimant a further 30 days to contact HMRC before making a decision on the household composition and tax credits award using all the available information.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Economic Growth: Tees Valley****Anna Turley:**[\[46093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the deliverability of the recommendations of the independent report, Tees Valley: Opportunity Unlimited, published in June 2016; and what the timetable is for his Department to respond to those recommendations and set out a schedule for the implementation of any recommendations which are accepted.

Andrew Percy:

Government is currently working with Tees Valley Combined Authority on progressing Lord Heseltine's recommendations. The report was debated in Parliament on 15 June.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-06-15/debates/16061550000002/TeesValleyInwardInvestmentInitiative#contribution-16061550000452>

■ Help to Buy Scheme**Mr Steve Reed:**[\[46541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the Help to Buy scheme to enable first-time buyers to buy property off-plan in order to avoid being priced out by foreign investors.

Gavin Barwell:

The Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme has enabled over 81,000 households to purchase a new-build home, to March 2016. The Government has committed a further £8.6 billion to the scheme, to provide up to 145,000 further homes by March 2021. Under London Help to Buy, which was launched in February 2016, equity loans of up to 40% are now supporting increasing numbers of first time home buyers.

Under the scheme, buyers can already make reservations up to 9 months before sale completion of a home. In practice, they can buy off-plan, before the property has

actually been built. In line with usual industry practice, they can also take on a mortgage offer up to 6 months before completion.

Homes can only be purchased through Help to Buy for a primary residence: they can only be bought by persons who will live in the home. They cannot be bought by investors who live abroad and then leave homes empty or sub-let them.

■ Housing: Construction

Tim Farron: [\[46305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department remains committed to a target of delivering one million homes by 2020; and what recent projections his Department has made on whether this target will be met.

Gavin Barwell:

The Prime Minister has been absolutely clear that we need to build more homes. We remain committed to delivering one million new homes, having doubled the housing budget to help us to so.

Since the end of 2009, we have delivered 900,000 new homes, and in the year to March 2016 permissions were granted for 265,000 homes, up 8% on the previous year, thanks to the reformed planning system.

■ Housing: Energy

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[46183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether it is his policy to continue the use of energy efficiency assessments when renting out or selling domestic properties; and if he will make a statement.

Gavin Barwell:

Energy performance certificates on sale, rent or build, are a requirement of the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations, which implemented the Recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive in England and Wales. Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. Therefore the requirement for energy performance certificates will continue to apply.

■ Landlords: Prosecutions

Mr Mark Hendrick: [\[45788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which district and unitary councils in England prosecuted landlords under (a) section 80, (b) section 95 (1), (c) Section 95 (4) of the Housing Act 2004 in 2015; and how many convictions there were in each of those authorities under each of those sections of that Act.

Gavin Barwell:

H.M Courts and Tribunal Service, which is responsible for the administration of magistrates' courts where offences under the Housing Act 2004 are considered, has advised that they do not hold information on convictions under the Act.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Fees and Charges**

Steve McCabe:

[\[46146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make representations to the National Association of Estate Agents to encourage private-rented accommodation sector agencies to reduce the fixed costs that those agencies charge to tenants moving into private-rented accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

Gavin Barwell:

Since 27 May 2015, through Section 83 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015, letting agents have been required to publish a breakdown of their fees, which redress scheme they are a member of and whether they are a member of a client money protection scheme, in their offices and on their websites. A breakdown of fees enables tenants to compare prices and assess value for money, creating effective competition that should force agents to keep their fees fair and strengthening consumer choice. The Government has established a Private Rented Affordability and Security working group to explore new approaches to remove entry costs and removal costs for tenants in the sector. The working group which includes representatives from across the PRS and Housing sector, including Crisis, Shelter, the National Landlords Association, the Association of Residential Letting Agents, is expected to provide its findings in the Autumn.

■ **Retail Trade: Urban Areas**

Mark Menzies:

[\[905905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support high street retailers.

Mr Marcus Jones:

This Government is supporting our high streets to thrive. We have introduced the biggest ever cut in business rates, worth £6.7 billion; launched the High Street pledge and digital high street pilots; introduced a fairer parking regime and sensible planning changes; and we are celebrating our high streets through the hugely successful annual Great British High Street Competition.

■ **South Tees Mayoral Development Corporation: Trade Unions**

Anna Turley:

[\[46085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is trades union representation on the Shadow Board of the South Tees Mayoral Development Corporation.

Andrew Percy:

The Shadow Board of the South Tees Development Corporation is at an early stage of its development, we have no plans to amend its carefully considered membership at this point.

■ **Supported Housing**

Helen Hayes:

[\[46667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government plans to take to support providers of supported housing affected by planned reductions in social housing rents.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government is committed to protecting the most vulnerable through our welfare reforms. That is why we have exempted supported housing from the Local Housing Allowance cap until 2019/20, from which point we will bring in a new funding model which will ensure that the sector continues to be funded at current levels, taking into account the effect of Government policy on social sector rents. We will apply the rent reduction to supported housing, with the exception of domestic violence refuges, with rents in these properties decreasing by 1% a year for 3 years, up to and including 2019/20.

Our social rent reduction policy was based on the need to put welfare spending on a sustainable footing whilst protecting the most vulnerable. It is right that supported housing providers make the efficiency savings we are asking of the whole social housing sector, and that's why the 1% rent reduction will apply to the majority of them. In exceptional circumstances, supported housing providers (as for general needs social sector providers affected by the policy) who feel that compliance with the social rent reduction policy would result in serious financial difficulty or jeopardise their financial viability, can apply for an exemption from the requirement.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[46670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to written statement WS154 of 15 September 2016, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the 1 per cent reduction for supported housing on providers of that housing.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government is committed to protecting the most vulnerable through our welfare reforms. That is why we have exempted supported housing from the Local Housing Allowance cap until 2019/20, from which point we will bring in a new funding model which will ensure that the sector continues to be funded at current levels, taking into account the effect of Government policy on social sector rents. We will apply the rent reduction to supported housing, with the exception of domestic violence refuges, with rents in these properties decreasing by 1% a year for 3 years, up to and including 2019/20.

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CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Betting Shops

Stephen Timms:

[\[46657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to monitor compliance by betting shops with the gambling minimum age.

Tracey Crouch:

The protection of children from being harmed or exploited by gambling is one of the core objectives of the Gambling Act 2005.

For high street betting, this means those under the age of 18 are prohibited from entering or gambling within a betting premises. The Gambling Commission, responsible for compliance on this issue, strengthened the requirements on betting operators to monitor the effectiveness of these age verification controls in May 2015.

The number of individuals challenged upon entry to a betting sector premises but unable to prove their age was 475,646 between Oct 2014- Sep 2015. This is across a total of 9000 betting shops and is a decrease of 8.2% or 42,598 incidents compared to the previous reporting period of Apr 2014 – Mar 2015; continuing a 3-year decline. The number of individuals challenged having gambled but unable to prove their age also fell, by 14%, to 23,619 from 27,445 in the same time period.

Where there is a failure to prevent underage gambling, regulatory and/or criminal action is taken.

■ Business

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[46540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will provide an update on the mission-led business review.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The mission-led business review is in progress. We are reviewing the evidence gathered through the call for evidence and regional events and working with the advisory panel in order to publish findings in due course.

■ Emergency Calls

Tim Farron: [\[46306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the emergency services can be contacted in areas where mobile phone service is poor or non-existent.

Matt Hancock:

Improving mobile connectivity across the UK, including in rural and hard to reach areas, is a priority for the Government and the December 2014 landmark agreement with industry guarantees that each mobile network operator will provide voice and SMS text coverage to 90% of the UK's landmass by end 2017. Additionally, Telefonica has a licence obligation to deliver indoor 4G coverage to 98% of UK premises, also by end 2017. Taken together these obligations will cut complete not spots by two thirds, resulting in 98% of the UK landmass with mobile coverage.

This coverage would be available to all mobile phone users for emergency 999 calls as the Code of Practice for the Public Emergency Call Service requires that a caller from a mobile phone is able to roam onto another mobile network to make an emergency call if they have no signal from their own provider.

Furthermore, the Government recognises the importance of public call boxes as a means of calling the emergency services. Ofcom requires that there is a period of consultation before a public call box is removed and that one of the factors to be considered by the relevant public body is the potential importance of the call box to contact the emergency services.

■ Heathrow Airport: Tourism

Sammy Wilson: [\[46664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with her Cabinet colleagues on the effect on tourism of an expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Tracey Crouch:

The Government has accepted the case for airport expansion in the South East and the Airports' Commission's shortlisted options. Transport and connectivity are key issues within the tourism sector, as highlighted in the Prime Minister's new Tourism Action Plan. The Department will be ensuring that tourism is one of the factors considered, when a final decision is taken on a preferred scheme.

■ Historic Environment Records

Edward Argar: [\[46530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to replicate the system of Historic Environment Records used in Wales in England.

Tracey Crouch:

In England local planning authorities are required to have regard to the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, which indicates that they should either maintain or have access to an Historical Environment Records (HER).

The Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS) programme intends to secure an improved and more cost effective approach to handling digital historic environment data, especially that held by local authority Historic Environment Records. It is intended to improve the accessibility of that information and work with HERs to become more user focused. As part of HIAS Historic England will continue to champion the development, maintenance and implementation of standards for the creation, management and storage of digital historic environment data.

■ Telecommunications: Fraud**Stephen Hammond:**[\[46629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to ensure that telecommunications companies do more to protect customers from vishing fraud and similar scams.

Matt Hancock:

The Government takes all types of fraud extremely seriously. We are working closely with telecommunications service providers and regulators to raise consumer awareness, in particular amongst those who are more vulnerable, to this practice and similar fraud that is carried out through the use of telephones.

The Government recently introduced secondary legislation to make it a requirement for all direct marketing callers to provide Calling Line Identification (CLI). This requirement came into force on 16 May 2016. The measure will increase consumer choice, by making it easier for people to identify direct marketing calls, and choose whether to accept them. It will also increase the ICO's ability to investigate such calls, by enabling consumers to provide better information and thus make it easier for the ICO to take action.

In March 2016 we allocated £0.5m to the National Trading Standards Scams Team to provide call blocking devices to vulnerable people. The devices will be rolled out nationwide over the next two years and evaluation reports will be submitted to the Department for Culture Media and Sport on their effectiveness.

The Home Office recently launched a new joint fraud taskforce to tackle the issue of scams more generally. Further information about the taskforce is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-launches-new-joint-fraud-taskforce>

■ Tourism: Scotland

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[46429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to promote tourism in Scotland.

Tracey Crouch:

Tourism is a devolved matter but a number of policy levers - from aviation connectivity to aspects of the regulatory framework and immigration - are reserved. Through the recently published Tourism Action Plan, this Government is working to ensure the benefits of growth in the tourism industry can be felt across the whole of the UK.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Information Warfare**

Clive Lewis: [\[46419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many recruits have joined the 77th Brigade as (a) regular and (b) reserve personnel since the formation of that unit in 2015.

Mike Penning:

The majority of personnel joining 77th Brigade transfer from other Regular or Reserve units and are therefore not recruits. The exception to this is Specialist Reserve Officers (SROs), who are recruited as civilians with niche skills. 44 SROs have been selected since 1 January 2015 of which 18 have completed the recruitment process and are currently on strength.

Clive Lewis: [\[46420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of military personnel serving in the 77th Brigade served in the (a) Army, (b) Royal Navy and (c) Royal Air Force before joining that unit; and how many such personnel have not previously served in any branch of the armed forces.

Mike Penning:

Of the 297 Regular and Reserve personnel currently serving with 77th Brigade, 11 (4%) personnel are from the Royal Navy, 276 (93%) are from the Army and 10 (3%) are from the Royal Air Force. This includes 18 Special Reserve Officers with niche skills, most of whom do not have previous military service. The remainder of the Regular and Reserve personnel have transferred to 77th Brigade from other units.

■ Armed Forces: Mental Health Services

Mr Douglas Carswell: [\[46563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to increase the number of Departments of Community Mental Health.

Mark Lancaster:

The provision of mental healthcare to the Armed Forces is kept under regular review, to ensure that it continues to meet the demands placed on it in the light of changes to the size and location of the UK Armed Forces.

Following a recent review of the Defence Mental Health Services, we are in the process of reshaping the current network of Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMHs) into a "hub and spoke" model. Once implementation is complete, we will have moved from a total of 16 DCMHs in the UK (plus satellite centres overseas), to 11 "hub" DCMHs located in main centres of military population, plus "spoke" Mental Health Teams (MHTs) serving a further eight locations, making 19 sites in total. Regular visiting clinics will also be held at other military centres around the country.

Focussing on fewer but larger DCMHs will enable us to provide greater resilience and a more consistent range of clinical and operational capabilities, while the additional of MHTs will increase accessibility and provide a more robust support for delivery to Cyprus, the North West and Wales, as well as improving access for eligible reservists and veterans.

■ Armed Forces: Private Education**Clive Lewis:**[\[46325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Written Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 44194, how many and what proportion of the total number of successful claims for the continuity of education allowance in 2015-16 were made by (a) officers and (b) other ranks.

Mark Lancaster:

In Financial Year 2015-16, there were 3,670 successful claims for Continuity of Education Allowance of which 2,190 were from officers and 1,480 were from other ranks. This equates to a proportion of 60:40. All numbers are rounded.

■ Army Air Corps**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[46689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to transfer the Army Air Corps' Islanders and Defenders to the RAF in 2018; and what plans his Department has for 5 Regiment's Army Air Corps command organisation.

Harriett Baldwin:

It has been agreed that the governance of the Fixed Wing Manned Aerial Surveillance Capability will be transferred from the Army to the RAF. Detailed implementation plans, including timescales and the implications for 5 Regiment Army Air Corps, or other Units have yet to be finalised.

■ Commonwealth War Graves Commission: Finance

Mr Kevan Jones: [R] [\[46597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's planned expenditure is for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in each year until 2020.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence's planned expenditure, paid through a Grant-In-Aid, for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) until Financial Year (FY) 2020-21 is given below:

FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
£49,908,705	£50,775,774	£51,763,497	£52,877,790

The figure paid by the UK is approximately 78% of the Commission's annual budget; the remainder is paid by five other Commonwealth Governments - Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa, in proportion to the number of their war graves. Additionally, the Department also asks the CWGC to maintain a number of non-war graves within the UK and overseas. For the FY 2016-17, £1.75 million will be paid to the Commission for this work; the planned annual increase to this sum is in line with that of the Grant-In-Aid.

■ Frigates: Procurement

Chris Stephens: [\[46570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to procure general purpose frigates, and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 set out the Ministry of Defence plans to replace the eight Type 23 frigates that are optimised for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) on a one for one basis with eight Type 26 Global Combat Ships, fitted with the full range of equipment required to fulfil the ASW role.

The Review also concluded that the remainder of the Royal Navy's future frigate requirement would be better met by a new class of lighter, flexible, general purpose frigates (GPFF) than by the five general purpose Type 26 ships previously planned. The GPFF programme is currently in its pre-concept phase.

■ HMS Lancaster

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[46411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the state of readiness is of HMS Lancaster; and when HMS Lancaster will return to operations.

Harriett Baldwin:

I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer given by the then Minister for Defence Procurement (Philip Dunne) to the hon. Member for Dunfermline and West Fife (Douglas Chapman) on 13 June 2016 to Question 40031.

Attachments:

1. HMS Lancaster [Hansard Extract 13 June 2016 40031.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Buildings

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[46583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the Estate Optimisation Strategy to be published.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[46596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's target is for reducing the defence estate in each year until 2020.

Mark Lancaster:

As set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Ministry of Defence is aiming to reduce the size of its built estate by 30% by 2040 and is committed to release land to accommodate 55,000 houses by 2020 in support of the Government's public sector land release agenda. This year I have announced the release of 35 sites which will provide land for potentially some 39,000 homes, of which approximately 20,000 are expected in this Parliament. We do not have an annual target for a reduction in the defence estate each year.

I will announce the results of the Department's Estate Optimisation Strategy later this year.

■ Northern Ireland Universities Air Squadron

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[46103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 20 March 2015 to Question 227862 and pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45109, on Northern Ireland Universities Air Squadron, what assessment he has made of the full 24 student places to be filled.

Mark Lancaster:

The Northern Ireland University Air Squadron provision of 24 student places reflects the current flying opportunities and staffing levels. The precise number recruited this academic year may not be known immediately, as students can express their interest and join the Squadron throughout the year.

■ Single Source Regulations Office

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[46595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Single Source Regulations Office's remit will be expanded to include government-to-government and Foreign Military Sales arrangements.

Harriett Baldwin:

The legislation that deals with single source procurement applies equally to UK based and overseas companies. Certain types of contract are excluded from the regulations, including those made directly with foreign governments. When framing the legislation, the Ministry of Defence carefully considered whether it would be practicable to include such agreements. The Single Source Regulations Office will make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Defence in June 2017 on changes to the legislation. They have indicated that they will review this exclusion. The Secretary of State for Defence will consider each recommendation carefully before concluding his review of the regulations by December 2017.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[46409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the Future Combat Air System.

Harriett Baldwin:

As set out in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), we are working in partnership with the UK defence industry and our closest allies to understand and develop the technologies that will be required for future combat air systems (FCAS). No decisions have yet been made as to what this system will consist of, nor the platforms and capabilities that it will include. We are focussing now on developing the core technologies that any such system will require. To do this we have developed and are implementing the FCAS technology initiative. This programme includes the development of an advanced unmanned combat air system (UCAS) demonstrator in partnership with France, bilateral projects with the United States (US) to mature other key technologies and a national programme to maintain the UK's position as a global leader in the combat air sector.

In Amiens in March 2016 we agreed to transition to the next phase of the UK/France UCAS programme in 2017 and to develop the full-scale demonstrators by 2025. In addition to the current projects we are in discussions with the US and other allies to understand areas of mutual interest for further collaborative work.

EDUCATION**■ Apprentices****Alistair Burt:**[\[46452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that 16 to 18 year-olds take up apprenticeships.

Robert Halfon:

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that give young people the chance to reach their potential; acquire transferable skills much valued in the labour market and the apprentice does not have to contribute to the costs of their learning.

We are encouraging a wide range of people into apprenticeships – our ‘Get In Go Far’ campaign is aimed at 14-24 year-olds, their parents, teachers and employers. This major four-year campaign aims to influence public perceptions, awareness and attitudes towards apprenticeships as a route into a successful career, encouraging more young people to apply and more employers to offer apprenticeship opportunities.

From May 2017, we have proposed giving employers and providers a cash payment each of £1,000 when they train a 16-18 year old, and we will fund 100 per cent of apprenticeship training costs for small employers with fewer than 50 staff when they employ 16-18 year old apprentices.

The National Careers Service provides independent, professional advice on careers, skills and the labour market, including on the benefits of apprenticeships and how to apply for vacancies.

Steve McCabe:[\[46532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to encourage companies to use digital funds from the proposed Apprenticeship Levy to pay for apprentice training for (a) ex-offenders, (b) children leaving care and (c) other vulnerable groups.

Robert Halfon:

Our proposed funding policy is designed to put employers of all sizes in more control, and support individuals from all backgrounds and regions.

We are giving employers more control of the funding for apprenticeships training in return for them investing more in apprenticeships; this includes simplifying the funding system to encourage employers to recruit more apprentices of all ages and from all backgrounds.

The Government provides additional support to employers for some groups. Under the funding proposals we sought feedback on by 5 September, the Government will provide extra support for 19-24 year old care leavers and 19-24 year olds with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC). Apprentices aged 19 to 24 without an EHC Plan, who have a learning difficulty and/or disability, can benefit from additional funding through Learning Support.

Apprentices can also apply for Access to Work funding for adjustments to the workplace and training providers can use funding to support the apprentice's learning. Reasonable adjustments are available for any qualifications within apprenticeships to ensure the apprentice has the chance to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

■ Apprenticeship Delivery Board

Peter Kyle: [\[46315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress has been made by the Apprenticeship Delivery Board.

Robert Halfon:

The Apprenticeship Delivery Board was announced in July 2015 and launched in January 2016. Board members are senior figures representing eight key sectors with potential for apprenticeship growth.

Board members have input to the apprenticeship reforms, supported the Get In Go Far campaign, helped to achieve 500,000 apprenticeship starts in the 2014/15 academic year, and are targeting major employers to advocate the case for apprenticeships.

An evaluation of the impact of the board is planned and will report its findings in January 2017.

■ Children: Day Care

Alistair Burt: [\[46451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent progress she has made on implementing 30 hours' free childcare for working parents.

Caroline Dinenage:

We pledged to introduce the manifesto commitment to give working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds 30 hours of free childcare from September 2017, and we have already made excellent progress in meeting this deadline.

We have already put in place legislation to support 30 hours through the Childcare Act 2016, announced increased funding of £1billion extra per year by 2019/20 to support the introduction of 30 hours and launched a consultation on how we can allocate funding in a fairer way. We have also: identified £50million of capital funding to create new childcare places; consulted on the operational delivery of 30 hours; and have worked to provide parents applying for 30 hours and Tax-Free Childcare with a single online application process for both government offers.

We have brought forward the implementation of the additional 15 hours to September 2016 for some families in eight areas. These areas will test how we can implement 30 hours in a way that works for children, parents and childcare providers.

Since the beginning of this month, working parents in York, Northumberland, Newham, Wigan, Staffordshire, Swindon, Portsmouth and Hertfordshire have been enjoying the benefits of 30 hours of free childcare.

Dr Tania Mathias:

[906536]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that funding is in place to implement its policy of 30 hours free childcare.

Caroline Dinenage:

We are committed to providing the high-quality, affordable childcare that working families need.

To enable the successful implementation of 30 hours of free childcare, we are investing £1billion of additional funding per year, including £300million per year to increase our national average funding rates.

■ Education: Northamptonshire

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[46690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in educational standards in Northamptonshire; and what plans she has to improve such standards.

Nick Gibb:

Key Stage 4 attainment data from 2009/10 to 2014/15 is published for Northamptonshire and at national level as part of the 'Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England' statistical first release[1].

Key Stage 2 attainment data for 2016 is published for Northamptonshire and at national level as part of the 'National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2016 (provisional)' statistical first release[2].

Due to reforms in 2016, Key Stage 2 data from previous years are not comparable.

The Department is raising standards in all schools with world class exams, a focus on an academic core, and a new accountability system that rewards those schools which help every child to achieve their best.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015> (Local authority tables, Table LA2)

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2016-provisional> (National, local authority and regional tables, Table L1)

■ Education: Young People

Tom Pursglove:

[906532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase opportunities for young people to access skills and vocational education.

Justine Greening:

It is essential that everyone, irrespective of background and upbringing, has the opportunity to get the skills and training they need to get on in life. Tech levels and certificates in schools, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, National Colleges, Institutes of Technology and proposed technical education reforms set out in the Skills Plan, present

real opportunities for people of all ages to acquire the high quality skills and vocational or technical education that employers demand. Opportunity Areas will be at the forefront of my Department's drive to increase opportunities for young people to develop the skills they need to succeed.

■ **Further Education: Sussex**

Sir Nicholas Soames: [46410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to publish the Sussex Area-Based Review post-16 education and training.

Robert Halfon:

As confirmed in the Area Review Guidance published in March 2016, we will publish the area review reports and we expect to publish the Sussex area review in the near future.

■ **GCSE**

Vernon Coaker: [46517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils at maintained comprehensive schools achieved five A*-C grade GCSEs in each of the last five years.

Vernon Coaker: [46518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils at maintained comprehensive schools achieved five A*-C grade GCSEs including mathematics and English in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the proportion of pupils at maintained comprehensive schools achieving five A* to C grade GCSEs and five A*-C grade GCSEs including mathematics and English, is published at national level for each of the last 5 years as part of the "GCSE and equivalent results in England: statistical first release" series[1].

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4> (main national tables, table 3 2010/11, table 3b 2011/12-2014/15)

■ **Mandarin Language**

Steve McCabe: [46637]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to ensure the Mandarin Excellence Programme is delivered to all local authorities in the UK; and how many (a) schools and (b) pupils in Birmingham are planned to start the programme this year.

Nick Gibb:

The Mandarin Excellence Programme offers intensive study in the language. The programme is expected to result in at least 5,000 young people heading towards a high level of fluency in Mandarin Chinese by 2020.

Secondary school pupils in an initial 14 secondary schools will study Mandarin for eight hours a week – a significant increase on the time pupils currently spend on the subject.

Currently two schools in the Midlands, one in Coventry and one in Walsall, have joined the programme. Around 300 pupils are expected to join the programme this year. There will be further opportunity for schools to apply to join the programme in subsequent years.

■ **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education**

Luciana Berger:

[46484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the (a) quality and (b) availability of PSHE in England.

Edward Timpson:

We want to provide all young people with a curriculum that prepares them for success in adult life. High quality personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education teaching has a vital role to play in this, helping young people understand the world around them, building resilience, and helping them to make good choices and stay safe. We have made it clear in the introduction to the national curriculum that all schools should make provision for PSHE education, drawing on examples of good practice.

In its report on PSHE education in schools in 2012, Ofsted found that overall, learning in PSHE education was good or better in 60% of schools and required improvement or was inadequate in 40%. The report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/not-yet-good-enough-personal-social-health-and-economic-education>

We will continue to keep the status of PSHE under close review and work with schools and head teachers to identify further action we can take to ensure that all pupils receive high quality, age appropriate PSHE and sex and relationships education.

■ **Primary Education: Suffolk**

Jo Churchill:

[46618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) primary school places, (b) primary school age pupils on the roll, (c) pupils in excess of school capacity and (d) unfilled primary school places there were in Suffolk in academic year 2014-15.

Edward Timpson:

The department collects information from each local authority on the number of schools, the number of places in those schools and the number of pupils on roll through the annual school capacity survey (SCAP).

The data is published annually. Data for May 2015 (relating to academic year 2014/15) can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-capacity-academic-year-2014-to-2015>

As at May 2015, in Suffolk there were:

a) 59,140 primary school places

- b) 52,169 primary school age pupils on roll
- c) 329 primary pupils in excess of school capacity
- d) 7,300 unfilled primary school places.

School capacities are as reported by local authorities for all school types, based on their knowledge of each school.

■ Pupils: Absenteeism

Luciana Berger: [\[46599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children were absent from school due to having a mental health condition in each year since 2010.

Edward Timpson:

The Department does not hold information on absence due to a mental health condition.

■ Schools: Finance

Sir Edward Leigh: [\[906535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to reduce differences in urban and rural school funding.

Justine Greening:

The government is committed to a national funding formula that will deliver fairness to all parts of the country – rural and urban, north and south.

In the first stage of our consultation, we proposed including a sparsity factor which would help rural schools, as well as a lump sum factor which would help small schools everywhere.

We will both respond to the first consultation and launch the second stage consultation later in the autumn.

■ Schools: Nurses

Gloria De Piero: [\[46648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many school nurses were employed to work in primary schools in England in the academic year beginning in September (a) 2015 and (b) 2010.

Edward Timpson:

The number of nurses and nursery nurses reported by local authority maintained nursery and state-funded primary schools in November 2015 and 2010 is provided in the table below. The source of this information is the School Workforce Census, which is an annual survey collected in November of each year.

	NURSERY			PRIMARY ^[1]			TOTAL FOR ALL STATE FUNDED SCHOOLS ^[2]		
	Nurses ^[3]	Nursery Nurses	Total	Nurses	Nursery Nurses	Total	Nurses	Nursery Nurses	Total
2015	SUPP	1,340	1,350	40	8,190	8,230	470	10,340	10,810
2014	SUPP	1,330	1,330	50	8,150	8,200	480	10,320	10,810
2013	SUPP	1,370	1,380	40	8,220	8,260	500	10,490	11,000
2012	SUPP	1,380	1,380	40	8,230	8,270	480	10,650	11,130
2011	SUPP	1,420	1,420	30	8,350	8,390	460	10,950	11,410
2010	SUPP	1,570	1,580	40	9,430	9,470	490	12,240	12,730

Source: School Workforce Census

[1] Some local authority maintained primary schools include nursery settings.

[2] Includes secondary schools, special schools, pupil referral units and local authority centrally employed school staff.

[3] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and figures less than 10 have been suppressed.

■ Schools: Sexual Offences

Luciana Berger:

[\[46485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools.

Edward Timpson:

The Department contributed a written submission to the Women and Equalities Select Committee's inquiry into the scale and impact of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools in 2016. This is published on the Parliament website.[1] The Committee published the report of its inquiry on 13 September, and the Government will make a formal response to the usual timetable.

The Department does not collect information on the number of cases of sexual harassment or sexual violence either by pupils or by teachers – and it has not produced any estimates.

The closest information held on levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence by pupils is the number of permanent and fixed period exclusions for sexual misconduct, which includes lewd behaviour, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual bullying, sexual graffiti and sexual harassment.

Exclusions information, broken down by reason for exclusion, is published annually by the Department in the 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England' National Statistics release.[2]

The 2015 National Foundation for Educational Research's teacher voice survey is a nationally representative survey commissioned by the Department. Teachers were asked questions on a range of topics, including common forms of bullying. Sexual bullying was not included as a category, however, a minority reported that homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic bullying was common at their school. The report and data have been published by the Department.[3]

The closest information held on sexual harassment and sexual violence by teachers relates to the number of cases of teacher misconduct relating to sexual misconduct reported to the Department. However, cases of teacher misconduct relating to sexual misconduct cover a broad range of incidents and it is not recorded whether these relate to incidents that took place on school sites.

[1]

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/women-and-equalities-committee/sexual-harassment-and-sexual-violence-in-schools/written/34902.pdf>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-voice-omnibus-june-2015-responses>

■ Secondary Education: Standards

Stephen Timms: [46497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of non-selective schools in selective areas is rated by Ofsted as (a) outstanding, (b) good, (c) satisfactory and (d) inadequate.

Stephen Timms: [46498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of secondary modern schools is rated by Ofsted as (a) outstanding, (b) good, (c) satisfactory and (d) inadequate.

Stephen Timms: [46499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of (a) secondary and (b) grammar schools is rated by Ofsted as (i) outstanding, (ii) good, (iii) satisfactory and (iv) inadequate.

Nick Gibb:

These are matters for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw. I have asked him to write to the Hon. Member and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House libraries.

■ Sixth Form Education: Admissions

Dr Tania Mathias:

[\[46678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of schools and sixth form colleges not accepting students who have failed to achieve a C grade in English and mathematics GCSE on availability of places for students who are required to resit those examinations.

Robert Halfon:

Post-16 providers are responsible for setting entry requirements to their post-16 courses, and can specify a C grade or higher in English and mathematics GCSE in entry requirements to level 3 courses such as A levels or Tech Levels. When setting entry requirements for specific courses, schools and sixth form colleges consider the level of English and mathematics a young person will need to possess in order to successfully study the course.

Government funding ensures that there is a place available for every young person at a local provider. If a student would benefit from support to identify a suitable place in post-16 education and training, there will be various sources of advice, including from the local authority.

At the end of 2015 the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds in education and work based learning (apprenticeships) was 90.9%, the highest participation figure since consistent records began in 1994.

■ Skilled Workers

Nic Dakin:

[\[46320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to implement the measures in the Skills Plan.

Robert Halfon:

The Post-16 Skills Plan sets out our plans to radically reform technical education provision and the wider skills system in England to ensure they match the best in the world, tackling long-standing issues which have harmed our nation's productivity and international competitiveness. We are committed to taking forward this ambitious programme in full, implementing the reforms in a lasting and coherent way.

We have already started work to identify pathfinder technical education routes; design the new functions within an expanded Institute for Apprenticeships; map the occupations within each route to identify what technical qualifications should be included within their scope; design the employer panels that will develop new standards where required; and develop 'transition year' arrangements for young people not ready to progress into mainstream technical or academic provision at 16, or later if their education has been delayed. In addition, we are continuing to implement those reforms which are already in train, such as the programme of locally led area reviews of post-16 provision.

Later in the autumn, we will publish an implementation plan, setting out in greater detail how we will deliver the Post-16 Skills Plan and how we will engage with key stakeholders, including colleges and employers, on the ongoing design and delivery of our proposals.

■ **Social Services: Children**

Tim Loughton: [\[46556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which local authority children's services departments subject to improvement notices have been visited by Ministers of her Department in each of the last six years.

Tim Loughton: [\[46557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which directors and other equivalent post holders of children's services subject to improvement notices (a) she and (b) Ministers of her Department have met on what dates in each of the last six years.

Edward Timpson:

Since my appointment in September 2012, as the relevant minister, I have visited and/or met with councillors and/or officers from 15 local authorities that were subject to Improvement Notices and/or Statutory Directions. I have also visited and/or met with councillors and or/officers from nine local authorities that have been subject to intervention since 2010. A list of these appointments is in the attached document.

Attachments:

1. List of meetings and visits [Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families, Edward Timpson MP, meetings with local authorities subject to intervention.doc]

Justin Tomlinson: [\[46564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the link between a family and their social worker in the event of a failed submission for a Care Protection Order.

Edward Timpson:

No assessment of the effectiveness of the link between a family and their social worker in the event of a failed application for a Care Order has been made by my Department. It would be for the local authority to determine what action to take following a failed application for a Care Order, including whether or not a change of social worker is necessary and whether the child remained at risk of harm and/or the family needed support.

In these circumstances, a further assessment of need should be undertaken by a social worker to decide whether the child and/or their family should receive services as a child in need, or if a child protection plan is needed.

■ Social Workers: Training

Justin Tomlinson: [46474]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to ensure funding parity for the fast track and graduate training schemes for social workers.

Justin Tomlinson: [46476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Frontline and Think Ahead social work programmes.

Edward Timpson:

The Government remains committed to providing appropriate levels of funding to a range of entry routes to social work.

An independent evaluation of the Frontline programme was published in March 2016, and is accessible online at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509240/DFE-RR507-Frontline-pilot-independent-evaluation.pdf

The first cohort of Think Ahead participants started the programme in summer 2016. Plans are being made to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

■ Students: Loans

Mr Gregory Campbell: [46105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the amount of student loans outstanding was as of 31 March in each of the last three years.

Joseph Johnson:

The Student Loans Company (SLC) administers student loans for each of the UK Government Administrations. Statistics on student loan debt and repayment in England are published annually by the SLC in the Statistical First Release 'Student Loans in England'. Information on the amount of student loan outstanding as of 31 of March in each of the last three years is available in Table 1. The information can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.slc.co.uk/official-statistics/student-loans-debt-and-repayment/england.aspx>

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Environment Protection

Kerry McCarthy: [46423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to publish the framework for her Department's 25-year plan for the environment; and what the timetable will be for (a) consulting on the plan and (b) publishing the final plan.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We will publish a 25 Year Environment Framework this autumn, starting off a period of public engagement to help shape the 25 Year Environment Plan which we aim to publish in 2017.

Helen Goodman:

[\[46446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to publish the 25 year plan for the environment.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Bristol East, Kerry McCarthy, on 10 October 2016, PQ UIN 46423.

■ Environment Protection: Finance

Helen Goodman:

[\[46581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she expects to receive the £2 billion green dividend that the Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced before the EU referendum on 23 June 2016.

George Eustice:

Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union (EU) and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation and receive funding under the Common Agriculture Policy. The Government will work with stakeholders and NGOs to design new domestic policy arrangements to be put in place after we leave the EU.

■ Lions: Hunting

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[46464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many lion trophies were imported into the UK in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Before 1 January 2015 there was no requirement to obtain a permit to import a lion hunting trophy for personal use so no data is held. In 2015 the Animal and Plant Health Agency issued 19 import permits (all were returned as used) for the importation of lion hunting trophies into the UK from outside the EU. As at 28 September 2016 it has issued seven import permits this year (none have yet been returned as used). Where permits are returned as used, this confirms that the importation has taken place.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[46467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of lion trophies imported into the UK.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Strict controls on the import of lions and their body parts were introduced in January 2015. These ensure that the exporting country must be satisfied that the animal was hunted sustainably and that the importing country must also carry out this check. We are working with CITES partners to strengthen hunting safeguards and put in place additional trade controls as appropriate.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Location**

Catherine West: [\[46468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, when he expects to have a permanent address for his Department.

Mr David Jones:

The Department is permanently headquartered at 9 Downing Street.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Meetings

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45148, if he will estimate the number of meetings Ministers of his Department have had with their international counterparts to date.

Mr David Jones:

The Prime Minister has been clear we will not give a running commentary on Brexit negotiations. We will ensure that we engage closely with all relevant interlocutors.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Public Expenditure

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45147, what his Department's total spend has been to date.

Mr David Jones:

The Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) is properly resourced. Detailed work is underway to establish the final budget required and this will be voted on and published as part of the Supplementary Estimate process. Total expenditure by the Department will be set out in the Annual Report and Accounts in the usual way.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Recruitment

Catherine West: [\[46318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many negotiators his Department has recruited.

Mr David Jones:

Britain has been at the forefront of the free trade-supporting countries in the EU for the last 40 years. The Department for Exiting the EU now has over 200 staff plus the expertise of over 120 officials in Brussels, and is growing fast. The overall size and scope of the new department, including staffing and budget, are regularly reviewed. We will ensure we are appropriately staffed to deal with all aspects of the forthcoming negotiation.

■ **Department for Exiting the European Union: Staff**

Emily Thornberry: [\[46254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many staff, at what grades, his Department has recruited in the (a) Market Access Budget, (b) Justice, Security and Migration, (c) Cross-Government Policy and Coordination, (d) Strategy and Planning, (e) Trade and Partnership and (f) Analysis Directorate.

Emily Thornberry: [\[46255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many staff, at what grades, his Department has recruited to work in the Permanent Secretary Office.

Emily Thornberry: [\[46256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many of his Department's 24 vacant Deputy Director posts have been filled.

Mr David Jones:

The Department for Exiting the EU now has over 200 staff in London, plus the expertise of over 120 officials in Brussels, and we are still growing rapidly. We are not in a position to give a final total nor a breakdown by directorate as recruitment is ongoing.

Stephen Gethins: [\[46454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2016 to Question 44230, whether the staff in his Department are new employees or have been seconded from other Departments.

Mr David Jones:

The Department for Exiting the EU now has over 200 staff in London, plus the expertise of over 120 officials in Brussels, and we are still growing rapidly. The overall size and scope of the new department, including staffing and budget, are regularly reviewed. We will ensure we are appropriately staffed to deal with the task at hand.

The Department will include staff and officials from various departments across Government. The Department has already started drawing together expertise with staff from around 20 Departments and organisations from across Government.

■ Didier Seeuws

Catherine West: [\[46395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with Didier Seeuws on the UK's exit of the EU since his appointment to the EU special task force.

Catherine West: [\[46396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many times he has met with Didier Seeuws since his appointment to the EU special task force.

Mr David Jones:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 12 September 2016 to the Question 44967.

The Prime Minister has been clear we will not give a running commentary on Brexit negotiations. We will ensure that we engage closely with all relevant interlocutors.

■ Economic Situation

Mr Mark Williams: [\[46573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his Department is undertaking sectoral analyses of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on different sectors of the economy.

Mr David Jones:

The Secretary of State's oral statement on 5 September 2016 explained that his officials, supported by officials across Government, are carrying out a programme of sectoral and regulatory analysis, which will identify the key factors for British businesses and the labour force that will affect our negotiations with the EU. They are looking in detail at over 50 sectors and cross-cutting regulatory issues.

■ Guy Verhofstadt

Catherine West: [\[46470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many times he has met with Guy Verhofstadt to discuss the UK's exit from the EU.

Catherine West: [\[46471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with Guy Verhofstadt on the UK's exit from the EU.

Mr David Jones:

The Prime Minister has been clear we will not give a running commentary on Brexit negotiations. We will ensure that we engage closely with all relevant interlocutors.

■ UK Withdrawal from EU

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 43456; when he expects the objectives and approach of the UK to negotiations with the EU to be agreed.

Mr David Jones:

The Prime Minister has been clear that we will trigger Article 50 before the end of March 2017. The process for leaving the EU and determining our future relationship will clearly not be brief or straightforward, so we need to take time to think through our objectives and approach. We want to get the best deal for Britain, not the quickest one. We recognise the need to create certainty as soon as possible but also to get negotiations off to the right start.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Andargachew Tsege

Steve McCabe: [\[46145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2016 to Question 39705, what assessment his Department has made of Ethiopia's progress on providing independent legal access for Andargachew Tsege.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

On 1 June 2016, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam assured the then Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), that Mr Tsege would be allowed access to independent legal advice to allow him to discuss options under the Ethiopian legal system. Since then, the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) has raised Mr Tsege's case with his Ethiopian counterpart, Foreign Minister Tedros, on 3 occasions, most recently during the UN General Assembly in New York, insisting that the Ethiopians follow through with their commitment to allow legal access. The British Government will continue to do so until Mr Tsege is given access to independent legal advice.

Steve McCabe: [\[46316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the outcome has been of his Department's efforts to secure a lawyer for Andargachew Tsege; and what other steps his Department plans to take to ensure the release of Mr Tsege.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

On 1 June 2016, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam assured the then Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), that Mr Tsege would be allowed access to independent legal advice to allow him to discuss options under the Ethiopian legal system. Since then, the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson)

has raised Mr Tsege's case with his Ethiopian counterpart, Foreign Minister Tedros, on 3 occasions, most recently during the UN General Assembly in New York. Each time he has insisted that the Ethiopians follow through with their commitment to allow legal access. The British Government will continue to raise this issue until Mr Tsege is given access to independent legal advice. We do not interfere in the legal systems of other countries by challenging convictions, any more than we would accept interference in our judicial system. We will continue to keep our approach to this case under review.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Forced Marriage

Steve McCabe:

[\[46239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 5 September 2015 to Question 43633, what the terms are of his Department's emergency loan agreement for British nationals overseas who require assistance from public funds to pay for repatriation; and what provision his Department makes for people who cannot afford the repayment conditions.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

When a British national (BN) enters into an emergency loan agreement with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) they sign a form to declare that they have exhausted all other methods of helping themselves, and accept the sum of the debt in its entirety. By signing the form, the BN is acknowledging that if they do not repay the loan within 6 months, the remaining balance will be subject to a surcharge of 10%; and that the total amount loaned to them must be repaid within five years. Failure to repay the debt may result in legal proceedings to recover monies owed.

In most cases, people are also required to agree to give up their passport. In all cases they must acknowledge that Her Majesty's Passport Office will not process an application for a new passport until the debt is paid in full. They must also consent for the Department for Work and Pensions to release to the FCO such information as may be relevant in respect of any non-payment.

We know that some individuals face difficulties in repaying their loan. When agreeing to the terms of the loan agreement we advise people to contact the FCO upon their return to the UK to discuss the options for loan repayment.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Staff

Emily Thornberry:

[\[46237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many staff employed by his Department have been (a) seconded to and (b) directly recruited by the Department for Exiting the EU.

Boris Johnson:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has seconded 39 positions including 30 officials on loan to the Department for Exiting the EU. This figure includes ten officials who were on loan to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from other government departments. No staff have been directly recruited by the Department for Exiting the EU from the

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The UK's Representation in Brussels will report jointly to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for Exiting the EU.

■ **Maldives: Foreign Relations**

Mr Hugo Swire: [\[46407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what he discussed in his recent meeting with his Maldivian counterpart.

Alok Sharma:

I met the Foreign Minister for the Maldives, Dr Mohamed Asim, on 13 September. I discussed the importance of the UK/Maldives relationship, particularly with regard to the large number of UK tourists that visit the Maldives each year. I raised the Government's concern about the decline in democracy and human rights in the Maldives, and urged the Maldives government to make progress on the recommendations made by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group.

■ **Maldives: Politics and Government**

Mr Hugo Swire: [\[46404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to discuss the political situation in the Maldives with the UN Secretary General.

Alok Sharma:

The Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson) has not discussed the Maldives with the UN Secretary General. Ministers and senior officials have met the Secretary-General's Envoy for the Maldives, Mr Tamrat Samuel. Mr Samuel's role is to encourage inclusive political dialogue in the Maldives, and we continue to call for all parties to engage constructively in that process. The British High Commissioner also met the UN Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs when he visited Colombo earlier this month.

Mr Hugo Swire: [\[46405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had on putting the Maldives on the agenda of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group for the United Nations General Assembly.

Alok Sharma:

Ministers and officials are in close contact with international partners about the situation in the Maldives. The Government welcomes the conclusion of April 2016 by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) that its consideration of the situation in Maldives should continue. We also support its recommendations, in particular the need for the release of political leaders, the widening of space for civil society to operate in, and a swift implementation of reforms to strengthen separation of powers and independence of the judiciary in the Maldives. At its meeting in September, we hope CMAG will take firm action in line with its mandate to deal with persistent and serious violations of Commonwealth values.

Mr Hugo Swire:

[\[46406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Commonwealth Secretary General about the Maldives.

Alok Sharma:

The Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson) has not discussed the Maldives with the Commonwealth Secretary General. Senior officials in London and Colombo have discussed the Maldives with the Secretary General, her staff and her Special Envoy for Maldives, Dr Willy Mutunga.

Mr Hugo Swire:

[\[46538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to discuss the situation in the Maldives with John Kerry.

Alok Sharma:

The Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), has no plans to discuss the situation in the Maldives with John Kerry.

■ Mohamed Ramadan

Andy Slaughter:

[\[46413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the Bahrain Ombudsman's investigation into the case of Mohammad Ramadan has complied with international minimum standards for torture investigations.

Andy Slaughter:

[\[46414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what evidence his Department has received in support of allegations that the Bahrain Ombudsman's investigation into Mohammad Ramadan's has not met international minimum standards for a torture investigation; and what assessment he has made of that evidence.

Andy Slaughter:

[\[46415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Bahraini government on the failure of the Bahrain Ombudsman to inform his Department that it had received a torture complaint regarding the case of Mohammad Ramadan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The United Nations Convention Against Torture requires all states to conduct prompt and impartial investigations into allegations of torture within their jurisdiction. We therefore welcome the Ombudsman's decision to conduct an investigation into the complaints regarding Mohammad Ramadan, and await the outcome of the investigation. Since the announcement of the Ombudsman's investigation, we have received non-governmental organisation representations regarding these allegations, and are aware of similar representations made to the Ombudsman. We take all such

allegations seriously. It is therefore important that investigations into allegations of torture are prompt and impartial, and we are encouraging the Ombudsman to carry out a swift investigation.

The Bahraini Ombudsman is an independent oversight institution, and we will continue to follow and support its work. I raised the case of Mohammad Ramadan with the Bahraini Ambassador on 8 March, and our Embassy Manama officials have raised the progress of the investigation several times directly with the Ombudsman's office, the most recent being 4 August.

■ Rohingya: Refugees

Stephen Timms:

[\[46399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to raise the situation of Rohingya refugees at the UN Summit on Refugees on 19 September 2016.

Alok Sharma:

Whilst the British Government did not raise the subject of Rohingya refugees at the UN Summit on Refugees on 19 September 2016, we remain keen to play our part in helping refugees globally. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing persecution of the Rohingya and have repeatedly raised our concerns with the Burmese Government at the highest levels. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), discussed the Rohingya with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi during her visit to the UK in September and I raised the issue in my intervention at the UN Secretary General's Partnership Group during my visit to the UN General Assembly in September.

The British Government is one of the largest bilateral donors to Rakhine providing over £18 million in humanitarian assistance since the intercommunal violence of 2012. Across the border in south east Bangladesh, a total of 82,000 people have benefitted from UK funded humanitarian programmes. Since 2014, the British Government has provided nearly £8 million to address the humanitarian suffering of Rohingya refugees and the vulnerable Bangladeshi communities that host them.

We are encouraged to see the new Burmese Government has started to take real steps to try to defuse tensions in Rakhine while making progress for the Rohingya, including through the recently announced Rakhine Commission led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, formation of a cross-Government Rakhine committee and re-starting the citizenship verification exercise. On 25 August I issued a statement welcoming the establishment of the Rakhine Commission, and on 14 September I spoke by phone with Mr Annan to convey the UK's strong support for his appointment and mandate.

■ Syria: Religious Freedom

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[46104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the UN Security Council on the persecution of Christians and other minorities living in Syria in the last three months.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK Government has consistently supported the need for accountability for atrocities that have been committed in Syria, in the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council (HRC).

On 19 September, the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), alongside the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Belgium, launched a global campaign to bring Daesh to justice for its crimes at the UN General Assembly – this initiative includes crimes committed against religious minorities.

The UK plays a leading role in the tri-annual Syria resolutions at the UN HRC, the latest of which took place in September. The HRC resolutions draw attention to the ongoing violations and abuses of human rights in Syria, the vast majority of which are the responsibility of the Asad regime, and refer to the need to protect ethnic, religious and confessional communities. We will continue to use our leadership role in the HRC to shine a spotlight on the dire human rights situation, and make clear our strong condemnation of the Asad regime.

We consistently use our interventions at the UN Security Council – most recently at an emergency session on Aleppo on 25 September – to highlight the suffering of the Syrian people, of all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

■ Yemen: Human Rights

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[46418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the UK will support an independent, international investigation into alleged breaches of international humanitarian law in Yemen at the Human Rights Council.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are pleased that we could reach a strong consensus Yemen resolution at the Human Rights Council. It is vital that the international community continues to be active in supporting efforts to improve the human rights situation in Yemen.

The Government is not opposing calls for an international independent investigation, but, first and foremost, we want to see the Saudis investigate allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) which are attributed to them; and for their investigations to be thorough and conclusive. Saudi Arabia has publicly stated that it is investigating reports of alleged violations of IHL, and that any lessons learned will be acted upon.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Ms Margaret Ritchie: [\[46495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Saudi Arabian government on the effect of its programme of air strikes on civilian centres, hospitals and schools in Yemen.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We regularly raise with the Saudi Arabian Government the importance of compliance with international humanitarian law and continue to call on all parties to the conflict to renew their commitment to a Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen. The UK supports the Saudi Arabian-led Coalition military intervention, which came at the request of legitimate President Hadi, to deter aggression by the Houthis and forces loyal to the former president Saleh, and allow for the return of the legitimate Yemeni Government.

Ms Margaret Ritchie: [\[46496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of Yemeni civilians that have been (a) killed, (b) injured and (c) displaced as a result of military action by Saudi Arabia in 2016.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not record reported number of civilian casualties, injured or displaced.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) monitors incidents of alleged international humanitarian law (IHL) violations by the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen using available information. This is used to form an overall view on the approach and attitude of Saudi Arabia to IHL. It is important to make clear that neither the MOD nor the FCO reaches a conclusion as to whether or not an IHL violation has taken place in relation to each and every incident of potential concern that comes to its attention. This would simply not be possible in conflicts to which the UK is not a party, as is the case in Yemen.

HEALTH

■ Abortion

Fiona Bruce: [\[46660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what measures are in place to ensure that (a) vulnerable women and (b) under 18s who undergo abortions receive follow-up support.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department's Required Standard Operating Procedures (RSOPs) for termination of pregnancy providers approved by the Secretary of State, state that all women requesting an abortion should be offered the opportunity to discuss their options and choices with a trained counsellor. In addition, protocols should be in place for onward referral to

specialist services. All independent providers of termination of pregnancy providers must comply with these RSOPs.

Pathways to further post-abortion counselling should be available for any woman who may require additional emotional support or whose mental health is perceived to be at risk.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists guideline on the Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion (2011) recommends that services should identify issues which make women particularly vulnerable, and refer them on to relevant support services in a timely manner.

Fiona Bruce: [\[46661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many deaths have occurred in the last five years following abortions provided through the NHS and carried out by the private sector.

Nicola Blackwood:

Data from abortion notification forms (HSA4) indicates that between 2011 and 2015, the most recent five years for which data is available, there was one death relating to a termination funded by the National Health Service and carried out by the independent sector.

Fiona Bruce: [\[46662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Care Quality Commission and (b) Marie Stopes International on the suspension of Marie Stopes' abortion services in the UK.

Nicola Blackwood:

I have met Care Quality Commission (CQC) officials leading on this issue. Departmental officials have had, and continue to have, regular discussions with the CQC and Marie Stopes International (MSI), following the suspension of some MSI services. These discussions have centred on what actions MSI needs to take and what assurances they need to give that they will be able to meet the required standards and quality of service in future.

■ Antidepressants: Prescriptions

Luciana Berger: [\[46243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many prescriptions for anti-depressants have been issued in each month of 2016.

David Mowat:

Information is not collected centrally on the number of prescriptions issued. However, information is available on the number of prescription items dispensed for antidepressants and is given in the below table.

NUMBER OF ANTIDEPRESSANT PRESCRIPTION ITEMS WRITTEN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND DISPENSED IN THE COMMUNITY IN ENGLAND FOR EACH AVAILABLE MONTH OF 2016, AS DEFINED BY BRITISH NATIONAL FORMULARY SECTION 4.3 *ANTIDEPRESSANT DRUGS*. ¹

Month	Items (000's)
January	5,131.6
February	5,102.7
March	5,355.8
April	5,457.8
May	5,247.3
June	5,486.1

Source : Prescription Cost Analysis system data provided by the NHS Business Services Authority.

Note : ¹ Based on the British National Formulary classification system prior to edition 70.

■ Aphasia

Tim Farron: [\[46307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who suffer from aphasia are given the support needed to communicate effectively.

David Mowat:

Rehabilitation services, specifically speech and language therapy, provide much of the National Health Service support for people with aphasia. As clinical commissioning groups are responsible for commissioning these services, they should be taking steps to ensure that support for people with aphasia is available and improve these services where appropriate.

Stroke is the most common cause of aphasia developing in adults. The vast majority of patients are admitted to hospital after a stroke and over 90% are managed on a stroke unit. All stroke units in England have access to speech and language therapy. After discharge from hospital about three quarters of areas in England have access to stroke specific early supported discharge teams of which 91% have a speech and language therapist.

■ Baby Care Units

Mr Steve Reed: [\[46543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many neonatal units meet the standard for overnight accommodation for parents as recommended in paragraph 3.11 of the Toolkit for High-Quality Neonatal Services, published by his Department in 2009.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England does not currently hold this level of information centrally, however it is being considered for collection in future.

Ensuring the very best and safest care for sick babies and their parents during what may be the most difficult time of their lives is absolutely essential.

This Government is absolutely committed to improving maternity and neonatal care which is why we have set out our intention to halve the number of neonatal deaths, stillbirths, maternal deaths and brain injuries occurring during or soon after birth by 2030 and have invested millions in training for staff, new safety equipment and facilities in hospitals for new families, as well as help to drive improvements in perinatal mental health.

■ **Breast Cancer: Health Education**

Dan Jarvis:

[46426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to promote breast cancer awareness during Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2016.

David Mowat:

Public Health England will support Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2016 with social media activity. The Be Clear on Cancer Breast Cancer materials are freely available online via the Campaign Resource Centre at:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/>

A campaign on heart and lung diseases including cancer is currently ongoing and will conclude on 15 October.

■ **Childbirth: Roads**

Mr Jamie Reed:

[46088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on how many babies were born by the side of the road in England in each of the last six years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Digital advises that the information requested is not collected.

■ **Childbirth: Staffordshire**

Mr Jamie Reed:

[46089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on how many babies were born in transit between Stafford and Stoke Royal University Hospital in each of the last six years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Dementia: Research

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[46356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the benefits derived for people with dementia from recent increased expenditure on dementia research.

Nicola Blackwood:

Government funding for dementia research doubled over the last Parliament to around £60 million each year, and will be maintained at this level to total over £300 million in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. Much of this investment is in research aiming to achieve a better understanding of dementia to inform development of future treatments and ways to prevent the onset of the condition. Significant research is looking at how to improve symptom management, care and services for people with dementia, ways of maintaining independent living in early-stage dementia, and improving quality of life for people with dementia and their carers.

■ Department of Health: Disability Aids

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[46412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how his Department uses used wheelchairs, zimmer frames, crutches and other ambulatory equipment.

David Mowat:

The Department has no central role in the provision of used wheelchairs, zimmer frames, crutches and other ambulatory equipment. This is a matter for local determination.

We want to see hospitals and other settings make the best use of such equipment, providing timely access to disability equipment in order to ensure an individual's safe discharge. This could be the difference between independence or reliance on carers, services and others. This should include considering the provision of recycled equipment where it is safe and cost-effective.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Mary Glendon: [\[46182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what response his Department plans to make to the reports published on 9 September by (a) the Office for National Statistics and (b) Public Health England on drug-related deaths; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Government is concerned by the increase in the number of drug-related deaths registered since 2013, particularly among ageing heroin users.

Effective drug treatment helps prevent drug-related deaths. The Government provides local authorities with funding to provide drug treatment through the Public Health Grant, and the Public Health Outcomes Framework includes an indicator measuring drug-related deaths. Last year the Government amended the Medicines Regulations to enable more people to have access to naloxone which reverses the effects of heroin

overdoses. Many ageing drug users also have health problems that can and should be treated by the National Health Service.

Public Health England (PHE) and the Local Government Association convened an expert group to investigate the causes of the rise in drug-related deaths and how to prevent future premature deaths. The inquiry report was published on 9 September and a copy is attached. PHE will develop a further programme of work to prevent drug-related deaths in response to the inquiry report's recommendations.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has set up a working group to investigate and better understand drug-related drugs at the United Kingdom level, and we will respond in due course to any recommendations.

Attachments:

1. PQ46182 drug-related deaths PHE [PQ46182 drug-related deaths PHE.pdf]

■ **Employment: Medical Records**

Liz McInnes: [\[46324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that work status is routinely recorded in health records.

Nicola Blackwood:

This matter is under consideration as part of work on the forthcoming Green Paper on work and health.

■ **Exercise: Children**

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[46386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how his Department plans to raise awareness among schools and head teachers of solutions they can choose to help children enjoy physical activity every day.

Nicola Blackwood:

The County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) will continue to work with schools to raise awareness of local sport and physical activity opportunities. As announced in the recently published *Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action*, CSPs will now also be working with the National Governing Bodies of sport and other national and local providers, to ensure that every school in England has access to high quality sport and physical activity programmes.

■ **Health Professions**

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[46263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many (a) doctors and (b) nurses have (i) been recruited and (ii) started training in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information on the number of doctors and nurses in England who have been recruited to the National Health Service and started training since 2010 is in the attached tables.

Attachments:

1. PQ46263 drs and nurses in training table.docx [PQ46263 drs and nurses in training table.docx.xlsx]
2. PQ46263 drs and nurses joiners table.docx [PQ46263 drs and nurses joiners table.docx.xlsx]

■ **Health Professions: Recruitment**

Mr Mark Hendrick: [\[45789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to work with NHS health trusts to identify and resolve problems in recruiting the required number of doctors, nurses and other health professionals necessary for the effective delivery of services.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The ultimate responsibility for recruitment and staffing rests with National Health Service organisations as they are best placed to ensure they have the right staff, in the right place, at the right time to provide safe and effective care for their patients.

Health Education England was established in 2012 to undertake responsibility for the forecasting and planning of future workforce supply, working with NHS organisations to meet their needs. On 4 October the Secretary of State announced that the number of medical training places available to students each year will be expanded to ensure the NHS has enough doctors to continue to provide safe, compassionate care in the future. From September 2018, the Government will fund up to 1,500 additional student places through medical schools each year.

The latest workforce data for June 2016 published by NHS Digital in September showed that there are almost 22,700 more professionally qualified clinical staff working within the NHS than in May 2010. Health Education England data shows that more than 86,000 professional staff were in training as of March 2016.

■ **Mental Health Services: Young People**

Luciana Berger: [\[46244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his assessment is of the adequacy of the availability of talking therapies to young people.

Nicola Blackwood:

The *Future in Mind* report published in March 2015 which followed the work of the Taskforce into Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing recognised the lack of access to treatment for children and young people with mental health difficulties. This suggested that less than 25% - 35% of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition, based on epidemiological data from 2005, accessed support. In response to this, the Government committed to realising the vision set out in *Future in Mind* to deliver a major, system-wide transformation in children and young people's mental health services. This aims to improve access to services and make evidence-based psychological therapies, also known as talking therapies, more widely available across the country for those children and young people who need them.

To support this transformation, an additional £1.4 billion funding has been made available over the course of this Parliament for spending on children and young people's mental health. This will be used to improve community-based services so that young people are helped earlier and are less likely to need to go into hospital. It will also enable the expansion and extension of the Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme so that children and young people are able to access high quality and evidence-based interventions wherever they live.

All clinical commissioning groups have been asked to work with their partners to develop Local Transformation Plans to transform their local offer to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. These Plans cover the full spectrum of mental health issues; from prevention and improving access to support and care for existing and emerging mental health problem to ensuring that inpatient services are available for those who need them.

■ Mental Patients: Suicide

Luciana Berger:

[46242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45664, what data his Department holds on adult mental health service inpatients that have taken their own life in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department does not collect data on mental health service inpatients who take their own life. Instead, the Department works collaboratively with the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and NHS England to monitor and analyse data on deaths of people in custody and in the National Health Service.

The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness, commissioned by NHS England through the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, publishes statistics on suicide by people in contact with mental health services. These data include all mental health inpatients and not just those detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. The latest report provides data between 2003 and 2013 and is available at the following link:

<http://research.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/cmhs/research/centreforsuicideprevention/nci/reports/NCISHReport2015bookmarked2.pdf>

The Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health and the Home Office are members of the Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody which is advised by the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody. The Independent Advisory Panel publishes statistics on deaths in custodial settings (including suicides), and including those detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. The latest report on deaths between 2000 and 2014 is published on its website:

<http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/IAP-Statistical-Analysis-of-recorded-deaths-in-state-custody-between-2000-and-2014.pdf>

The CQC is responsible for monitoring the Mental Health Act 1983 and publishes annual monitoring reports on its website. These reports includes all deaths of people detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 (including suicides) reported to the CQC by mental health providers. This data is used by the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody. The latest monitoring report for 2014/15 is published on the CQC's website:

http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151207_mhareport2014-15_full.pdf

■ **NHS: Retirement**

Helen Jones:

[46425]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (a) when and (b) by whom the decision was taken to withdraw funding for the NHS retirement fellowship; and what evidence on the health benefits of fellowship activities was considered prior to that decision being made.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Health Education England (HEE) has, for the last two years, provided funding on behalf of the system to the NHS Retirement Fellowship. The funding was provided in support of the work they do for former employees of the National Health Service, however, the funding was always intended to be transitional support and not a guaranteed grant year on year. Like all publicly funded bodies, HEE is having to review its financial commitments and in turn, has prioritised funding for the education and training of the future workforce.

■ **NHS: Sustainable Development**

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[46416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45067, whether the Sustainability and Transformation updated plans which will be submitted in October 2016 will be made publicly available.

Luciana Berger:

[46480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will ensure that the Cheshire and Merseyside Sustainability and Transformation Plan is published in full before NHS England agrees transformation plans in October 2016.

David Mowat:

Local areas will submit their plans to the national health and care bodies for review in October, with further public engagement and consultation taking place from this point.

We expect that most areas will take a version of their Sustainability and Transformation Plan to their organisation's public board meeting for discussion between late October and the end of the year. We would also expect that most areas will publish their plans, for more formal engagement, during this period, building on the engagement they have already done to shape thinking. No changes to the services people currently receive will be made without local engagement and, where required, consultation.

NHS England, with other national health and care bodies, released guidance to the local areas developing Sustainability and Transformation Plans entitled 'Engaging local people' in September 2016 which can be found on their website.

Luciana Berger: [\[46481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will ensure that there is adequate time for public consultation on the Cheshire and Merseyside Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

David Mowat:

We expect all local leaders to be regularly talking to members of the public and stakeholders, including hon. Members. It is vital that people are able to shape the future of their local services. No changes to the services people currently receive will be made without local engagement and, where required, consultation. There are longstanding assurance processes in place to make sure this happens. The national health and care bodies have published new engagement guidance for local areas developing Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

NHS England, with other national health and care bodies, released guidance to the local areas developing Sustainability and Transformation Plans entitled 'Engaging local people' in September 2016 which can be found on their website.

■ Nurses: Training

Luciana Berger: [\[46598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that ending the NHS bursaries for nurses does not deter people from training to be a mental health nurse.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We expect this reform to enable universities to provide up to 10,000 additional training places to study pre-registration nursing, midwifery and the allied health subjects including mental health nursing.

In order to meet National Health Service workforce supply requirements, Health Education England will retain responsibility for workforce planning to ensure that the right number of trained staff are available for the NHS.

■ Obesity

Richard Burden: [\[46463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce obesity in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

Nicola Blackwood:

We launched *Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action* on 18 August. Our plan focuses on actions that are likely to have the biggest impact on childhood obesity. We will continue to work with the National Health Service, local authorities and other partners to deliver the proposals in our plan.

Public Health England helps local authorities to identify excess weight through various programmes such as the National Child Measurement Programme and NHS Health Checks, and supports local authorities to provide evidence based and effective interventions to help those individuals manage their weight.

A copy of *Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action* is attached and is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/546588/Childhood_obesity_2016_2_acc.pdf

Attachments:

1. PQ46463 Childhood Obesity Plan [PQ46463 Childhood Obesity Plan.pdf]

■ **Offences against Children**

Steve McCabe:

[46505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 44394, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the finding in the NSPCC report, entitled Transforming mental health services for children who have experienced abuse, published in June 2016, that 14 per cent of Local Transformation Plans contained an adequate needs assessment for children who have been abused or neglected; and if he will issue further guidance to clinical commissioning groups on ensuring such plans include such an assessment.

Nicola Blackwood:

The published Children and Young People's Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) for mental health set out how local areas intend to implement the proposals detailed in "*Future in Mind*" published in March 2015. These plans are jointly produced by clinical commissioning groups working with key partners across the National Health Service, local authority, education, youth justice and voluntary sectors, and crucially, involving young people and their families in their design. LTPs should cover the full spectrum of service provision, addressing the mental health needs of all children and young people including the most vulnerable, making it easier for them to access the support they need when and where they need it.

NHS England published a quantitative review of LTPs in January 2016 and a further thematic review of LTPs in August 2016 which includes detailed analysis of developing models and approaches to identification and management of children and young people with extra vulnerability to mental health problems including those who have experienced abuse or neglect.

NHS England has issued further guidance regarding the refresh of LTPs which includes a reminder regarding meeting the needs of children and young people who have extra vulnerabilities, such as those who have been abused.

■ Prostate Cancer: Clinical Trials

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[46353]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the outcome of the ProtecT randomised trials into prostate cancer among men.

David Mowat:

The National Institute for Health Research funded ProtecT trial (Prostate testing for cancer and Treatment) published two papers in the New England Journal of Medicine on 14 September 2016: *Mortality and Clinical Outcomes at 10 years' Follow-up in the ProtecT Trial* and *Patient Reported Outcomes Over Six Years in the ProtecT Prostate Cancer Trial*. The papers showed that active surveillance is as effective as surgery and radiotherapy in terms of survival at 10 years for men whose prostate cancer was diagnosed by a prostate specific antigen test. The results of this study will provide men and their doctors with key information needed to manage localised prostate cancer, and will now be examined by appropriate bodies in England. For example, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) periodically reviews the need to update its guidance to reflect new clinical evidence and developments in technologies.

The NICE quality standard on prostate cancer already contains the statement 'Men with low risk localised prostate cancer for whom radical prostatectomy or radical radiotherapy is suitable are also offered the option of active surveillance'. The quality standard can be found at this link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs91>

■ Schools: Nurses

Gloria De Piero:

[46650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his policy is on hearing and sight tests being carried out by school nurses in primary schools.

Nicola Blackwood:

At the age of school entry, most children will have a hearing test and an eye test. The tests may be conducted at school but can be carried out elsewhere depending upon the arrangements in the local area.

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises Ministers and the National Health Service about all aspects of screening policy and supports implementation. Using research evidence, pilot programmes and economic evaluation, it assesses the evidence for programmes against a set of internationally recognised criteria.

In November 2013 the UK NSC re-affirmed its recommendation that child vision screening between four and five years of age should be offered by an orthoptic-led service. Public Health England is working to improve the quality and consistency of current vision screening services across the UK.

■ Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

Luciana Berger: [46241]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many meetings and on what dates he has had meetings with NHS Improvement on Southern Health since the start of 2016.

Mr Jeremy Hunt:

Oversight of National Health Service trusts is primarily the responsibility of NHS Improvement (NHSI). I meet regularly with the Chief Executive of NHSI, as I do with a number of senior leaders. Our discussions cover a variety of issues that fall under NHSI's remit including the progress of trusts that are subject to regulatory support.

■ Strokes: Health Education

Mrs Cheryl Gillan: [46094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much his Department has spent from the public purse on the Act FAST campaign in each year since that campaign began.

David Mowat:

Public Health England (PHE) took over all the public health campaigns formerly run by the Department on 1 April 2013, including Act FAST.

The funding allocated to the Act FAST media spend is as follows:

2013-14: £870,000

2014-15: £850,000

2015-16: £930,000

Marketing spend is defined for this purpose as advertising spend covering only the media costs (inclusive of agency commission). These figures do not include recruitment/classified advertising costs and ad hoc spend under £10,000. All figures are rounded to the nearest £10,000.

2016-17 media spend figures are not available as the expenditure has not yet been committed.

All PHE spend over £25,000, including on public health campaigns, is published routinely and available on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phe-spend-over-25000>

■ Suicide

Luciana Berger: [46482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many deaths by suicide in each age group have been recorded within one month of being released from prison in England in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not held centrally.

■ West Cumberland Hospital

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[46087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will visit the West Cumberland Hospital (a) before the start of the formal consultation stage of the Success Regime and (b) during the formal consultation stage of that regime.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department continues to champion the Success Regime and I look forward to visiting West Cumberland Hospital. My private office is in touch with North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust to make arrangements.

HOME OFFICE

■ Action Fraud

Andrew Bridgen: [\[46433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Action Fraud.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Action Fraud is the national reporting point for fraud and financially-motivated cyber crime. We have seen significant improvement in performance; official figures show reports of fraud have trebled since Action Fraud was rolled out nationally, addressing the concern that fraud was an under-reported crime type.

Since its launch the Government has been building the capability of police forces, GCHQ and the NCA to respond to online cyber crime. Over the last year, Action Fraud has introduced an improved system which keeps victims informed of the progress of their case. The number of disseminations to local forces has also increased.

■ Anti-slavery Day

Sir Edward Garnier: [\[46431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to mark Anti-Slavery Day 2016; and if she will make a statement.

Sarah Newton:

Anti-Slavery Day on 18 October is an important opportunity to continue to raise awareness of this appalling crime. We have made good progress in tackling it, but there is more to do.

A range of events will mark the day and the Government will announce its plans in due course.

■ Asylum

Steve McCabe: [46378]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people her Department has granted asylum to in each year from 2010 to 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office publishes quarterly figures on asylum applications and initial decisions (including grants) within the Immigration Statistics release.

■ Asylum: Children

Mr Steve Reed: [46542]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the daily payment for unaccompanied asylum seeking children was for (a) under 16 and (b) 16-17 year olds in each of the last six financial years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

From 1 October 2010 until 1 July 2016 the funding rate for the majority of local authorities for supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children was £95 per day for a supported child under 16 and £71 per day for a supported child aged 16 or 17. These rates were increased on 1 July 2016 to £114 per day for supported children under 16 and £91 for supported children aged 16 and 17. Enhanced levels of funding have been provided to a small number of "Gateway" local authorities, in recognition of the large numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in their care. The most recent funding instructions can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-uasc-grant-instructions>

■ Asylum: Families

Steve McCabe: [46539]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 September 2016 to Question 43315, on asylum: families, what additional support her Department provides to (a) requesting member states and (b) such people who have not had their asylum claims granted.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are committed to making the Dublin Regulation work effectively and will take responsibility for an asylum claimant from another Member State where there are grounds to do so. The UK has been working to strengthen the process for family reunification of unaccompanied minors under Dublin for some time. We have seconded a UK official to Greece, have a long-standing secondee working in Italy and will shortly be seconding another official to the French Interior Ministry to support these efforts.

As stated in the answer of 5 September 2016 to Question 43315, the Dublin Regulation concerns the determination of the Member State responsible for examining a claim for asylum. It does not, however, concern the substantive assessment of whether or not

asylum can be granted in individual cases. Asylum seekers and their dependants who are in the UK are supported by the Home Office if they would otherwise be destitute.

The Home Office provides funding to local authorities for the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Those who the Home Office have found not to be in need of protection and who have exhausted their appeal rights are expected to leave the UK.

■ Asylum: Housing

Luciana Berger: [\[46240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have had housing support terminated following a failed asylum claim in (a) Liverpool, Wavertree constituency, (b) Liverpool, (c) Merseyside and (d) England in each year since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Information on numbers of cases who have had support terminated broken down by reason for cessation and by area of the UK, is unavailable and could be produced only at a disproportionate cost.

Chris Stephens: [\[46571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2016 to Question 46027, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the provision of Compass accommodation to asylum seekers is not let from property (a) where the landlord has lost registered social landlord accreditation and (b) deemed unsuitable for human habitation by the local authority.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Providers are monitored closely and accommodation is inspected frequently to ensure that accommodation for asylum seekers is contractually compliant and of the correct standard. We work closely with any local authority that raises concerns about asylum accommodation and dispersal to help address those concerns.

■ Deportation

Rob Marris: [\[46534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people the Government sought to deport from the UK in 2015-16 where the immigration status application had not been finally determined.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

All removals adhere to existing legislative requirements contained within the Home Office Enforcement Instructions and Guidance, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chapters-46-to-62-detention-and-removals>

■ Fraud

Stephen Hammond: [\[46628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the incidence of vishing fraud.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office do not hold any data on the incidence of vishing fraud. Vishing is when fraudsters obtain personal details of a victim by phone, usually with the intention of using this information to commit fraud. It is an enabler to commit fraud, rather than a fraud type in itself. The Home Office only collects data on the number of incidents of frauds, with no breakdown currently available for enablers used to commit them.

The Joint Fraud Taskforce, which brings together government, law enforcement and industry is considering options to reduce social engineering, alongside other initiatives to combat fraud more broadly.

■ Homicide

Conor McGinn: [\[46326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unsolved murders there are in cases where the remains have not been recovered in (a) England and Wales, (b) Scotland and (c) Northern Ireland.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office Homicide Index contains information on homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information on whether a body was recovered in a homicide has been included in the Homicide Index since 2007/08.

In the eight years from 2007/08 to 2014/15, there were 30 homicides where no body has been recovered and no suspect has been charged and a further seven where suspects have been acquitted of homicide at court or proceedings have been discontinued.

The data refer to the position as at 13 November 2015, when the Homicide Index was frozen for the purpose of analysis.

Information on homicides in Scotland and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Scottish Government and Police Service of Northern Ireland respectively.

■ Human Trafficking: Victim Support Schemes

Martyn Day: [\[46616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding her Department has provided to support victims of human trafficking in each year since 2010.

Martyn Day: [\[46617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of people in the UK who have been trafficked.

Sarah Newton:

The Home Office and Ministry of Justice jointly fund the Adult Victims of Modern Slavery Care and Coordination Contract in England and Wales. Since July 2011, The Salvation Army has been delivering this service. The total Government funding over this period has been:

YEAR	FUNDING
2011-2012	
(July-June)	£2.3 million
2012-2013	
(Jul-Jun)	£3.8 million
2013-2014	
(July-June)	£3.9 million
2014-2015	
(July -March)	£4 million
2015-2016	
(April -March)	£9 million

The Home Office estimates that in 2013 there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK.

In 2015 there were 3,266 of victims of human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – the UK’s framework for referring and supporting victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

In addition, 427 potential victims of modern slavery were identified in England and Wales via the “duty to notify” requirement which requires specified public bodies to report to the Government all potential adult victims of modern slavery encountered in England and Wales who do not wish to be referred to the NRM. Similar provisions will shortly be in place in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

■ **Police: North West**

Mr Mark Hendrick:

[\[45792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was spent on hire cars by each constabulary in the North West in 2015; and what steps are being taken to reduce expenditure on such cars.

Brandon Lewis:

Based upon the third party Spend data provided by North West Forces for April 2015 to March 2016; the following was detailed as being spent on Hire Cars (all costs are ex VAT);

Cumbria Constabulary - £164,302

Cheshire Constabulary - £209,474

Greater Manchester Police - £87,411

Lancashire Constabulary - £529,285

Merseyside Police - £206,084

The Government continues to support forces to drive down procurement expenditure and to encourage greater collaboration between police forces and with other public sector bodies and emergency services. We believe that significant savings can be achieved through shared or collaborative procurement.

The police-led Collaborative Law Enforcement Procurement (CLEP) programme is supported by the Home Office and focused on improving procurement in the categories of goods and services on which the police spend most money to help save up to £350 million in real terms by the end of this Parliament.

As part of the recent price comparison exercise published on police.uk on 24th August, the Home Office published the prices paid by all Forces for 1 day and 30 day hire cars. It showed a wide variation of pricing which we are working with Forces to address as part of CLEP via the Strategic Police Procurement Board and the National Police Procurement Executive (NPPE). The NPPE is developing a strategy over the autumn which will look to aggregate their requirements nationally and regionally utilising crown Commercial Frameworks.

■ Police: Safety

Holly Lynch:

[\[46387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on police safety of the distinction between the offences of assault on a police officer or police community support officer and resisting arrest.

Brandon Lewis:

I want to be clear that an assault of any kind on a police officer or Police Community Support Officer is wholly unacceptable. The choice of which is the most appropriate offence to charge an offender with is one that the Crown Prosecution Service must take.

Sentencing guidelines already provide for assault of a police officer to be treated more severely in appropriate cases. The courts need to be able to take into account all the circumstances of each case.

■ Refugees: Middle East and North Africa

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[[46417](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) Syrian refugees and (b) vulnerable persons from the Middle East and North African region the UK plans to resettle in the UK over each of the next four years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We intend to resettle up to 20,000 Syrians in need of protection and up to 3,000 vulnerable persons from the Middle East and North African region in the UK over the lifetime of this Parliament.

We will continue to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify appropriate cases, prioritising the most vulnerable. The numbers resettled in a particular period will depend on a range of factors including the flow of referrals from UNHCR in the field and the availability of suitable accommodation and care packages in the UK.

We will manage the flows based on need and in support of the wellbeing of the people and communities involved, rather than rushing to meet arbitrary targets. However, we are clear that we want to help as many people as we can as quickly as possible.

■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Mr Christopher Chope:

[[46428](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it the policy of the Government to enable councils in England to operate combined registration districts.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

There are no current plans to change the law to enable councils in England to operate combined registration districts. Under existing legislation some local authorities undertake joint working initiatives to offer improved service options, which have proved successful.

■ Seasonal Workers: Agriculture

Tim Farron:

[[46569](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that farmers continue to have access to sufficient seasonal labourers after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

As part of the process for leaving the EU and dealing with its impacts on various sectors, the Home Secretary will continue to work closely with colleagues across Whitehall and the Government will engage with relevant stakeholders including those in the agricultural industry.

■ Security Industry Authority: Telecommunications

Jessica Morden: [\[46086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for customer service of changing the operation of the Security Industry Authority contact centre from telephone to email.

Brandon Lewis:

The Security Industry Authority is moving towards a digital by default licensing system. We are aware that there have been issues during the transition to digital which have resulted in higher than expected volumes of customer contact.

We are working closely with the Security Industry Authority to ensure customer service issues are addressed; the Security Industry Authority have already increased the number of staff responding to customer queries.

■ Undocumented Migrants: France

Stella Creasy: [\[46262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish (a) how much spending has been committed from the public purse, and on what, (b) the outcomes proposed and (c) the outcomes achieved to date as part of the joint intervention fund agreement of September 2014 with the French government to combat illegal migration between 2015 to 2020.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The September 2014 Joint Declaration committed the UK to a £12 million contribution to upgrade port infrastructure across the juxtaposed ports in northern France and to ensure effective measures are taken to protect vulnerable persons such as victims of trafficking.

The migrant situation has developed significantly since the September 2014 Declaration and further investment has followed, in line with the Government's aim to reinforce border security. We continue to work closely with the French authorities at both political and operational levels on a package of measures to further bolster security at ports in northern France. This includes not only physical and personnel security measures but also wider work to tackle criminal gangs involved in people trafficking. The UK has also part funded a project, run by a French non-governmental organisation to identify and direct vulnerable people to protection, support and advice within France.

The investment in security by the UK, the closer coordination of our law enforcement response and the significant investment in police resources by the French Government has led to a significant improvement in the situation at the ports in northern France. The UK and France regularly review security at the ports to ensure the new measures are maintained and remain effective.

Furthermore, at the UK-France summit in Amiens on 3 March, the Home Secretary announced that the UK will contribute £17 million to joint work with France to ease migrant pressures in the Calais region and further strengthen the UK border. Most

recently, the Home Secretary and French Interior Minister reiterated at their meeting on 30 August that both Governments are committed to working side by side on a range of issues in northern France.

■ Visas: Syria

Marion Fellows:

[46521]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications by Syrian nationals for UK visitor visas have been (a) received and (b) granted in each annual quarter for the last three years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The latest quarterly Home Office immigration statistics on entry clearance visas are published in 'Immigration Statistics, April - June 2016', available from the Home Office website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics>

■ West Midlands Police: Finance

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[46436]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total budget was for West Midlands police force in each of the last seven years.

Brandon Lewis:

Details of core Government funding to Police and Crime Commissioners (and previously Police Authorities) are published annually in the Police Grant Report. These can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-finance> Figures for 2010-11 to 2016-17 are shown below for information. Police and Crime Commissioners are required to publish annual group accounts showing the budget and expenditure for their respective police forces and their own offices, including precept and other local income. For West Midlands Police, these are available at <http://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/budgetary-and-financial-information/statements-of-accounts>

YEAR	CORE GOVERNMENT FUNDING (£)
2010/11	504,297,082
2011/12	497,784,836
2012/13	464,421,955
2013/14	472,809,895
2014/15	456,919,964
2015/16	433,573,284
2016/17	431,099,809

Note: Some specific grants have been rolled into core Government funding over this period, including in 2012/13, the Neighbourhood Policing Fund and in 2014/15, the Community Safety Fund. This affects comparison between the figures over the period. Additionally, core funding previously paid by DCLG became part of Home Office core funding in 2013/14. These figures are included in all years to aid comparison.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Consultants

Andrew Gwynne: [\[46516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which private consultancy firm her Department holds a contract with; what the value is of each such contract; and what services are being provided by each of those consultancy firms.

Rory Stewart:

Detail on DFID contracts is available via the Contracts Finder website.

■ Developing Countries: Energy

Patrick Grady: [\[46330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if her Department will continue to support at present levels the Energy Africa Campaign.

James Wharton:

The UK Government is playing a leading role in improving energy access in development countries. For example, through our Energy Africa Campaign we are working with solar firms to accelerate the expansion of the household solar market in Sub-Saharan Africa, helping to bring universal energy access in the continent forward from 2080 to 2030. The Government remains fully committed to this objective.

■ Developing Countries: Renewable Energy

Steve McCabe: [\[46493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans she has to increase investment in decentralised renewable energy in developing countries.

James Wharton:

The UK Government is playing a leading role in improving energy access in developing countries. DFID has a range of programmes which are working with developing countries to ensure renewable energy markets work effectively as well as supporting energy businesses to grow, and providing consumers with access to funding to buy solar goods. For example, our Energy Access Ventures programme is investing in off-grid electric and we are delivering green mini-grid solutions across Africa.

Through the UK Government's Energy Africa campaign we are working with solar firms to help them access the finance they need to expand their businesses, create jobs and help reach millions of people in Africa without electricity access.

Frank Field:

[\[46529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department plans to spend on supporting low-income communities to access renewable energy in developing countries in each of the next five years.

James Wharton:

The UK Government has committed to invest £5.8 billion between April 2016 and March 2021 through its International Climate Finance (ICF) to support sustainable economic growth and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. The UK aims to spend 50% of this climate finance on adaptation and 50% on mitigation activities, including a range of measures to support access to renewable energy in developing countries.

■ Government Departments: Development Aid

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[46502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with her ministerial colleagues in other departments on the use of the development aid budget by those departments; and if she will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

The Secretary of State for International Development has regular meetings with her ministerial colleagues in other departments and discusses a range of issues.

■ Iraq: Children

Tom Brake:

[\[46621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that its humanitarian response in Mosul minimises child protection risks.

Rory Stewart:

On 21 September, the UK announced an extra £40 million of humanitarian funding to Iraq, taking our total commitment to £169.5 million since June 2014. This new support will be targeted specifically to enable a scale up of humanitarian assistance ahead of Mosul operations. An element of this support will aim to help protect civilians displaced as a result of the operations – including children.

The UK is the largest donor to the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund, which has supported specialist protection and rehabilitation for people escaping from Daesh, including women and children. The UK regularly lobbies the Iraqi authorities to ensure the protection of its people as they flee Mosul and other areas.

Tom Brake:

[\[46622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that its humanitarian response in Mosul does not involve screening procedures for children which separate them from their families.

Rory Stewart:

The screening of fighting-age men fleeing from Daesh-controlled areas is conducted by the Government of Iraq as a security measure.

The UK and other major donors to the UN response in Iraq continue to vigorously lobby the Government of Iraq and other authorities to respect International Humanitarian Law during screening operations. We lobby for screening to take place in a transparent manner, under a fully accountable chain of command, and to be monitored independently by the UN and other neutral and impartial humanitarian actors.

On 21 September, the UK announced an extra £40 million of humanitarian funding to Iraq, taking our total commitment to £169.5 million since June 2014. This new support will be targeted specifically to enable a scale up of humanitarian assistance ahead of Mosul operations. An element of this support will aim to help protect civilians displaced as a result of the operations – including children.

Tom Brake:[\[46623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding her Department is providing for children displaced in the Iraq conflict against Daesh; and what that funding will be used for.

Rory Stewart:

On 21 September, the UK announced an extra £40 million of humanitarian funding to Iraq, taking our total commitment to £169.5 million since June 2014. This new support will be targeted specifically to enable a scale up of humanitarian assistance ahead of Mosul operations. An element of this support will aim to help protect civilians displaced as a result of the operations – including children.

The UK is the largest contributor to the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund, through which the UK has helped thousands of displaced girls and boys to receive education, vaccinations and other forms of support. Our assistance also includes cash programming, which provides the most vulnerable Iraqis with the opportunity to purchase items to address their most urgent needs. For instance, it gives parents the opportunity to buy medicines, clothing and other necessities for their children.

■ Non-governmental Organisations**Stephen Doughty:**[\[46099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what meetings she has had with those non-governmental organisations which receive funding from her Department since she took up office.

Rory Stewart:

The Secretary of State has met a range of non-governmental organisations, including during her overseas visits. Information on Ministers' meetings with external organisations is published as part of DFID's quarterly Transparency return.

Stephen Doughty: [\[46101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what meetings her officials have had with non-governmental organisations which receive funding from her Department since she took up office.

Rory Stewart:

As a matter of course, DFID officials meet regularly in the UK and overseas with a wide range of non-governmental organisations who receive funding from DFID.

■ Overseas Aid

Stephen Doughty: [\[46100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what meetings she has had with the Prime Minister on the status of the 0.7 per cent gross national income to be used as Overseas Development Assistance funding since taking up office.

Rory Stewart:

The Secretary of State meets regularly with the Prime Minister. Both the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister have stated that they are committed to the Government's policy of spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on Official Development Assistance.

Patrick Grady: [\[46331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent meetings she has had with the National Security Adviser on transparency and effectiveness of the cross-government aid funds.

Rory Stewart:

The Secretary of State for International Development has regular meetings with the National Security Adviser and discusses a range of issues.

Mr David Nuttall: [\[46336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what forecast she has made of which countries in receipt of UK aid will no longer require UK aid in (a) five, (b) 10 and (c) 15 years.

Rory Stewart:

UK aid is supporting Britain's interests through building a safer more prosperous world and helping countries achieve a timely sustainable exit from poverty. It is not possible to accurately predict which countries will require aid in those timeframes, but assessments of the likely trajectory of poverty in a country informs how we allocate resources. Programmes are largely focused on countries where extreme poverty currently affects a significant proportion of the population; is projected to persist over the medium term; where DFID has a comparative advantage; and, where the country itself is unable to finance their own development needs.

Richard Burden:

[\[46379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her article in the Daily Mail, entitled Too much of your money is simply stolen or squandered, published on 13 September 2016, in what areas of her Department's spending funding is being stolen or wasted.

Rory Stewart:

DFID has a zero tolerance approach to fraud and has a wide range of robust measures and controls in place to protect UK aid and ensure we maximise value for money. My department works in challenging areas and operates a comprehensive risk management framework which assesses and responds to the risk of fraud at every stage of the project cycle. The Counter Fraud Section responds firmly to any allegation of fraud recovering funds wherever possible. We expect our partners to account for losses from their own funds to minimise the impact on UK taxpayers and the recipients of aid.

■ Syria: Business

Tom Brake:

[\[46682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what representations her Department has received on reports that Syrian businesses approved by the EU and by the US government have received aid payments from the UN mission in Syria.

Tom Brake:

[\[46685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has provided aid payments to Syrian businesses which have been approved by the EU and the US government.

Rory Stewart:

My Department has not made any direct aid payments to Syrian businesses. Our aid is delivered through the United Nations, international non-governmental organisations and other international organisations.

The UN, which operates in a very difficult environment in Syria, has assured us that they comply with all relevant sanctions.

■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Tom Brake:

[\[46489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2016 to Question 40083, what recent assessment her Department made of the feasibility of air drops of humanitarian aid in Syria.

Rory Stewart:

My department's assessment is that aid delivered by road, by trusted humanitarian partners who can ensure it gets to those who need it most, remains the best way of getting help to affected populations. The use of air drops to deliver aid is high risk and should only be considered as a last resort when all other means have failed, and if it is an effective way of getting humanitarian supplies to people. Air drops require certain

conditions to be met for successful delivery that are difficult to meet in most of Syria; ideally including clear drop zones, safe air space and access for the intended recipients, and co-ordination with authorities on the ground to oversee distribution.

We therefore continue to deliver the majority of our supplies by road, although our partners have made occasional air-drops in the past.

■ Yemen: Armed Conflict

Keith Vaz:

[\[46610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which of the recommendations made by the APPG for Yemen in its report, *Conflict in Yemen, the forgotten crisis*, published in October 2015 have been adopted by her Department.

Rory Stewart:

We share the APPG's concern about the serious humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and welcome the recommendations for DFID in the report.

The Secretary of State recently co-hosted an international event on Yemen at the UN General Assembly to shine a spotlight on the crisis. At the event, donors pledged over \$100 million in additional funding to the Yemen crisis and UN agencies committed to improving the delivery of humanitarian aid on the ground. The Secretary of State announced an extra £37 million for Yemen at the event, bringing the UK's total funding for Yemen to £109 million for 2016/2017.

We have continued to lobby at all levels for rapid, safe and unhindered commercial and humanitarian access. Since May, we have provided £1.4 million to the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to facilitate commercial shipping to Yemen, crucial to ensuring adequate supplies of food and fuel.

Edward Argar:

[\[46633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the humanitarian situation on the ground in Yemen.

Rory Stewart:

Yemen is one of the most serious and complex humanitarian crises in the world. The United Nations (UN) estimates that 21.2 million people in Yemen require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs for food, water, sanitation, and healthcare, or protect their fundamental rights. Yemen is also experiencing an economic crisis, which has driven up food and other prices, and reduced people's purchasing power.

Ultimately, only an end to the conflict will address the humanitarian crisis. The UK is working closely with other countries to de-escalate the conflict and is providing significant support to UN-led peace talks. The UK is also working with the UN and other countries to improve commercial and humanitarian access to and within Yemen.

The Secretary of State recently co-hosted an international event on Yemen to shine a spotlight on the humanitarian crisis. At the event, the UK announced a further £37 million, bringing our total humanitarian support for Yemen to £100 million for 2016/2017.

■ Yemen: Overseas Aid

Edward Argar: [\[46635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress her Department has made on increasing the volume of aid delivered on the ground in Yemen in the last six months.

Rory Stewart:

On 21st September, the Secretary of State co-hosted an international event on Yemen at the UN General Assembly to shine a spotlight on the crisis. At the event, donors pledged over \$100 million in additional humanitarian funding for Yemen and UN agencies committing to improving the delivery of humanitarian aid on the ground. As of 6 October, the UN Appeal is now 47% funded, up from 32% at the end of August.

The UK is the 4th largest donor to the Yemen crisis. We have so far committed £100 million in humanitarian assistance over the financial year (16/17), with £41.5 million distributed between March and August 2016 for food, medical supplies, water, and emergency shelter.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Exports**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2016 to Question 46072, what plans he has to replace the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria after the UK leaves the EU.

Mark Garnier:

I refer the hon. Member for Coventry South to the answer I gave on 19 September 2016 to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Diana Johnson), UIN 46058.

■ Defence: Exports

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[46594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the decline in defence exports.

Dr Liam Fox:

Defence export figures fluctuate on a year to year basis given the long term nature of defence acquisition. In the context of an increasingly competitive global market, the UK's defence exports were £7.7 billion in 2015. Based on past performance, over a five year period, the figures demonstrate that the sector's core business is strong.

■ Department for International Trade: Public Expenditure

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will estimate the total amount his Department has spent to date.

Greg Hands:

The newly created Department for International Trade (DIT) has been forged out of the forerunner (non-ministerial) Departments UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), UK Export Finance (UKEF) and has assumed Trade Policy Unit responsibilities previously held by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Until such time as a transfer of functions order establishes the Secretary of State as a corporation sole, DIT remains a unified Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) department for accounting purposes.

■ Department for International Trade: Travel

Tim Farron: [\[46309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September to Question 45236, to which destinations (a) ministers and (b) officials have taken flights as part of their official duties since his Department was established.

Greg Hands:

Since the inception of the department, as part of their official duties Ministers and accompanying officials have visited:

Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Liam Fox) - USA, India, Switzerland, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Northern Ireland, Scotland.

Rt. Hon Friend the Minister of State (Greg Hands) - USA, Germany, Taiwan, Korea.

Hon Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Mark Garnier) - Burma, Thailand, Israel, France.

Noble Friend the Minister of State (Lord Price CVO) - China, South Korea, USA, Germany, Brazil, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia.

■ Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad

Catherine West: [\[46319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many overseas visits he has made for the purpose of negotiating trade deals since his appointment as Secretary of State.

Greg Hands:

As we leave the EU, Britain will seek to become the global leader in free trade. Ministers and officials in the Department for International Trade are making overseas visits to a wide range of markets, in order to promote the UK as a great place to do business and with which to trade. Through these discussions, we are working to ensure we take

advantage of all the opportunities available to us, including through our future trading relationships.

■ Overseas Trade

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[46408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of UK trade was with (a) Germany, (b) France, (c) Italy, (d) Spain, (e) Australia, (f) China, (g) Singapore, (h) US, (i) Canada and (j) other EU member states in each of the last five years.

Mark Garnier:

The proportion of UK trade (exports and imports) with Australia, Canada, China, Singapore, the US and all EU member states in each of the last five years is given in the attached table. The estimates are based on data sourced from the latest Office for National Statistics' Pink Book 2016 release.

Attachments:

1. Proportion of UK Trade - Statistics [Final answer to PQ 23055 - Table 1.docx]

■ Trade Agreements: Commonwealth

Catherine West: [\[46317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade deals the UK has with other Commonwealth countries.

Greg Hands:

The EU has trade agreements in place with 23 Commonwealth countries.

JUSTICE

■ Alexander Blackman

Richard Drax: [\[46375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make representations to the Criminal Cases Review Commission on expediting its investigations into the case of former Marine Sergeant Alexander Blackman.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Marine Sergeant Blackman's application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission is being treated as a Priority 1 case, the highest level of priority available.

■ Child Arrangements Orders: Scotland

Tom Blenkinsop: [\[46090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of prohibited steps orders on access to families across the Scottish English border; and on the movement of families and individuals across that border.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The welfare of the child is the court's paramount consideration when making a prohibited steps order and such orders restricting the freedom of a parent to choose his or her place of residence are exceptional.

■ **Children: Custody**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[46151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment she has made of the equality between mothers and fathers of court judgments on child custody and access to children; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The law requires the welfare of the child to be the court's paramount concern when making any decision about a child's upbringing, including with whom the child is to live or spend time. The courts must consider the individual facts of each case when making a decision.

Decisions in these cases are a matter for the independent judiciary.

■ **Homicide**

Conor McGinn:

[\[46327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many murderers are serving sentences in cases in which the remains of the victims have not been recovered.

Conor McGinn:

[\[46328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many murder convictions there have been since 1988 in cases in which the remains of the victim have not been recovered.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is not available.

■ **Immigration: Appeals**

Stephen Timms:

[\[46503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate her Department has made of the cost of an appeal being cancelled at (a) First-tier Tribunal and (b) Upper-tier Tribunal due to documents from the Home Office not being submitted before the hearing date in each of the last three years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chambers) are administered by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

HMCTS does not routinely estimate the cost of the cancellation of individual postponement and adjournments because the Tribunal will, wherever possible, replace a cancelled hearing with cases that are available in reserve.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Jo Churchill: [\[46619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many decisions taken on claims for (a) employment and support allowance and (b) personal independence payment have been appealed in (i) Bury St Edmunds (ii) Suffolk and (iii) the UK in each of the last five years; and how many of those appeals have been successful.

Sir Oliver Heald:

I refer the honourable member to the answers given to PQ 43251 on 18 July 2016 and PQ 44405 on 12 September 2016.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Apprentices**

Peter Kyle: [\[46313\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if she will appoint a new Apprenticeships Adviser.

Mrs Theresa May:

The Department for Education is in charge of the apprenticeships policy. I will continue to make any appointments, as they are required, to deliver the government's agenda.

■ Parliamentary Private Secretaries

Patrick Grady: [\[46665\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45481, where the information on Parliamentary Private Secretaries has been published; and at what time on 12 September 2016 that information was published.

Mrs Theresa May:

Parliamentary Private Secretaries are not members of the Government. The information was published by the Conservative Party on the 12 September 2016.

SCOTLAND**■ Overseas Trade: Scotland**

Mr Peter Bone: [\[46668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Scottish businesses and trade bodies in Scotland about opportunities for overseas trade.

David Mundell:

Both the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland and I have undertaken a series of visits and meetings over the summer with key sectors of Scottish industry and business. The purpose of these meetings is to understand any concerns and ideas, including opportunities for overseas trade.

The Scotland Office also works closely with the Department for International Trade, including on initiatives such as the Exporting is GREAT campaign, which toured Scotland in August and September. This campaign exists to inspire and support more first-time exporters to trade overseas and promote the growth it can bring.

TRANSPORT

■ Abellio Greater Anglia

Mr Douglas Carswell: [\[46561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to seek compensation for passengers from Abellio Greater Anglia.

Paul Maynard:

All franchised Train Operating Companies are required under their franchise agreement to have in place a Passenger's Charter which will include arrangements for compensation for passengers.

Abellio Greater Anglia operate the Delay Repay passenger compensation system in their Passenger's Charter under which all passengers are entitled to claim compensation for each delay of 30 minutes or more which they experience, whatever the cause. The entitlement is 50% compensation of the single fare for delays of 30 to 59 minutes and 100% of the single fare for delays of 60 minutes or more.

■ Beaches: Gwynedd

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[46397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which authority is responsible for the safety of (a) beach users and (b) swimmers at beaches in Gwynedd.

Mr John Hayes:

Safety at public beaches is generally the responsibility of the local authority, who carry out risk assessments to determine appropriate safety measures.

Gwynedd Council have information guides about beach and harbour safety on their website.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Data Protection

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg: [\[46374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the DVLA does not give out motorists' data to organisations which will misuse it.

Andrew Jones:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) takes the protection of the data it holds very seriously and has measures in place to protect it. These measures vary depending on the service used and the sensitivity of the data provided.

All DVLA's data release services are subject to a formal assessment before they are made available for use. This ensures that there are adequate policies as well as procedural and technical controls in place to protect the data. Privacy Impact Assessments are also completed to identify and address any privacy risks associated with the service and ensure that personal data is processed in compliance with the law.

An audit carried out earlier this year by the Information Commissioner's Office confirmed that the DVLA's procedures offer high assurance that processes are in place to mitigate the risks of non-compliance with the Data Protection Act.

■ Driving: Licensing

Jim Shannon: [\[46551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that people who lose their driving licence on the grounds of poor vision and subsequently receive a letter from their optometrist confirming that their vision meets the required standards can have their driving licence reinstated quickly.

Andrew Jones:

Drivers in Great Britain whose licence has been revoked for failure to meet the required eyesight standards may submit further evidence to support their case. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency will consider that evidence within three working days. Further medical enquiries may be required.

Driver licensing is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and is a matter for the Department for Infrastructure in the Northern Ireland Executive.

Jim Shannon: [\[46552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the introduction of a graduated licence system for young drivers.

Andrew Jones:

None. It is important that we strike the right balance between the safety and the freedom of young drivers. Many rely on their cars to get to work and education; so licensing restrictions could affect their ability to access these opportunities.

We're focussing our efforts on encouraging learner drivers to be better prepared for the wonderful freedoms a driving licence offers, but without compromising on safety, which is at the heart of what we do.

■ Driving: Mobile Phones

Mr Hugo Swire: [\[46310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the dangers of using a hands-free kit while driving.

Mr Hugo Swire: [46311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what evidence his Department has received which shows that using a hands-free kit while driving is any less dangerous than using a hand-held phone.

Mr Hugo Swire: [46312]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to prohibit the use of hands-free kits by drivers of commercial coaches.

Andrew Jones:

The Highway Code makes it clear that drivers need to be in control of their vehicles at all times. That means that drivers need to ensure that they use any device in their vehicles in a safe way when driving.

Driving while using a hands-free kit is legal and previously published research estimated that whilst a hands-free kit is distracting, it is safer than using a hand-held device.

Many cars now have built in hands-free kits and we are working with the industry to ensure that safety and legislation keeps pace with new technology as it develops.

■ **Edinburgh Airport: Noise**

Martyn Day: [46656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department expects an updated Strategic Noise Map for Edinburgh Airport to be available.

Mr John Hayes:

As noise is a devolved matter, the UK Government is not able to answer questions on noise mapping for Scottish airports. This is the responsibility of the Scottish Government and they will be able to advise on this matter.

■ **Govia Thameslink Railway**

Tim Loughton: [46558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much in compensation payments has been paid by Network Rail to Govia Thameslink Railway since the start of that franchise.

Paul Maynard:

The latest information is published on Network Rail's website - <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/transparency/datasets/> - covering the years 2011-12 to 2014-15.

Tim Loughton: [46559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much in compensation payments has been paid by Govia Thameslink Railway to customers since the start of that franchise.

Paul Maynard:

The delay repay compensation figures for all Train Operating Companies covering the years 2009-10 to 2014-15 are published on the GOV.UK website at –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/train-operating-companies-passenger-charter-compensation-between-2009-to-2015>. Figures for the 2015-16 financial year for all Train Operating Companies are expected to be published on the GOV.UK website later this year. Releasing all the figures at the same time will allow everyone to see them together which will provide a clear and consistent publication and help avoid misinterpretation and confusion.

■ Heathrow Airport

Sammy Wilson: [46663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the outcome of the EU referendum on the timetable for a decision on Heathrow expansion.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government is committed to delivering the important infrastructure projects the country needs. This includes delivering runway capacity to the timetable set out by the Airports Commission. The Government's work in preparation for negotiations to leave the EU does not affect the timing of this decision.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Steve McCabe: [46394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of total spending on High Speed 2 has been on (a) wages and (b) performance bonuses.

Andrew Jones:

From 2009-10 to 2015-16, the Government spent £1.4bn on the HS2 programme. The total payroll costs for HS2 Ltd permanent staff for the same period were £94.6m, out of which £113.5k was spent on performance related pay.

Grant Shapps: [46508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the next appraisal of the High Speed 2 project is planned.

Andrew Jones:

The Department is continuing to keep the appraisal of HS2 under review and further updates will be prepared as the programme reaches critical milestones. The Government intends to announce a decision on the route of Phase 2 by the end of the year and this will be supported by an updated appraisal.

■ High Speed Two

Steve McCabe: [46359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last met Simon Kirby, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd; and when he was made aware of Mr Kirby's decision to resign as Chief Executive of that company.

Andrew Jones:

The Secretary of State last met with Simon Kirby on 20 July 2016. He was made aware of Simon Kirby's resignation as CEO of HS2 Ltd on the afternoon of Friday 9 September 2016.

■ High Speed Two: Resignations**Steve McCabe:**[\[46358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of Simon Kirby's resignation from HS2 Ltd on achieving the 2026 target date for opening phase one of High Speed 2.

Andrew Jones:

Simon Kirby has built a high calibre team and leaves HS2 Ltd in excellent shape. Sir David Higgins remains as chair and a new CEO will be appointed as soon as possible. The 2026 target date for opening phase one of HS2 is not affected.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance**Sammy Wilson:**[\[46348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential implications for its policies of the European Court of Justice ruling of September 2014, *Damijan Vnuk v Zavarovalnica Triglav C-162/13*, on the requirement for all motorised vehicles used off-road to be insured.

Sammy Wilson:[\[46349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has made to bring forward legislative proposals to implement the ruling of the European Court of Justice of September 2014, *Damijan Vnuk v Zavarovalnica Triglav C-162/13*, on insurance for motorised vehicles used off-road and on private property.

Andrew Jones:

We oppose any measure that imposes unreasonable costs on British motorists, home owners and businesses. We are pleased to have achieved positive progress; the Commission has agreed in principle that the Motor Insurance Directive should be amended. They set out their high level proposals in an Inception Impact Assessment in June.

The Secretary of State will consult in due course on whether or not to make changes to how the Motor Insurance Directive is implemented in domestic law.

■ Public Transport**Justin Tomlinson:**[\[46475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to establish a body with the remit of ensuring that the rights of public transport users are protected.

Paul Maynard:

The Government remains committed to safeguarding the interests of public transport users, doing so (in addition to the work of the DfT) primarily through the following three bodies:

- The Office of Rail and Road, which protects rail passenger rights through licensing train operating companies and enforcing consumer protection law in the rail sector.
- Transport Focus is responsible for representing the interests of Britain's rail passengers as well as those of bus, coach and tram passengers in England (outside of London).
- London TravelWatch, which is funded by the London Assembly, performs a similar role to that of Transport Focus for passengers in London.

The Government remains open-minded to considering any alternatives as to how these arrangements could be further improved in the future.

■ Railway Stations: Taxis

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[46630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on rail companies charging taxi drivers to use taxi ranks at train stations.

Paul Maynard:

Decisions to charge taxi operators for accessing taxi ranks at railway stations are a commercial matter for the train company operating the station.

■ Railways

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[46473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will commission the Behavioural Insights Team to conduct research on efficiency and passenger journeys in the rail sector.

Paul Maynard:

The Department has recently commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team to deliver a programme of workshops on the use of behavioural insights research in policy making, including rail passenger experience. In addition, the Department is currently exploring a range of behavioural insight approaches as part of its wider programme of rail research.

■ Railways: Commuters

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[46478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to inform rail commuters of the protections available to them under the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

Paul Maynard:

It is the responsibility of train operators, as service providers, to ensure that their customers are made aware of their rights to compensation or other redress in cases of service failure or disruption. Train operators' existing compensation schemes will

continue to provide the main means of redress for passengers after 1 October 2016, when the Consumer Rights Act came into force for all transport providers.

Information about the Consumer Rights Act is widely available from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service, consumer organisations and government websites.

■ Railways: Compensation

Caroline Lucas:

[[46147](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2016 to Question 40383, when he plans to make an announcement on when passengers will have access to compensation when trains are over 15 minutes late; whether the application of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) from 1 October 2016 will affect that access; after how many minutes of delay the consumer's right to claim a full refund under the CRA will take effect; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Maynard:

As set out in the previous answer, we are committed to improving compensation arrangements for passengers and we expect to make an announcement on this shortly.

We want to strengthen the rights of rail passengers to get compensation for poor service. The Consumer Rights Act will allow rail passengers to challenge compensation amounts awarded for delays and cancellations where the train operator is at fault.

Train operators' existing compensation schemes will continue to provide the main means of redress for passengers after 1 October 2016, when the Act comes into force for all transport providers. We will continue to work with train operators to improve their compensation schemes.

Helen Hayes:

[[46524](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to publish its responses to the consumer group, Which?, super-complaint on rail delays compensation made to the Office of Rail and Road.

Paul Maynard:

The Department is developing its response following the Office of Rail and Road's formal investigation of this super-complaint. We will publish this response in due course.

■ Railways: South East

Peter Kyle:

[[46666](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 23 March 2016, to Question 31738, when he plans to publish the findings of the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study.

Paul Maynard:

The study is now complete and the findings are being carefully considered by Ministers. We remain committed to publishing the findings, and Hon Members with constituencies along the study route will be notified when this happens.

■ Railways: Suffolk

Jo Churchill: [\[46620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what change there has been in passenger numbers on trains in Suffolk since 2010.

Paul Maynard:

The number of journeys made by rail in Suffolk during 2014-15 has increased by 23% since 2009-10, in line with the strong growth nationally in rail journeys. The number of journeys since 2009-10 is shown below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF JOURNEYS IN SUFFOLK	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR
2014-15	6,121,321	-0.1%
2013-14	6,129,781	1.0%
2012-13	6,068,473	6.7%
2011-12	5,688,434	4.9%
2010-11	5,423,631	9.1%
2009-10	4,971,597	-

Source: The Office of Rail and Road

■ Selby-Hull Railway Line: Electrification

Karl Turner: [\[46264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on the electrification of the Hull to Selby rail line; and what his provisional timeline is for those works to be completed.

Paul Maynard:

The government is currently considering the case for electrification of the line between Selby and Hull in light of the intention by Hull First Trains to invest in a new bi-mode fleet. The government will announce its decision in due course.

■ Southern

Peter Kyle: [\[46504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to announce the composition of the project board for Southern Rail, announced on 1 September 2016.

Paul Maynard:

Further details on the composition of the project board will be available in due course.

MPs have been asked to nominate a passenger representative for the Project Board.

These nominations are currently being considered and an announcement will be made in the coming weeks.

Helen Hayes:

[46631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Southern Railway has paid in compensation to Network Rail since the start of that franchise.

Paul Maynard:

Under their track access agreement, compensation for unplanned disruption passes between Govia Thameslink Railway and Network Rail based upon which party is responsible for each disruptive incident. The Department does not see the breakdown of the compensation paid by each party. The net figures covering the years 2011-12 to 2014-15, are published on Network Rail's website ('Payments for disruption on the railway made under schedule 8') at the following address:

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/transparency/datasets/>

Helen Hayes:

[46632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Southern Railway (a) has paid to passengers in compensation and (b) received in compensation from Network Rail since the start of that franchise.

Paul Maynard:

a) The delay repay compensation figures for all Train Operating Companies covering the years 2009-10 to 2014-15 are published on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/train-operating-companies-passenger-charter-compensation-between-2009-to-2015>. Figures for the 2015-16 financial year for all Train Operating Companies are expected to be published on the GOV.UK website later this year. Releasing all the figures at the same time will allow everyone to see them together which will provide a clear and consistent publication and help avoid misinterpretation and confusion.

b) Under their track access agreement, compensation for unplanned disruption passes between Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and Network Rail based upon which party is responsible for each disruptive incident. The Department does not see the breakdown of the compensation paid by each party. The net figures covering the years 2011-12 to 2014-15, are published on Network Rail's website ('Payments for disruption on the railway made under schedule 8') at the following address:

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/transparency/datasets/>

Payments to train operators, made through the performance regime, are not designed to cover the refund claims which passengers make. They are instead designed to hold train operators financially neutral to the long-term revenue impact as a result of disruption.

■ Stansted Airport: Londonderry

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[46357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of offering Public Service Obligation Route status to the Londonderry to Stansted Airport service.

Mr John Hayes:

The UK government has agreed in principle to support the air route between City of Derry Airport and London through a Public Service Obligation. It is now for Derry City & Strabane District Council take forward the tender process to identify an airline to operate the route.

■ Taxis: Licensing

Andrew Gwynne: [\[46501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice his Department offer local authorities on issuing Hackney carriage or private hire driver licences to people based outside their local authority area.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[46515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice his Department provides to local authorities on the issuing of Hackney carriages and private hire driver licences to individuals based outside their own local authority.

Andrew Jones:

Local authorities can issue licences to prospective Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle drivers irrespective of where the driver lives. The Department provides Best Practice Guidance for local authorities to help them develop their own standards for taxi and PHV operators, drivers and vehicles.

■ Taxis: Offences against Children

Louise Haigh: [\[46363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent representations he has received on child sexual exploitation and the licensing of private hire vehicles.

Andrew Jones:

The Department for Transport receives a wide variety of representations from a diverse range of stakeholders in relation to private hire vehicle licensing, including child sexual exploitation.

Alongside the Government's commitment to eradicating child sexual abuse, these representations have assisted us in taking action such as introducing statutory Best Practice Guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing in relation to safeguarding.

Louise Haigh: [\[46364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many child sexual exploitation issues prosecutions have been brought in relation to private hire vehicles in each year since 2000.

Andrew Jones:

The Department for Transport does not hold data on the number of child sexual exploitation prosecutions related to private hire vehicles. Such information should be sought from the Police.

■ **Tolls: Merseyside**

Luciana Berger:

[46483]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the tunnel and bridge tolls in Merseyside on the (a) finances, (b) employment levels, (c) employment choices and (d) road travel habits of residents of Liverpool, Wavertree.

Andrew Jones:

Tolling levels for the Mersey Tunnels and the future Mersey Gateway Crossing are the responsibility of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Halton Borough Council respectively. Any assessment of the local impact of these tolls is therefore a matter for these bodies rather than this Department. The Department's assessment of the business case for the Crossing included a consideration of the overall impacts effects of tolling levels on road users and showed that the new Crossing will reduce congestion and improve journey times for users. This assessment was not disaggregated to the level of individual local areas.

■ **Tolls: Non-payment**

Robert Ffello:

[46097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to address non-payment of tolls, charges, penalties and fees by non-UK drivers.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government takes the recovery of non-payment of tolls, charges, penalties and fees very seriously by UK and non UK drivers. The following sets out the steps used by the different organisations responsible in addressing the non-payment of UK charges and penalties.

When a non-UK vehicle uses the Dartford Crossing without paying the Dart Charge, Highways England uses a European debt recovery agency to issue a Penalty Charge Notice. Highways England also runs seasonal compliance campaigns, providing translated material at ports, airports and poster sites in the Calais area to build broader awareness for foreign drivers heading to the UK.

For the HGV levy, the Government has effective enforcement procedures that are delivering 95% compliance rates in Great Britain. The Driver and Vehicle and Licencing Agency (DVLA) has the powers to target non-compliant vehicles, and hold them until a penalty is paid.

Enforcement of road traffic legislation is an operational matter for the police. They are able to issue penalties for speeding, and those who cannot provide a verified UK address can be required to make an on-the-spot roadside payment, known as a fixed penalty deposit.

Local authorities have powers to clamp or remove foreign vehicles to ensure drivers comply with parking restrictions and pay any penalties.

The Government will continue to look at the ways we collect tolls, charges, penalties and fees by non-UK drivers and ensure improvements are made where necessary.

Robert Flello:

[\[46098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the amount in tolls, charges, penalties and fees which remain unpaid by (a) commercial and (b) domestic drivers from outside the UK in each of the last five years.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government takes recovery of non-payment of tolls, charges, penalties and fees very seriously both by UK and non UK drivers. When it is non-payment from a non UK driver a European debt recovery agency is used to support recovery of outstanding charges.

It is not possible to identify the amount in tolls, charges, penalties and fees which remain unpaid by (a) commercial and (b) domestic drivers from outside the UK in each of the last five years without incurring disproportionate cost as this information could only be obtained by a search of all tolling, charging, penalty charging and fee systems.

WALES

■ Tidal Power: Swansea Bay

Edward Argar:

[\[46634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with Ministers of the Welsh Government on the Swansea Tidal Lagoon project; and what recent assessment he has made of progress on that project as a result of those discussions.

Alun Cairns:

I discussed the proposed Tidal Lagoon project with the First Minister for Wales and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy when I met with them both in August.

This is an exciting project for Wales. We must, however, ensure that it will deliver affordable energy and that it represents value for money for energy consumers. Charles Hendry is due to finalise his independent review into tidal lagoons this autumn which will help establish an evidence base to ensure all decisions made regarding tidal lagoon energy are in the best interests of the UK.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Disability: Self-employed

Mary Robinson:

[46549]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 in improving access for self-employed disabled people to access professional networking events; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Government carried out a post-legislative scrutiny review of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) in 2015, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-legislative-memorandum-the-equality-act-2010>

The review noted that, in the area of disability, the Act introduced a number of protections that had not been present in the Disability Discrimination Act. These included the extension of indirect discrimination to disability; the introduction of discrimination arising from disability (where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something that happens in consequence of their disability); and the extension of the duty on employers and suppliers of goods and services to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons.

Under the Act, service providers have an anticipatory duty to make such adjustments. This means that where reasonable, they must identify and make the adjustments that disabled people might in future require in order to purchase or use their goods, facilities and services without being put at a substantial disadvantage compared to those that do not have a disability. This duty, which can ultimately be enforced in court, applies to the organisers of professional networking events in the same way as to other service providers.

More widely, the Government is fully committed to assisting disabled people access the labour market, for example through Access to Work. This is the Government's scheme to fund practical support above and beyond the reasonable adjustments that an employer has a duty to make under the Equality Act 2010 for workers with a health condition or disability that affects the way they perform their job. Support is individually tailored and can include travel to work, support workers and specialist aids and equipment. The scheme is also open to self-employed disabled people.

Access to Work helped 36,470 individuals last year and the Spending Review provided for a real-terms increase in funding, starting in 2016/17, to enable the scheme to support an additional 25,000 people by the end of the Parliament.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Carer's Allowance: Ashfield**

Gloria De Piero: [\[46647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many adults in Ashfield constituency have received carer's allowance for caring for children under the age of 16 in each of the last three financial years.

Penny Mordaunt:

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

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

Mr Mark Hendrick: [\[45791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time equivalent staff are employed at the carers allowance building at Palatine House, Preston; and what his Department's plans are for changes in that number up to May 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

The number of full time equivalent staff at Palatine House in Preston is 234.12, of which 140.32 work in the Carers Allowance Unit. The headcount number for the Carers Allowance Unit for future years will be agreed as part of the Department's routine annual resource allocation process.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Liz McInnes: [\[46323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Government plans to publish its green paper on disability employment.

Penny Mordaunt:

We will publish a Green Paper later this year.

Stephen Timms: [\[46533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress the Government has made to reduce the disability employment gap.

Penny Mordaunt:

We recognise that the gap between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people remains too large.

Last year the Work and Health Unit was established to lead the drive for improving work and health outcomes for people with health conditions and disabilities, as well as improving support for people absent from work through ill health and those at risk of leaving workforce.

The Unit has begun work to build the evidence base of what works to support disabled people and people with health conditions to obtain and remain in work.

We plan to produce a Green Paper later this year that will explore a range of ways to improve the prospects and transform the lives of disabled people and people with long term health conditions by removing barriers that prevent them from working, and helping ensure that they are able to obtain and remain in work.

■ Fit for Work Programme

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[46095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the contract with Maximus for delivery of the Fit for Work programme includes provision of public funding for taxi journeys for anyone (a) turned away from or (b) moved to a different assessment centre.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Fit for Work service provides a supportive occupational health assessment and general health and work advice to employees, employers and General Practitioners (GPs), to help individuals stay in or return to work. Advice is delivered via a website, telephone line and webchat and does not involve participants travelling to an Assessment Centre.

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[46096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance his Department has given to Maximus to ensure that centres used for Fit for Work assessments are accessible to wheelchair users.

Penny Mordaunt:

All Assessment Centres utilised by MAXIMUS to undertake Work Capability Assessments meet accessibility standards under the Equality Act 2010.

Before attending an assessment, claimants are given the opportunity to alert the assessment provider to any additional requirements they may have and the provider will endeavour to meet all reasonable requests.

If a claimant is unable to travel to or access an Assessment Centre as a result of their health condition or impairment, a home visit may be offered.

This is unconnected to Fit for Work, a website, telephone line and webchat service that does not involve participants travelling to an assessment centre. Fit for Work provides a supportive occupational health assessment and general health and work advice to employees, employers and General Practitioners (GPs) to help individuals stay in or return to work.

■ Joint Work and Health Unit

Liz McInnes:

[\[46659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what provision the Government has made for the long-term future of the Joint Work and Health Unit.

Penny Mordaunt:

Both the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions continue to jointly sponsor the Work and Health Unit as an important part of this Government's agenda to deliver long-term change to the work and health systems.

■ **Mining: Industrial Health and Safety**

Tom Blenkinsop:

[46238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2016 to Question 44365, what assessment the Health and Safety Executive has made on the effect of long shift patterns on the incidence of (a) errors, (b) accidents and (c) injuries in (i) all sectors of the workforce and (ii) the mining industry.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not hold this information. However, HSE recognises that poorly designed shift-working arrangements and long working hours can result in fatigue, accidents, injuries and ill health and has produced guidance for employers on designing and implementing shift-working arrangements:

(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/humanfactors/topics/fatigue.htm>).

■ **Motability**

Patrick Grady:

[46329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants have lost their entitlement to motability cars during their reassessment from disability living allowance to personal independence payment; and how many such claimants have subsequently had their motability cars reinstated following an appeal to the first-tier tribunal in each year since 2010.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department does not routinely collect information on the numbers of people who have had to return a Motability vehicle nor on whether they were successful on appeal. Motability is an independent charitable organisation that is wholly responsible for the administration of the Motability scheme, including collating its own management information. Whilst the Department meets regularly with Motability to discuss scheme performance, questions relating to the details of the scheme's operation should be directed to Motability itself.

■ **Musculoskeletal Disorders**

Liz McInnes:

[46377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government's planned Green Paper on disability employment will include proposals related to people with musculoskeletal conditions.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Green Paper will be published later this year, and we welcome feedback.

■ Pension Protection Fund

David Warburton: [\[46437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his Department's timetable is for publishing and implementing the secondary legislation required to implement the increase in the Pension Protection Fund compensation cap provided for under the Pensions Act 2014.

Richard Harrington:

On 15 September I tabled a written statement saying that I had begun the consultation on this secondary legislation with the intention that the increase in the compensation cap will be implemented from April 2017.

■ Pensions: Advisory Services

Steve McCabe: [\[46531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the capacity of Pension Wise to meet the volume of over the telephone and face-to-face appointment requests it receives; and what plans he has to increase Pension Wise's capacity after the introduction of the proposed secondary market for annuities.

Richard Harrington:

Pension Wise regularly reviews capacity within the service with its delivery partners to ensure it has the right number of guidance specialists in the right places. Since launch there have been over 82,000 Pension Wise appointments and customer satisfaction has been consistently high.

The service is confident that it will be able to meet the demand of those seeking guidance on selling their annuity on the secondary market.

■ Rents: Arrears

Stephen Timms: [\[46257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans his Department has to monitor the effect on housing rent arrears of the length of time taken for initial payment of universal credit.

Damian Hinds:

DWP are undertaking work to investigate the issue of rent arrears in Universal Credit, it aims to understand the true level of rent arrears and what is causing them. We expect to know a lot more about this issue as the work progresses and following the analysis of the next Universal Credit Gateway Survey which we will be publishing later this year.

■ Social Security Benefits

Andrew Selous: [\[46142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how his Department assesses whether benefit appointees should be appointed; what factors are taken into account in such cases by the assessor; and what the requirements relating to the mental capacity of adult benefit recipients are in such cases.

Andrew Selous: [46143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department makes of whether an adult should continue to have a benefit appointee.

Andrew Selous: [46144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department takes to ensure that benefits paid to benefit appointees are used in the best interests of the benefit recipient.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Secretary of State confirms that a claimant requires an appointee if we receive unequivocal medical evidence as to the claimant's capacity to manage their benefit claim or if, as in the vast majority of cases, the visiting officer, through a series of questions relating to the comprehension of claiming and managing a benefit award, will reach a conclusion as to their capacity to act for themselves. This is specifically a benefit-related capacity assessment and not a mental capacity assessment.

Once someone has been appointed, they will remain in that role until (a) they wish to relinquish it (b) they themselves lose capacity (c) the claimant regains capacity or (d) they abuse their position by not acting in the best interests of the claimant and the appointment is revoked. This latter requirement is stressed to the prospective appointee when the appointment is being considered and they are required to sign form BF56 to confirm that they understand their responsibilities. The Department also has a review system in place.

The vast majority of revocations of an appointeeship occur because of information received from a third party alleging financial abuse which is subsequently confirmed on investigation.

■ Social Security Benefits: Ashfield

Gloria De Piero: [46651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many under 16s in Ashfield constituency have received personal independence payment or disability living allowance in each of the last three financial years.

Penny Mordaunt:

Statistics on the number of children under the age of 16 in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, by a range of breakdowns including time series, are available from the Tabtool: <http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/tabtool.html>. Personal Independence Payment is not available to children under the age of 16.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Mr Mark Hendrick: [45790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming (a) jobseeker's allowance, (b) employment and support allowance and (c) universal credit had their benefit sanctioned in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested, up to 31 March 2016, on the number of sanction referrals and adverse sanction decisions, in respect of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), is published and available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started---SuperWEB2.html>

The information requested on Universal Credit sanctions is not currently available. The Department updated its strategy for releasing official statistics on Universal Credit (UC) in February 2016. As outlined in the strategy, officials are currently assessing the data for UC and will only release information once the necessary quality assurance work has taken place. These statistics will be published in accordance with the relevant protocols in the Code of Practice for official statistics.

Universal Credit official statistics and the Departments release strategy can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics>

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females**Debbie Abrahams:****[46091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which three transitional options the former Pensions Minister, Baroness Altmann, commissioned from his Department to address the effects on women born in the 1950s following state pension equalisation.

Debbie Abrahams:**[46092]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimates his Department has made of potential cost of proposed transitional measures to address the effects on women born in the 1950s following state pension equalisation.

Caroline Nokes:

Transitional arrangements are already in place. At the time of the Pensions Act 2011 the Government introduced a concession worth £1.1 billion to limit the impact of the rising State Pension age on those most affected. The concession capped the maximum delay that anyone would face in claiming their State Pension to 18 months rather than two years, relative to the previous timetable. The Government has no plans to introduce further transitional arrangements.

The following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-foi-releases-for-march-2016> provides:

- information on the transitional arrangements considered during the passage of the Pensions Act 2011 (see table A); and
- illustrative costings for hypothetical policies including the three requested by the previous Minister for Pensions (see tables B to D).

These options are not under policy consideration.

■ Supported Housing

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[46671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to written statement WS154 of 15 September 2016, how he plans that the localised pots will meet demand on supported housing.

Caroline Nokes:

The Secretary of State confirmed in his Written Statement to Parliament on 15th September that the Government will shortly be publishing a consultation document on supported housing.

The Government values the important role that supported accommodation plays in helping vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. This announcement demonstrates the commitment of this Government to safeguarding vulnerable groups, and encouraging further development to meet future demand.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[46672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to implement annual uprating to ensure that funding matches demand for supported housing.

Caroline Nokes:

The Secretary of State confirmed in his written Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 15th September that the Government will shortly be publishing a consultation document on supported housing.

The Government values the important role that supported accommodation plays in helping vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. This announcement demonstrates the commitment of this Government to safeguarding vulnerable groups, and encouraging further development to meet future demand.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[46673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is his policy that people with a learning disability will continue to be entitled to independent living after the introduction of the new funding system for supported housing.

Caroline Nokes:

The Secretary of State confirmed in his written Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 15th September that the Government will shortly be publishing a consultation document on supported housing.

The Government values the important role that supported accommodation plays in helping vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. This announcement demonstrates the commitment of this Government to safeguarding vulnerable groups, and encouraging further development to meet future demand.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[46674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans that the new funding system planned for 2019/20 will apply to existing supported housing tenants.

Caroline Nokes:

It is our intention that from 2019/20 core rent and service charges will be funded through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit up to the level of the applicable LHA rate. This will apply to all those living in supported accommodation from this date, including existing tenants.

■ Supported Housing: Learning Disability**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[46645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans he has to monitor the effect of a new funding system for supported housing on people with a learning disability.

Caroline Nokes:

The Secretary of State confirmed in his Written Statement to Parliament on 15th September that the Government will shortly be publishing a consultation document on supported housing.

The Government values the important role that supported accommodation plays in helping vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. This announcement demonstrates the commitment of this Government to safeguarding vulnerable groups, and encouraging further development to meet future demand.

■ Universal Credit**Stephen Timms:**[\[46260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with how many local authorities his Department has worked to improve budgeting advice for universal credit claimants.

Damian Hinds:

Universal Credit has introduced Personal Budgeting Support to provide budgeting and money advice to claimants as part of Universal Support provisions. We have engaged with all 380 local authorities in delivering this.

■ Universal Credit: Self-employed**Stephen Timms:**[\[46259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that universal credit is effective in supporting an increasing number of people into self-employment.

Damian Hinds:

Universal Credit Claimants who are gainfully self-employed and within one year of starting out in self-employment are also eligible for a 'start-up period', of up to one year to support them to grow their business.

Claimants who are in their start-up period will attend quarterly sessions designed to provide support, assistance and guidance. They will have access to a cadre of work coaches with the right skills to signpost self-employed people to support to grow their business and earnings.

We will use survey findings to ensure that the journey for newly self-employed claimants of Universal Credit is effective.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Overseas Electors

Minister for Constitution (Chris Skidmore):

[\[HCWS166\]](#)

I am pleased to publish the Government's plans setting out how we will deliver on our manifesto pledge to remove the current 15 year time limit on British citizens who live abroad registering as overseas electors.

Our proposals will give all British citizens who have lived in the UK a lifelong right to vote in parliamentary elections. They will ensure that all eligible overseas electors are able to register to vote and renew their registration in a convenient and timely fashion while maintaining the integrity of the electoral register and guarding against fraud. The policy will allow British citizens previously resident in the UK but who were not previously registered to vote, or had registered more than 15 year ago, to register as an overseas elector.

The publication of the policy will allow the expatriate community and those with technical electoral expertise to comment. Our aim is to have implemented the policy ahead of the next scheduled parliamentary elections.

The costs of implementing the policy are well within my department's spending review bid and funding will in due course be available for local authorities in line with the Government's new burdens doctrine.

This is one of a number of proposals to make sure our democracy works for everyone. The Government is also encouraging registration in under-registered areas, equalising constituencies, and looking at what can be done to improve access to anonymous registration for those escaping domestic violence.

I am placing a copy of the policy statement in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. WMS - Amended Overseas Electors [Overseas Electors1.pdf]

■ Transfer of CERT-UK

Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (Ben Gummer):

[\[HCWS167\]](#)

Further to the Government's statement of March 2016, the transfer of CERT-UK (the Computer Emergency Response Team, UK) functions and staff to the new National Cyber Security Centre has now completed. CERT-UK has ceased operating and will be closed. The new Centre, which will open publicly over the coming months, is part of GCHQ and will be the UK's authority on cyber security. More information on the National Cyber Security Centre will be set out in the government's National Cyber Security Strategy which will be published later this year.

Attachments:

1. WMS - Amended Transfer of CERT-UK [Transfer of CERT-UK.pdf]

TREASURY**■ Government's shares in Lloyds Banking Group**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond):

[\[HCWS170\]](#)

Further to the statement provided to the House on 4 December 2015, today I can inform the House that the trading plan to sell the Government's shares in Lloyds Banking Group has been re-started. This is a further step in the Government's plan to return Lloyds to the private sector.

I received advice from UK Financial Investments (UKFI) that selling shares through the trading plan represents good value for money for the taxpayer. This sales method has been very successful previously, achieving over £9bn of sales between December 2014 and June 2016. In total, we have recovered over £16.9 billion for the taxpayer from Lloyds through sales and dividend payments.

The trading plan commenced on 7 October 2016 and will run for a year. Shares will not be sold below a floor price that HMT has determined delivers value for money for the taxpayer and ensures that the government will get back all of the £20.3 billion that taxpayers injected into Lloyds during the financial crisis. The actual number of shares sold under the trading plan will depend on market conditions.

I can also announce the withdrawal of the Lloyds retail offer. At the current share price, the retail offer would be extremely unlikely to recoup all the money the taxpayers put into the bank. Our plan will get back all the cash taxpayers invested in Lloyds during the financial crisis and leave the bank in a better place to continue the crucial role it plays in supporting individuals, families and businesses up and down the UK.

I will update Parliament with further details at the end of the trading plan.

■ UK Bilateral Loan to the International Monetary Fund

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke):

[\[HCWS173\]](#)

Today, the UK completed the signing of a new bilateral loan commitment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), valued at 9,178.2 million SDRs, equivalent to £10,278m using exchange rates on 7 October 2016. This bilateral loan replaces one of the same value, which came into effect in February 2016 (HCWS542). UK lending to the IMF remains within the limit set by The International Monetary Fund (Limit on Lending) Order 2010, which came into force on 22 July 2010.

The new loan is part of a global initiative to ensure that the IMF is well-resourced. It is vital at this time that we have an IMF equipped to strengthen the resilience of the global economy against risks and uncertainty. The UK is one of the first countries to sign a new bilateral loan with the IMF, maintaining its leading role within international institutions and in the world economy.

The SDR is the unit of account used by the IMF. Its value is calculated daily as a weighted average of the US dollar, euro, renminbi, yen, and pound sterling.

DEFENCE

■ Military Operations—European Convention on Human Rights Derogation

Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS168\]](#)

Over the past decade a series of court judgments have extended the reach of the European Convention on Human Rights to combat zones. This extra-territorial jurisdiction was never envisaged by the Convention's authors.

While the Courts have been seeking to reconcile the Convention with the long established Law of Armed Conflict (or International Humanitarian Law), our military personnel have been engaged in operations overseas in support of the international community. They have had to do so in the face of growing legal uncertainty and an unprecedented level of litigation, much of it fuelled by a small number of law firms. In addition to the millions of pounds this litigation has been costing the taxpayer, the resulting uncertainties have been distressing to many current personnel and veterans, and military advice is that there is a risk of seriously undermining the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

It is for these reasons that the government through a range of measures is implementing the manifesto commitment to ensure our Armed Forces overseas are not subject to persistent legal claims that undermine their ability to do their job.

I am today informing the House that before embarking on significant future military operations, this government intends derogating from the European Convention on Human Rights, where this is appropriate in the precise circumstances of the operation in question. Any derogation would need to be justified and could only be made from certain Articles of the Convention.

In the event of such a derogation, our Armed Forces will continue to operate to the highest standards and be subject to the rule of law. They remain at all times subject to UK Service Law, which incorporates the criminal law of England and Wales, and International Humanitarian Law (the law of armed conflict including the Geneva Conventions) wherever in the world they are serving. Therefore any credible allegations of criminal wrongdoing by members of the Armed Forces will continue to be investigated, and prosecuted within the Service Justice System.

Meanwhile the government will continue to work tirelessly to uphold International Humanitarian Law in armed conflicts and to ensure that the appropriate, time-honoured balance between military necessity and humanitarian concerns – as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions – continues to govern armed conflicts throughout the world.

This announcement is an important part of our plan to deliver our manifesto pledge including limiting the length of time that claims can be brought against the government; strengthening the penalties for firms who engage in vexatious practices; and to reduce the financial incentive for law firms to pursue spurious claims.

■ Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees: Triennial Review

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Ministry of Defence) (Mark Lancaster):
[[HCWS172](#)]

The Ministry of Defence is required to review their Non Departmental Public Bodies at least once every three years to ensure that they have regular independent challenge.

I am today announcing the outcome of the Triennial review of the Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees (VAPCs). The Review examined whether there is a continuing need for the function provided by the VAPCs and concluded in two stages. The first stage examined the key functions of the VAPCs and the second stage ensured that the body is operating in line with the recognised principles of good corporate governance.

The review concluded that the VAPCs continue to provide valuable impartial advice to both myself and Veterans UK, part of Defence Business Services. In addition, the VAPCs continue to play an important role in furthering the interests and needs of veterans, not least of which is the result of the establishment of forums under the Armed Forces and Community Covenants, which continue to generate significant contribution from the public sector, local authorities and military units. Thus the VAPCs are able to sustain clear and relevant value for a range of stakeholders.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ General Affairs Council - 20 September 2016

The Minister of State, The Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr David Jones):
[[HCWS169](#)]

The General Affairs Council on 20 September was chaired by the Slovak Presidency and held in Brussels.

General Affairs Council

The General Affairs Council on 20 September discussed the October European Council; follow up to the June European Council; mid-term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework; and the European Commission's Annual Work Programme 2017.

A provisional report of the meeting and the Conclusions adopted can be found at:
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2016/09/20/>

Preparation of the European Council (20-21 October)

The Council was presented with the agenda for the October European Council. It is due to discuss migration, trade, and external relations with Russia. The Government made clear that while we remained a Member State of the EU, the UK would continue to contribute fully in the preparation of the European Council and advance positions in line with our national interest.

Follow-up to the June European Council

The Council also discussed the Conclusions of the June European Council, focusing on migration, jobs, growth and investment, and external relations. Member States called for more practical ways to implement European Council Conclusions.

Mid-Term Review / Revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework

The Commission presented its proposal for the Mid-Term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-20. The proposal is intended to increase flexibility in the EU budget, focusing on the economy, security and migration. The Presidency confirmed this will be a standing item on the General Affairs Council agenda until agreement is reached.

Commission Annual Work Programme 2017

The Commission presented the 2017 Letter of Intent. During an exchange of views the UK stated that the Commission should prioritise the single market, the digital single market and migration. We also made clear any proposals on defence issues would need careful scrutiny and should not duplicate NATO. The Presidency stated its intention to present the Commission with a letter outlining the overall views of Member States for it to consider when finalising the 2017 Commission Work Programme.

Sir Julian King's appointment

Sir Julian King has been appointed as European Commissioner for the Security Union. He secured the European Parliament's endorsement when it voted in favour of his appointment on Thursday 15 September. The Council of the European Union gave its approval at the General Affairs Council on Tuesday 20 September. Sir Julian replaces Lord Hill following his resignation in July this year.

HOME OFFICE

■ Contingencies Fund Advance

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS171\]](#)

The Home Office requires an advance to start recruitment of the Director General of the Office for Police Conduct. This advance is to cover recruitment costs only, as the successful candidate will take up their post following Royal Assent of the Policing and Crime Bill.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £15,000 for this new service will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Home Office. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £15,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment and Support Allowance

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Damian Green): [\[HCWS174\]](#)

I would like to update hon. Members on the main item of business undertaken by my Department since the House rose for conference recess.

When people claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and/or Universal Credit (UC) due to a health condition or disability they are required to take part in Work Capability Assessments (WCA) on an ongoing basis to confirm their eligibility. This includes people with the most severe health conditions or disabilities, even though we already know from their initial WCA, and from healthcare professionals, that, short of medical advances, their condition is unlikely to improve.

On 1 October, I announced that that we will stop reassessing people with the most severe health conditions and disabilities. This change will apply to people who have already been placed in the ESA Support Group or UC Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity categories following a WCA and who have the most severe health conditions and disabilities (defined as claimants with severe, lifelong, often progressive and incurable conditions, with minimally fluctuating care needs, who are unlikely to ever be able to move closer to the labour market and into work). The IT changes needed are expected to be completed by the end of 2017. In the meantime, we will be working to ensure these people are not reassessed unnecessarily.

Over the coming months we will work with key stakeholders, including disabled people, disability charities, our health assessment provider, the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments, medical professionals and others to develop a set of criteria, set out in guidance, to switch off reassessments for those that are eligible.