



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Daily Report

Thursday, 9 February 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 9 February 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 09 February 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Business: Regulation**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[63047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2017 to Question 62005, when his Department plans to publish the revised Better Regulation Framework Manual following consultation on the final agreement of efficiency changes.

Margot James:

An updated Better Regulation Framework Manual will be published this spring subject to final agreement to a package of changes to improve the efficiency of the better regulation system.

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

Jon Trickett:

[\[63062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total pay bill was for (a) male and (b) female employees in his Department in 2015-16; and what the per capita spend from that pay bill for each man and woman was in that year.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy was not formed in the 2015-16 financial year and therefore this data is not available. Data in relation to the previous departments, BIS and DECC, could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

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

Philip Davies:

[\[62948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many former prisoners have been employed by his Department in each of the last five years.

Margot James:

All individuals applying for roles at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are subject to Disclosure Scotland checks during the application process.

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974), Disclosure Scotland checks confirm the unspent convictions of an individual seeking employment at the department but do not disclose this information. Therefore we do not hold information of any spent convictions an employee may have.

■ EURATOM

Ian Murray:

[\[62627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on the (a) Joint European Torus project and (b) Culham Centre for Fusion Energy of the UK's decision to withdraw from Euratom; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 3 February 2017]: Maintaining and building on the UK's world-leading fusion expertise and securing alternative routes into the international fusion R&D projects such as the Joint European Torus (JET) project will be a priority. Government is working closely with the UK Atomic Energy Authority on ways to achieve this.

Ian Murray:

[\[62628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the UK ceasing to be a member of Euratom on the Joint European Torus project's (a) funding, (b) staffing, (c) operational experiments and (d) collaboration with other EU scientist and member states.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 3 February 2017]: Maintaining and building on the UK's world-leading fusion expertise and securing alternative routes into the international fusion R&D projects such as the Joint European Torus (JET) project will be a priority. Government is working closely with the UK Atomic Energy Authority on ways to achieve this.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Capita

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[63305\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which contracts the Government has awarded to Capita in each of the last five years.

Ben Gummer:

I refer My Rt. Hon Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Hemsworth on 7 February 2017 to UIN: 62923.

■ Epilepsy

Jim Shannon:

[\[62763\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have died as a result of symptoms relating to epilepsy in each of the last five years.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response to PQ62763 [Response to PQ62763.pdf]

■ Government Departments: ICT**Alex Chalk:**[\[62786\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government takes to consult professional bodies in the IT industry on ensuring value for money before embarking on large-scale IT projects.

Ben Gummer:

Cross-government standards exist to ensure best use of taxpayer money on IT projects, including Commercial Operating Standards and Technology Code of Practice. These were both reiterated in light of public consultation which included trade bodies. The use of these standards is assured through the IT and commercial spend controls operated by Cabinet Office.

The updated Commercial Operating Standards (published on GOV.UK) define how all government departments should operate commercially to ensure strong commercial behaviours and getting value for money. Point 5 of this standard focuses on maximising competition by engaging with the market early, and designing service requirements that are accessible to as many suppliers as possible.

TREASURY**■ Apprentices: Taxation****Justin Madders:**[\[62927\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much has been raised by the apprenticeship levy since it was established; and how much of that sum has been subsequently re-invested in apprenticeships.

Jane Ellison:

The apprenticeship levy will come into effect in April 2017. By 2019-20, as set out in the OBR forecast, total UK spending is expected to exceed what we currently forecast to raise through the levy. Spending on apprenticeships in England will be £2.45 billion, and the Devolved Administrations will receive £460 million.

■ Aviation: Taxation**Patrick Grady:**[\[62791\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will respond to EDM 572, Frequent Flyer Levy campaign.

Jane Ellison:

The Government believes that Air Passenger Duty fulfils effectively the same function as a Frequent Flier Levy as the nature of the tax is that those who fly more and further pay more than those who do not. For example, a business passenger who makes a long-haul journey four times a year pays £571 more in tax than an economy passenger who flies only once to a short-haul destination.

Banks**Kelly Tolhurst:**[\[63006\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to support high street banking for local communities.

Simon Kirby:

High streets are a crucial part of our local and regional economies. The Government wants to see vibrant hubs where people live, shop, use services, and spend their leisure time.

A new agreement between the Post Office and UK banks, announced on 24 January 2017, means that more individuals and businesses can use 11,600 local Post Office branches to access a wider range of banking services. Thanks to the new agreement, the Post Office estimates that 99% of personal bank customers and 75% of business customers will now be able to do their day to day banking at a Post Office.

The Government recognises the need to support local communities to adapt to changes in banking, including when bank branches close. In March 2015, the Government helped to broker an industry-wide agreement to work with customers and communities to minimise the impact of bank branch closures and put in place alternative banking services. The Government welcomed Professor Russel Griggs' recent review of the Protocol and is pleased to see the industry commit to further improvements to protect those affected by closures.

The Government has also made a manifesto commitment to support credit unions in making financial services more accessible. Credit unions are democratic, not-for-profit, financial services providers which are owned and run by members of their community and who provide affordable, sustainable credit to their members.

Capital Allowances**Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[63121\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) people and (b) businesses received capital allowance in (i) 2013-14 and (ii) 2014-15.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[63125\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) people and (b) businesses received the annual investment allowance for income and corporation tax in (i) 2013-14 and (ii) 2014-15.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[63129\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) people and (b) businesses received rollover relief for balancing charges on ships in (i) 2013-14 and (ii) 2014-15.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[63133\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) people and (b) businesses received the Business Premises Renovation Allowance in (i) 2013-14 and (ii) 2014-15.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[63147\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses elected to use tonnage tax in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

PQ 63121:

Corporation Tax

The number of incorporated businesses claiming Capital Allowances for Corporation Tax are as follows (rounded to the nearest 10,000):

2013-14: 940,000

2014-15: 960,000

Income Tax

The number of individuals/unincorporated businesses within the income tax self-assessment system claiming Capital Allowances are as follows (rounded to the nearest 10,000):

2013-14: 1,490,000

2014-15: 1,420,000

PQ 63125:

Corporation Tax

The number of incorporated businesses claiming the Annual Investment Allowance for Corporation Tax are as follows (rounded to the nearest 10,000):

2013-14: 610,000

2014-15: 650,000

Income Tax

The number of individuals/unincorporated businesses within the income tax self-assessment system claiming the Annual Investment Allowance are as follows (rounded to the nearest 10,000):

2013-14: 615,000

2014-15: 605,000

PQ 63129: Information is not held detailing how many people and businesses benefit from rollover relief for balancing charges on ships.

PQ 63133:

Corporation Tax

The number of incorporated businesses claiming the Business Premises Renovation Allowance for Corporation Tax are as follows (rounded to the nearest 50):

2013-14: 250

2014-15: 350

Income Tax

The number of individuals/unincorporated businesses within the income tax self-assessment system claiming the Business Premises Renovation Allowance are as follows (rounded to the nearest 50):

2013-14: 1,150

2014-15: 1,000

PQ 63147: In 2013-14 85 groups elected to use Tonnage Tax. Data is presented at a group level as companies elect into the Tonnage Tax scheme as a group of companies. 2014-15 data is currently unavailable and will only be made available from Autumn 2017.

■ Import Duties

Chris Leslie:

[\[63157\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the top 20 categories as defined by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) were according to value of imports of goods imported into the UK in the most recent year for which records are available; and how much HMRC collected in gross customs duties in each of those categories.

Jane Ellison:

The top 20 categories as defined by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), according to the value of imports into the UK and how much HMRC collected in gross customs duties in each of those categories, are set in the below table. This data covers the period from 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016.

| RANK | TARIFF CHAPTER | TARIFF DESCRIPTION | CUSTOMS DUTY PAID |
|------|----------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 84 | Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof | £150,361,671.11 |
| 2 | 87 | Vehicles other than | £275,986,917.79 |

| RANK | TARIFF CHAPTER | TARIFF DESCRIPTION | CUSTOMS DUTY PAID |
|------|----------------|--|-------------------|
| | | railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof | |
| 3 | 85 | Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles | £221,484,925.55 |
| 4 | 61 | Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, knitted or crocheted | £391,863,383.24 |
| 5 | 71 | Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coins | £18,816,020.49 |
| 6 | 62 | Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, not knitted or crocheted | £421,133,522.33 |
| 7 | 27 | Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes | £2,027,350.73 |
| 8 | 88 | Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof | £6,550,507.58 |

| RANK | TARIFF CHAPTER | TARIFF DESCRIPTION | CUSTOMS DUTY PAID |
|------|----------------|--|-------------------|
| 9 | 97 | Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques | £160.60 |
| 10 | 73 | Articles of iron or steel | £44,803,950.05 |
| 11 | 90 | Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical instruments and apparatus; parts and accessories thereof | £46,001,258.87 |
| 12 | 64 | Footwear, gaiters and the like; parts of such articles | £263,335,200.26 |
| 13 | 39 | Plastics and articles thereof | £176,508,703.45 |
| 14 | 94 | Furniture; bedding, mattresses, mattress supports, cushions and similar stuffed furnishings; lamps and lighting fittings, not elsewhere specified or included; illuminated signs, illuminated nameplates and the like; prefabricated buildings | £51,244,638.13 |
| 15 | 95 | Toys, games and sports requisites; parts and accessories thereof | £73,082,253.07 |
| 16 | 30 | Pharmaceutical products | £0.00 |
| 17 | 82 | Tools, implements, cutlery, spoons and | £23,187,892.86 |

| RANK | TARIFF CHAPTER | TARIFF DESCRIPTION | CUSTOMS DUTY PAID |
|------|----------------|--|-------------------|
| | | forks, of base metal; parts thereof of base metal | |
| 18 | 40 | Rubber and articles thereof | £36,571,397.53 |
| 19 | 63 | Other made-up textile articles; sets; worn clothing and worn textile articles; rags | £89,399,258.34 |
| 20 | 42 | Articles of leather; saddlery and harness; travel goods, handbags and similar containers; articles of animal gut (other than silkworm gut) | £55,873,412.99 |

■ LIBOR: Fines

Ms Gisela Stuart:

[\[62902\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has any further funds from Libor fines to allocate in the March 2017 Budget.

Mr David Gauke:

1. There is currently no intention to conduct a public application process for LIBOR funds, for allocation in the March 2017 Budget.

■ Motor Vehicles: Taxation

Richard Burden:

[\[63203\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has received representations on his proposed change to vehicle taxation scheduled for April 2017 on (a) the potential effect on future vehicles, (b) the potential effect on air quality and (c) postponing the introduction of those changes until further consultation is carried out.

Jane Ellison:

HM Treasury receives a wide range of representations on the future of vehicle taxation, including on the VED reforms that are due to come into force in April 2017. Recent representations from the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) and some of its members covered the issues set out in this question.

■ Treasury: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[62897]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of his Department.

Simon Kirby:

In accordance with the Treasury's policy we do not provide personal data on individual employees.

The Treasury promotes equality of opportunity in employment to ensure that its workforce is representative of the community it serves and that the Department attracts and retains talented employees.

Information on the diversity of the Treasury's employees is published in the Treasury's Annual Report and Accounts which are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-annual-report>.

■ VAT: Take-away Food

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[63145]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate has he made of the amount of VAT that has been raised in respect of hot takeaway food in each of the last three years.

Jane Ellison:

The information requested is not held.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Dental Health

Steve McCabe:

[62638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities in England provide or commission an oral health improvement programme; and what estimate he has made of the funds committed to such programmes by local authorities in England in each of the last three financial years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The department does not collect this information. Local councils are funded to deliver a wide range of services and it is for them to determine how best to deliver those services for the benefit of their local residents.

■ Housing: Construction

Justin Tomlinson:

[62694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if his Department will provide transitional loss protection for local authorities affected by the new taper on New Homes Bonus.

Justin Tomlinson:

[62695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the new taper on New Homes Bonus on local authorities who approve and build a high volume of houses.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government based its decisions to reform the New Homes Bonus on the need to sharpen its incentive effect to increase the delivery of new homes. The Bonus has been successful in encouraging authorities to welcome housing growth, however, it did not reward those authorities who are the most open to growth.

The changes to the scheme are being made to increase the focus of the Bonus on delivery of new homes, to reward those authorities who are really committed to growth whilst also freeing up resources to be recycled within the local government settlement to support authorities with particular pressures, such as adult social care.

The reforms are being made following a 12 week consultation on the proposals and the views expressed were taken into consideration in the consultation analysis.

Those areas who deliver the most housing growth will continue to benefit most from the Bonus under the new scheme. The payments for the Bonus in 2017/18 are £1.2 billion and will still be worth £900 million in 2018/19.

The Government chose to take a moderate approach to reforming the Bonus from the options consulted on and also to stage the changes to give authorities time to adapt their plans, we will therefore not be providing transitional funding.

John Healey:

[62986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2017 to Question 61611, on housing construction, how many Home and Communities Agency customers who have received funding from the Home Building Fund have had customer identification and verification checks which have identified possible red flags for tax avoidance or evasion.

Gavin Barwell:

The Homes and Communities Agency has not identified any customers seeking funding from the Home Building Fund which have identified possible red flags for tax avoidance or evasion.

John Healey:

[62987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2017 to Question 61611, on housing construction, how many organisations that have received funding from the Home Building Fund are registered for tax purposes in (a) one of the Channel Islands and (b) the Isle of Man.

Gavin Barwell:

The Home Building Fund lends to UK registered entities and does not gather specific information in relation to their registration for tax purposes. All borrowers are required to confirm that they comply with UK tax legislation and are subject to Know Your

Customer and Money Laundering checks as part of the customer due diligence process. Transactions are subject to additional internal controls (referred to as the Offshore Protocol) if the transaction structure involves an offshore party within its hierarchy. Where appropriate additional due diligence and independent tax advice will be taken

Grant Shapps:

[\[63154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on house-building projections.

Gavin Barwell:

My Department does not publish projections for house building.

Because of the decisions this Government has taken, the British economy is fundamentally strong and will continue to be strong as we negotiate our departure from the EU. The Bank of England expects the UK economy to grow this year 2 per cent, up on their previous prediction in November of 1.4 per cent.

The Housing White Paper recognises that there are challenges and opportunities ahead. In some parts of the country the house building industry draws heavily on migrant labour. So this is the moment for the industry to raise its game and invest in growing its own workforce, and in new and innovative methods of construction. We will continue to monitor any developments within the house building industry.

■ **Housing: Immigrants**

John Healey:

[\[62984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2017 to Question 60963, if he will place in the Library unpublished research on the effect of immigration on housing commissioned or produced by his Department.

Gavin Barwell:

My department has published all the completed research it has commissioned or produced on the effect of immigration on housing. There are no pieces of unpublished research to place in the Library of the House.

■ **Housing: Prices**

Grant Shapps:

[\[63153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of recent trends in buy-to-let cost rises; and what steps his Department is taking to mitigate against any adverse effect from significant changes in property prices.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government recognises issues of affordability in the Private Rented Sector. The Housing White Paper launched on 7th February sets out how the Government will fix

the broken housing market by boosting housing supply, thereby helping to improve affordability in the long term.

The Government also recognises the important role that buy-to-let landlords play in the UK housing market and economy.

At Summer Budget 2015, the Government set out a package of measures to reduce the budget deficit, rebalance the economy and make the tax system fairer.

HMRC's analysis shows that only 1 in 5 landlords will be affected by the tax changes on property finance costs (such as mortgage interest or interest on loans to buy furnishings).

The Government does not expect this to have a large impact on house prices or rent levels due to the small overall proportion of the housing market affected. The Office of Budget Responsibility also expects any impact to be small.

■ Job Creation: Ashfield

Gloria De Piero:

[\[63046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many jobs have been created in Ashfield constituency as a result of funding from the European Regional Development Fund since that fund's inception.

Andrew Percy:

[Holding answer 8 February 2017]: The number of jobs created as a result of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is not available at a constituency level. The recent 2007-13 ERDF Programme is reported to have created 8861 jobs across the East Midlands region (covering the counties of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland) including 164 jobs in the district of Ashfield.

The source of ERDF funding is provided by the overall contributions made by each EU Member State. The United Kingdom currently makes a contribution to the EU, net of what it receives in return. The England European Regional Development Fund Programme for 2014-2020 has a total value of £2.8 billion. As part of this the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership was allocated circa £97 million of funding to deliver a range of projects and initiatives in the local area.

■ Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

David Morris:

[\[62689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the funding allocation to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership has been in each year since its inception; and what that funding allocation is for 2016-17.

Andrew Percy:

Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership is currently directing and influencing a significant growth programme of nearly £1 billion of investment. This includes £69.8 million which was recently announced for its third growth deal, bringing the total

award through the Local Growth Fund to £320.9 million for 2015-2021. Further details of this funding are published here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/585215/Lancashire_Factsheet.pdf

■ Local Government: Conditions of Employment

Mr Christopher Chope:

[63310]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what his Department's policy is on the termination of district council partnership working arrangements where the future structure of local government is under consideration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

It is a matter for councils locally to decide on their partnership arrangements.

■ Local Government: Dorset

Mr Christopher Chope:

[63309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what his Department's policy is on the length of time that district councils in Dorset be allowed to (a) consider and (b) present alternative proposals on the future of local government structures in that area.

Mr Marcus Jones:

It is open to any councils to submit proposals for local government reorganisation which I will consider carefully as soon as practicable after their submission. I understand certain councils in Dorset intend shortly to submit such proposals which I shall consider accordingly.

■ Parking

Daniel Zeichner:

[62666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, for what reason he has not yet published his Department's response to the consultation Parking reform: tackling unfair practices.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We have set out a clear manifesto commitment to tackle aggressive parking enforcement and excessive parking charges, and taking steps to tackle rogue and unfair practices by private parking operators. This Government has put in place a range of measures to reform the behaviour of private parking companies, including the banning of wheel clamping and towing.

The Government is committed to reforming unfair parking practices and supporting our town centres. The discussion paper 'Parking reform: tackling unfair practices' sought thoughts and comments on the private parking sector. My Department

published a summary of the responses on 11 May 2016. I am considering responses to the discussion paper, and options for reform.

■ **Planning: Fees and Charges**

John Healey:

[\[63539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the potential revenue that will be raised by local authorities after July 2017 as a result of the proposed changes in the level of planning fees local authorities may charge.

Gavin Barwell:

If all planning authorities in England take up the offer of a 20 per cent increase in planning application fees, in the region of £75 million of additional fee income could be generated for local planning authorities, based on an estimate of current planning application fee income.

■ **Public Lavatories: Disability**

Richard Arkless:

[\[63204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of Changing Places toilet facilities in public places; and if he will include requirements for such facilities in any future disability strategy.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government supports steps to increase the number of Changing Places toilets. Research into the effectiveness of the statutory guidance which supports Building Regulations' requirements for access for non domestic buildings is currently being finalised. The research has covered provision of Changing Places toilets. The research will be published in due course and the Government will consider carefully any findings relating to Changing Places toilets.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme**

Sir Gerald Howarth:

[\[62931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what measures his Department has put in place to tackle fraud and abuse related to the Right to Buy scheme.

Sir Gerald Howarth:

[\[62932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what additional safeguards the Government's Right to Buy working group has identified to tackle fraud and abuse of that scheme.

Gavin Barwell:

This Government takes fraud extremely seriously. The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 increased the deterrent to tenants considering cheating the system,

ensuring those who do cheat are detected more easily and punished more severely, and encourages social landlords to take a more proactive approach to tackling tenancy fraud.

We also provided £19 million funding to help councils tackle tenancy fraud as part of over £35 million government funding to tackle fraud across local government.

The findings and recommendations of the Government's Right to Buy fraud working group will be published in due course.

■ Starter Home Initiative

John Healey:

[\[62793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the net value of the Government's spending on starter homes in the next (a) 10, (b) 20 and (c) 30 years.

Gavin Barwell:

The Housing White Paper confirms that the Starter Home Land Fund will invest £1.2 billion over the Spending Review period to support the preparation of brownfield sites for starter homes and other types of affordable home ownership. DCLG will recover these investments as the sites are developed.

■ Unitary Councils

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[63311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether it is his Department's policy to accept proposals for unitarisation in the event that there is a disagreement between the councils affected by those proposals.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 provides that the secondary legislation about reorganisation may be made, if Parliament approves, providing one council in the area consents. We have made clear that if a reorganisation proposal is to be implemented there needs to be a good deal of local support.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[63312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department has issued to local authorities on requirements for consulting with all councils that have (a) accepted and (b) rejected proposals on unitarisation; and what steps his Department has taken to encourage reconciliation in such cases.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We have issued no such guidance; how councils prepare proposals for reorganisation and the arrangements they have for collaboration and joint working is a matter for them.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **Arts****Michael Gove:**[\[62648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department and its non-departmental public bodies are taking to support poetry, creative writing and community drama.

Matt Hancock:

The Government is committed to making sure that everyone has the opportunity to experience and participate in all forms of arts and culture, and has protected funding for the arts in England over the life of this Parliament, which will support poetry, creative writing and community drama.

In addition, Arts Council England's Creative Writing in Schools provides funding for the charity First Story, which has been able to bring professional writers into secondary schools serving low-income communities to help students find their voices and raise their aspirations.

The Poetry Society will receive over £1 million in funding by 2018, which will help it continue to be one of Britain's most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally.

Community drama which delivers a number of arts and cultural programmes to the local community, and theatre companies such as Kendal Community Theatre, who provide workshops and training for aspiring actors remain important initiatives that benefit from public funding.

Ultimately poetry, creative writing and community drama are underpinned by excellent English teaching, which since 2010 we have worked tirelessly to support.

■ **British Board of Film Classification****Tom Watson:**[\[63301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, on what dates Ministers of her Department have met the British Board of Film Classification to discuss the Digital Economy Bill since July 2015.

Matt Hancock:

We have been in regular dialogue with the BBFC since July 2015.

■ **Broadband: Business****Louise Haigh:**[\[61422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to page 15 of the January 2017 green paper, Building our Industrial Strategy, how many broadband using firms would need to exploit faster broadband in order to see a net annual gross value added increase of £14 billion as identified in that paper; and what the upload and download speed is of faster broadband.

Matt Hancock:

These figures come from "UK Broadband Impact Study Impact Report November 2013" by the consultants SQW, commissioned by DCMS to help evaluate the Broadband Delivery UK programme and available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257006/UK_Broadband_Impact_Study_-_Impact_Report_-_Nov_2013_-_Final.pdf

The study attempted to estimate the impact of the intervention by comparing the possible distribution of speeds over time with and without the intervention, including to change in availability of Full fibre-on-demand. The ranges of speeds involved were discussed and illustrated in Chapter 3 of the report.

■ Data Protection: EU Law**Stephen Timms:****[908727]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to secure an adequacy of the protection of data decision from the European Commission.

Matt Hancock:

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

■ Gaming Machines**Alex Cunningham:****[908725]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, when her Department plans to announce its proposed review of fixed odds betting terminals.

Tracey Crouch:

The Government announced a Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures, including FOBTs, on 24 October 2016. We expect to publish our findings in spring 2017.

■ Sculpture: Victoria Tower Gardens**Sir Edward Leigh:****[63158]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who owns the Burghers of Calais sculpture in Victoria Tower Gardens.

Tracey Crouch:

The Burghers of Calais sculpture is owned by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Its day-to-day maintenance is the responsibility of The Royal Parks, currently an Agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

■ Sports and Tourism

Oliver Colvile: [\[908726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to encourage the hosting of major sporting and tourism events in the UK.

Tracey Crouch:

Since London 2012, the UK has hosted nearly 100 major sporting events. We will host the World Athletic and Para-Athletic Championships in this summer, and after that, the women's World Cups in Cricket, Hockey and Netball, cycling's World Championships and the Euro 2020 semi finals and final.

The government is committed to bringing sport and tourism events to the UK. The Government's Tourism Action Plan highlights the work we are doing to encourage major tourism events here.

■ Sports: Homophobia

Greg Mulholland: [\[908724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions her Department has had with sports governing bodies on tackling homophobia in sport.

Tracey Crouch:

Government is determined to stamp out homophobia in sport and enable Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people to engage in sport as players, officials and spectators, in line with the government's strategy for sport and physical activity, *Sporting Future*. We are working with Sport England, National Governing Bodies and clubs, alongside organisations such as Pride Sports, Stonewall, and Football v Homophobia, to promote a number of anti-homophobia initiatives.

■ Tech North and techUK

Louise Haigh: [\[63168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what the level of Government funding for (a) Tech UK and (b) Tech North has been in each year from their establishment to date.

Matt Hancock:

I refer the Hon Member to my response to PQ 52415.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Cadets

Michael Gove: [\[62641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which state schools receive funds from his Department to support cadet forces; how much each school received in 2015-16; and how much each school will receive in 2016-17.

Michael Gove:

[\[62642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which independent schools receive funds from his Department to support cadet forces; how much each of those schools received in 2015-16; and how much each of those schools will received in 2016-17.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) supports cadet units in independent and state schools in a number of ways, including the provision of uniforms, weapons and equipment and ration packs. Specific examples are detailed below:

- Schools usually employ a School Staff Instructor (SSI) to help manage and administer the cadet unit. SSIs can claim 51 days of Volunteer Allowance per year from the MOD, with the school paying for any additional days they need.
- The MOD also provides a 'Consolidated Grant' to each Combined Cadet Force (CCF) contingent. The amount varies, but for 2016-17 the allocation was £513 per CCF, plus £20 per cadet.

Please note that while such items and support are provided by the MOD the funding is not provided directly from the MOD to schools. In the examples highlighted above the funding is paid directly to the individual or the CCF.

The only funding which goes direct to schools is through the Cadet Bursary Fund (CBF). The CBF is available to state schools which have opened cadet units under the joint MOD/Department for Education (DfE) Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP). The CBF was set up by the DfE and is managed by a registered charity, the Combined Cadet Force Association. However, the funding for the CBF is not provided from the budget of either Department.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[63162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to announce the final number of vehicles his Department plans to procure as part of the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle programme.

Harriett Baldwin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 November 2016 to Question 49995. The Mechanical Infantry Vehicle project is in the concept phase and it remains too early to provide a timeline by which a decision on numbers can be provided.

Attachments:

1. Armoured Fighting Vehicles [Hansard Extract 1 November 2016.docx]

■ Defence: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[63163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of adopting the recommendation by the Single Source Regulations Office that programmes and platforms procured through foreign military sales should be brought into the single source procurement regulations regime; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

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 2017 on changes to the legislation after they have consulted fully on this and other issues.

■ Military Bases: Closures**Chris Stephens:** [\[R\] \[63307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an assessment of the socio-economic effect of the proposed MoD site closures announced in 2016; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Lancaster:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 November 2016 to Question 53401 from the hon. Member for Llanelli (Nia Griffith).

Attachments:

1. Military Bases:Closures [Hansard Extract 21 November 2016 HOC 53401.docx]

Chris Stephens: [\[R\] \[63308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with military and civilian personnel on the proposed MoD site closures; and what assistance his Department plans to give to people required to relocate.

Mark Lancaster:

"A Better Defence Estate" is a military-led review. All military and civilian personnel at sites identified for closure were informed at the time of the announcement through their chain of command. Staff will continue to be kept up to date, through the chain of command, on plans and developments for their sites.

Military personnel currently based at sites identified for closure will be relocated with their unit or re-assigned in accordance with existing career management procedures. As much notice as possible will be provided.

Civilian staff will be expected to honour the mobility obligations if their post is being relocated. Where an individual's post is being relocated outside the scope of their personal mobility obligation they will be managed in accordance with normal Departmental policy and processes.

■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

Philip Davies: [62953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many former prisoners have been employed by his Department in each of the last five years.

Mark Lancaster:

The information is not held centrally for Service personnel or civil servants and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ MOD St Athan

Christina Rees: [63030]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) military and (b) civilian personnel are based at MOD St Athan.

Mark Lancaster:

The information requested is published quarterly and can be found at the following link;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/location-of-uk-regular-service-and-civilian-personnel-quarterly-statistics-2016>

As at 1 October 2016 Ministry of Defence locations, including MOD St Athan, within the Vale of Glamorgan had 1,230 personnel in total. This is broken down as around 1,000 Service personnel and around 200 civilians.

■ Royal Artillery

Sir Nicholas Soames: [63156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the role and establishment is of the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery based at Thorney Island.

Mike Penning:

16th Regiment Royal Artillery is the United Kingdom's short range air defence and air surveillance Regiment. The Regimental establishment is 31 officers and 354 other ranks.

■ Unmanned Marine Vehicles

Mr Douglas Carswell: [63146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the threat that underwater drones and distributed netted sensors pose, as part of the risk reduction and demonstration phase for the Dreadnought Class submarines.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence places a high priority on assuring the effectiveness of the United Kingdom's independent nuclear deterrent and managing the associated risk.

We dedicate considerable resource to assessing the threats from emerging capabilities and will apply any necessary mitigation throughout the lifetime of the nuclear deterrent to combat these threats.

EDUCATION

■ Academies

John Pugh: [\[62705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which academies have been transferred between which academy trusts since May 2015; and what the cost of each such transfer was.

Edward Timpson:

From May 2015 to January 2017 as part of our strategy to increase further the number of pupils being taught in good or outstanding schools we rebrokered the attached list of academies to new trusts. We are committed to publishing the costs of individual rebrokerages cases on gov.uk in due course.

Attachments:

1. Academies to New Trusts [62705 Attachment.xlsx]

■ Adoption: Nottinghamshire

Gloria De Piero: [\[63014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children under the age of 16 have been (a) adopted and (b) on the adoption waiting list in (i) Ashfield constituency and (ii) Nottinghamshire in each year since 2010.

Edward Timpson:

The number of looked after children who were looked after by the Nottinghamshire local authority and adopted when aged under 16, in each year ending 31 March 2010 to 2016, is shown in the table below. This information is not available at constituency level.

NUMBER OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ADOPTED AGED 0 TO 15 YEARS

Coverage: Nottinghamshire

| Year ending 31 March | Number of looked after children adopted during the year |
|----------------------|---|
| 2010 | 30 |
| 2011 | 25 |
| 2012 | 45 |

NUMBER OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ADOPTED AGED 0 TO 15 YEARS

| | |
|------|----|
| 2013 | 45 |
| 2014 | 90 |
| 2015 | 95 |
| 2016 | 70 |

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: SSDA903

The number of looked after children who were looked after by the Nottinghamshire local authority and waiting to be placed for adoption with a placement order at 31 March 2010 to 2016, and aged under 16 at these dates, is shown in the table below. This information is also not available at constituency level.

NUMBER OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ON A PLACEMENT ORDER WHO WERE NOT PLACED FOR ADOPTION AGED 0 TO 15 YEARS

Coverage: Nottinghamshire

| At 31 March | Number of looked after children on a placement order and not placed for adoption |
|-------------|--|
| 2010 | 40 |
| 2011 | 60 |
| 2012 | 100 |
| 2013 | 135 |
| 2014 | 85 |
| 2015 | 55 |
| 2016 | 40 |

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: SSDA903

■ Children in Care

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [63206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on how many places there are available in secure residential accommodation for children in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales; how many of those places are currently filled; and how many children placed in such accommodation in (i) England were previously resident in (A) Scotland and (B) Wales, (ii) Scotland were previously resident in (A) England and (B) Wales and (iii) Wales were previously resident in (A) England and (B) Scotland.

Edward Timpson:

The data requested on the number of places approved, number of places available and number of children accommodated is published in the 'Children accommodated in secure children's homes' Statistical First Release for England and Wales:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-accommodated-in-secure-childrens-homes-31-march-2016>

The publication is based on an aggregate return and does not collect information on where children were previously resident.

The department does not publish nor collect data for Scotland. However, data on available places in secure residential accommodation for Scotland is publicly available at <http://www.sanscotland.org/>

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [63207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked-after children who have one or more siblings have (a) been placed and (b) not been placed with their siblings in each of the last three years; and of those children who were not placed with their siblings (i) how many have contact with the siblings they are separated from and (ii) what the frequency is of that contact.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [63208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many adopted children (a) were placed with their full or half siblings in the last three years and (b) who were not so placed have not had contact with their full or half siblings detailed in their adoption order in the last three years.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [63302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children subject to care orders (s31) as defined by the Children Act 1989 are placed with their (a) full and (b) half siblings.

Edward Timpson:

Local authorities hold such information in plans for looked after children and adopted children. This data is not sent to the Department. Local authorities must take account of a family's needs when planning care for a child in so far as is consistent with the welfare of a child (which remains paramount), as set out in guidance on care

placements, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-care-planning-placement-and-case-review>. Where it is not possible, or appropriate, to place siblings together, siblings must be supported to understand the reasons why. Contact arrangements between siblings must be robust and remain under independent review.

■ **Citizenship: Teachers**

Stephen Timms:

[63054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2017 to Question 61973, for what reasons there has been a decrease in the number of citizenship trainees since 2010; and what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of trained citizenship teachers.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to ensuring that high quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society.

There are more teachers in schools in England than ever before, and we've recruited more trainees than we did last year in several priority subjects. We recognise the scale of the challenge, particularly as the economy improves, pupil numbers grow and the demand for talented graduates increases. The Government has put in place a range of measures for recruitment to teacher training for 2017/18 and are investing over £1.3 billion up to 2020 to attract new teachers into the profession. This investment in training the next generation of teachers clearly demonstrates the political will we have to make sure that all schools are able to recruit the teachers they need.

Schools recruit teachers in a variety of different ways, not just straight from initial teacher training, so the impact of any recruitment shortfall is limited, and shortfalls in recruitment to teacher training, relative to targets, will not result in a teacher shortage.

It is also important to note classes in Citizenship are often taught by teachers who have trained in a different subject. All initial teacher training (ITT) providers must ensure trainees are able to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level which include: having a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas; foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject; and address misunderstandings.

Stephen Timms:

[63055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2017 to Question 61973, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the change in the number of citizenship trainees since 2010 on the quality of citizenship education provided in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to ensuring that high quality Citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society.

Citizenship education is part of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. The revised programmes of study were introduced in September 2014 and seek to direct teaching towards the core knowledge of citizenship, and to give schools more scope to decide how to teach citizenship.

Schools are free to deliver Citizenship in a way that best meets both the schools' and their pupils' needs, in line with the programme of study. The Government does not prescribe how many hours schools should teach of any subject, nor how many teachers of any subject they should employ. These are matters for individual schools and we trust head teachers to make these decisions.

Additionally initial teacher training (ITT) providers must ensure trainees are able to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level which include: having a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas.

Ofsted, in its inspections of schools, considers the breadth and balance of the curriculum, including provision for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes how pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain. Ofsted have strengthened their inspection frameworks so that inspectors assess how well all schools protect pupils from the risks of extremism and radicalisation, and promote fundamental British values.

■ Department for Education: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:**[\[62881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of her Department.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department cannot release information on ethnicity, gender or disability status in relation to specific individuals.

The Department does not hold information about the educational background or socio-economic status of its three most senior officials.

■ Department for Education: Staff**Cat Smith:**[\[62991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many staff of her Department at what grade were employed in the youth policy team in July 2014.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Youth Policy Team moved to Cabinet Office in 2012, therefore information in scope of this response is not held by the Department for Education.

■ Education Endowment Foundation**Michael Gove:****[62649]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which initiatives the Education Endowment Foundation has funded since its establishment; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of each such initiative.

Edward Timpson:

Since the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) was established in 2011 through a £125 million grant from the Government, it has revolutionised the use of evidence in education. It has made grants worth £83 million to 133 projects working with over 8,300 schools and has published individual evaluation reports on 66 completed projects. The EEF has also identified nine programmes that it has previously tested and which show particular promise; each of which will receive further grant funding in order to test its impact at a larger scale. Full details of all of the projects that the EEF has funded to date, and evaluation reports on those which are complete, are published by the EEF on its website at: www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk.

Tim Loughton:**[63317]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funds have been given to the Educational Endowment Foundation in each year since its establishment; what underspends by her Department have been repaid to the Treasury in each of the last 10 years; how much was granted for Academies Conversion; on what it has been spent; and how much has been returned to the Treasury.

Edward Timpson:

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) was established in March 2011 with an endowment of £125 million from the Department. Since then, the Department has awarded a further £12 million of funding to the EEF - £10 million in 2012 to support literacy catch-up for children at the transition from primary to secondary school;

£1 million in 2013 to fund pilot studies that test approaches to engaging teachers with research evidence in ways that have an impact on teaching practice; and £1 million in 2014 to expand research into the most effective ways that character can be taught in schools.

The table below shows net underspend based on the Department's total expenditure (both resource and capital expenditure, aggregated) compared to the budgeted amount permitted to be spent by the Department in that year's Parliamentary Estimate. The figures are drawn from the audited Statement of Parliamentary Supply in the relevant Department for Education and Skills; Department for Children, Schools and Families; and Department for Education Annual Report and Accounts ('Resource Accounts' prior to 2010-11).

| FINANCIAL YEAR | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| Net Total | 1,955,850 | 776,667 | 563,071 | 307,237 | 272,763 | 105,166 | 1,442,355 | 1,066,887 | 322,239 | 35,249 |
| outturn | 0 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 9 |
| compare d with Estimate: saving/ (excess) | | | | | | | | | | |

Between 2010 and 2016, the Government spent £332m to support schools to become academies. During the same period, there have been nearly 5,000 academies opened. The vast majority of spend has been used for grants to schools to support them to convert to academy status.

The level of grants for sponsored projects has varied since 2010, when the academies programme began to expand under the coalition government. Since this expansion, the costs per sponsored academy have come down significantly, reflecting efficiencies implemented by the Department.

Through our careful management of the economy we have been able to protect the core schools budget in real terms. That means schools are receiving more funding than ever before for children's education, totalling over £40 billion this year.

When the Government launched our Educational Excellence Everywhere white paper, it was clear that we would attend to and reflect on the discussions around it. After listening to the sector, in May 2016 the Department confirmed that it would no longer be pursuing full academisation by 2022.

It remains our ambition that all schools will become academies, but removing the requirement for this to happen by 2022 means that our spending on school support will depend on the new rate of academy conversion. We are monitoring this and will allocate funds according to the expected rate and need. Indicatively, in 2016-17 we expect to spend around £90 million on supporting schools to convert, supporting sponsors to turn around the schools they take on, and supporting strong multi-academy trusts to deliver for pupils.

■ Engineering: Education

Grant Shapps:

[\[62905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the money pledged by the Government in January 2017 for institutes of technology and schools will in part be allocated for aerospace and aviation engineering.

Robert Halfon:

Institutes of Technology will harness the expertise of employers, both in leadership and design of the curriculum, to help fill local skills gaps. They will specialise in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects at higher levels and be aligned to the new technical routes set out in the Skills Plan, including engineering and manufacturing. We will set out next steps on the process for establishing Institute of Technology shortly.

■ **Pre-school Education****Lucy Powell:**[\[63247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the amount that Ofsted spent on inspecting early years settings in the last year for which figures are available.

Caroline Dinanage:

Ofsted is the non-Ministerial Government Department responsible for the regulation of childcare providers in England. Ofsted has stated that its direct cost of inspections and pre-registration inspections of early years settings was £22.9m in 2015-2016, the most recent full year for which financial information exists.

Tim Loughton:[\[63315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to publish the early years workforce strategy; and whether it will include steps to increase the number of early years teachers in the private, voluntary and independent childcare sector.

Caroline Dinanage:

A well-qualified workforce in the early years is crucial and that is why the Government has committed to developing a workforce strategy. The strategy will help employers attract, retain and develop staff to deliver high quality provision across the early years sector. As part of the strategy we are considering what government can do to help grow the graduate workforce in the sector.

The workforce strategy will be published shortly.

Tim Loughton:[\[63316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many new early years teachers are expected to be recruited in England in the next three years.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Department supports growth of the graduate workforce by making early years initial teacher training places available to meet demand from childcare employers. As the sector is mainly made up of private businesses, we do not set recruitment targets for early years teachers. We do, however, offer financial support to employers so that they can release their staff to train as an early years teacher.

We are currently developing a workforce strategy to help remove the barriers to attracting, retaining and developing excellent staff in our early years settings, including what government can do to help grow the graduate workforce.

■ Regional School Commissioners

Michael Gove: [62650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how she has assessed the effectiveness of Regional School Commissioners.

Edward Timpson:

As civil servants, Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) are subject to the civil service performance management framework. Their performance is also monitored against a number of Key Performance Indicators, which cover their four core remits:

1. Taking decisions on the creation of new academies
2. Ensuring there are enough high-quality sponsors to meet local need
3. Monitoring academy performance and tackling underperforming academies and free schools
4. Providing advice and making recommendations in relation to free schools, university technical schools and studio schools.

The RSCs are accountable to the National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter. Alongside this, the RSCs provide regular updates to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, Lord Nash, together and individually, on specific cases.

This information is in the public domain and can be found here:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/the-role-of-regional-schools-commissioners/written/21126.html>

■ Schools: Admissions

Mr Edward Vaizey: [62515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to publish the consultation on flexible admission to schools for summer-born children.

Nick Gibb:

We are concerned that the parents of summer born children sometimes feel forced to send them to school before they are ready or risk them missing the reception year where the essential teaching of early reading and arithmetic takes place. However, it is important that we take the time to consider how to implement any possible changes and what new arrangements we might put in place. We need to be careful not to create any unintended consequences elsewhere in the system. Any changes we do make will be subject to a full statutory process.

■ Schools: Nottingham

Anna Soubry: [62459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to provide approval for the proposed amalgamation of College House Junior School and Meadow Lane Infant School.

Nick Gibb:

The application, for consent to publish a proposal to open a new community school, to replace the existing Meadow Lane Infant and College House Primary Schools was approved on the 2 February.

Nottinghamshire County Council has been informed.

Schools: Staff**Ian Austin:****[63019]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average unit cost was to a (a) school and (b) local authority of employing a (i) teacher and (ii) classroom assistant in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what estimate she has made of such costs in (A) 2016-17, (B) 2017-18, (C) 2018-19 and (D) 2019-20.

Nick Gibb:

Further to our response to the honourable member's previous question, (60334), we can only provide details of salary costs, which are as quoted in the previous response.

The latest available statistics on the average salaries of teaching assistants employed by schools and local authorities in England were published in PQ 60334 in January 2017 in Hansard at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/60334>

Skilled Workers: Training**Dr Paul Monaghan:****[61786]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to encourage skills development in UK businesses in response to the UK's decision to leave the EU.

Robert Halfon:

We are committed to ensuring we have a strong skills system that can drive increases in productivity, improvements in social mobility and help make a success of Brexit. This will be essential to the success of our Industrial Strategy, and to ensuring a sufficient supply of the right skills to the labour market as we leave the European Union.

Apprenticeships are a great way to progress in work and life, a great way for employers to improve the skills base of their businesses and we are committed to 3m starts by 2020. They work for people of all ages and backgrounds and can transform lives. We are committed to making sure that apprenticeships are as accessible as possible, to all people, from all backgrounds.

The needs and involvement of employers are central to our apprenticeship reforms. We have put employers in control of standards development and funding so that they are more responsive to the needs of business and people are equipped with the skills employers need.

Our Industrial Strategy recognises that we need to bring forward a new offer on skills and technical education that builds on the Skills Plan we published in July 2016. It sets out our ambitions for wide-ranging reform of the skills system. Central to the reforms is the creation of a simplified, high status Technical Education system consisting of 15 occupational routes, which will give learners the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for work, making them much more attractive to employers and generating a future pipeline of skilled labour. These reforms will be underpinned by our investment in specialist delivery institutions for key sectors where there are skills gaps.

As part of the Government's work on Lifetime learning we have identified significant trends such as a decline in work-based training, with key barriers including perceptions of affordability and attitudinal inhibitors. As set out in the Industrial Strategy Green Paper, The Government is committed to exploring ambitious new approaches to tackle these barriers and encourage lifetime learning, including reaching out to workers whose industries are rapidly changing or in decline, and the provision of better information

Taken together, our skills policies will help to ensure that our businesses will have access to people with the skills that they need to be globally competitive and drive productivity.

■ Social Services: Children

Stephen Timms:

[\[63059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the link between post-natal depression and children being taken into social care; and if she will make a statement.

Edward Timpson:

The Department has made no separate assessment to collect information in this way. Local authorities who provide social care support do so in accordance with the Children Act 1989. The Act promotes family life whilst maintaining a child's needs as paramount. Children should remain with their families, unless intervention is necessary to protect them.

Government will provide an additional £365 million to NHS England over five years (to 2020/21) to improve perinatal mental health services.

Tim Loughton:

[\[63314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2017 to Question 61766, if she will publish the supportive statements regarding the power to test different ways of working from the 15 organisations and individuals she lists in that Answer.

Edward Timpson:

14 of the supportive statements regarding the power to test different ways of working are already available publically, in published policy documents, articles and Hansard. Links to these documents are provided below:

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-01-10/debates/7454bf55-0b80-46b9-ab65-675091bc9c4d/ChildrenAndSocialWorkBill\(Lords\)\(FifthSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-01-10/debates/7454bf55-0b80-46b9-ab65-675091bc9c4d/ChildrenAndSocialWorkBill(Lords)(FifthSitting))

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2016-11-08/debates/5ABC82B8-3486-474C-8A9A-9445BBCD382E/ChildrenAndSocialWorkBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2016-11-08/debates/5ABC82B8-3486-474C-8A9A-9445BBCD382E/ChildrenAndSocialWorkBill(HL))

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/10/13/scrapping-red-tape-safeguards-fight-future-childrens-services/>

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/files/DEP2016-0760/Power_to_innovate_-_policy_statement.pdf

<http://adcs.org.uk/blog/article/the-power-to-innovate>

The supporting statement from Ofsted has not been published previously, their statement reads:

“Carefully planned innovation can be an important part of improving outcomes for children. Ofsted has seen how good local authorities can make a difference for children when working more flexibly to meet a child's needs. While Ofsted does not take a view on any particular model for social work, there is merit in exploring how some flexibilities could improve outcomes for children.”

■ Technology: Education**Grant Shapps:****[62904]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how she plans to ensure that girls and women benefit from the money pledged by the Government in January 2017 for institutes of technology and schools.

Robert Halfon:

This government is committed to widening participation for under-represented groups across all areas of technical education and this applies to Institutes of Technology. These institutions will help to deliver excellence in technical education across the country, providing learners from all backgrounds with a clear route to employment or higher education. We will set out next steps for establishing Institutes of Technology shortly.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture and Environment: Research****Caroline Lucas:**[\[63096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what research the Government has commissioned in the last six months to inform the development of agricultural and environmental policy once the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

Defra invests a significant amount in agricultural and environmental research to underpin policy development and implementation. Much of this is relevant to the development of future policy in the context of EU exit.

However, research specifically to inform agricultural and environmental policy once the UK leaves the EU, which is distinct from the department's on-going research programmes, has not been commissioned in the last 6 months.

■ Arable Farming**Jim Shannon:**[\[63226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her Department's plans are for the operation of the three crop rule after the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

As we prepare to leave the EU, we are looking at removing the rules that are unnecessarily burdensome, focusing instead on what works best for the UK. We want to free our farmers to grow more, sell more and export more British food, whilst upholding our high standards for the environment and animal health and welfare.

The Secretary of State announced on 4 January that we will be looking to remove such rules, including the three crop rule at the earliest opportunity once we have left the EU.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Cleaning Services**Tim Farron:**[\[62266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the hourly pay-rate is for her Department's cleaning staff.

George Eustice:

Defra's office cleaners are provided through a facilities management contract and are paid the following hourly rates as a minimum:-

- Outside of London boroughs £8.25 rising to £8.45 from April 2017
- Within London boroughs - £9.40 rising to £9.75 from April 2017

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Pay**Jon Trickett:****[63070]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total pay bill was for (a) male and (b) female employees in her Department in 2015-16; and what the per capita spend from that pay bill for each man and woman was in that year.

George Eustice:

The table below shows the total and per capita male and female pay bill in 2015-16. Pay bill includes base salary, allowances, employer pension contributions and National Insurance costs.

| PAY BILL | MALE | FEMALE |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total | £52,522,528 | £46,130,760 |
| Per Capita | £47,190 | £45,315 |

Pay bill figures for men and women in each department can vary significantly based on representation at different grades and how many staff in the Department are in full or part time work.

A more meaningful way of considering existing pay disparities amongst men and women would be to look at each department's gender pay gap. The Civil Service has been publishing mean and median gender pay gaps for each department since 2008 as part of the annual release of *Civil Service Statistics* by the Office for National Statistics. The latest gender pay gap data (published in October last year) can be found on the Office for National Statistics website.

■ Dogs: Imports**Mr Alistair Carmichael:****[63213]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many prosecutions there have been in respect of non-compliant dogs and puppies entering the UK via Dover or the Eurotunnel in (a) 2012, (b) 2013, (c) 2014, (d) 2015 and (e) 2016.

George Eustice:

The number of prosecutions in respect of non-compliant dogs and puppies entering England and Wales are set out below.

| YEAR | NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS * |
|------|--------------------------|
| 2012 | 7 |
| 2013 | 5 |
| 2014 | 5 |
| 2015 | 4 |

| YEAR | NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS * |
|------|--------------------------|
| 2016 | 5 |

*It is not possible to know from the returns where these non-compliances were identified (e.g. at Dover or Eurotunnel or elsewhere - including by air).

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) does not gather, collate or hold this data for Scotland or Northern Ireland.

■ Hedgehogs: Conservation

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[63209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to protect the hedgehog population.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is concerned about the decline of the hedgehog and supports efforts to make our gardens more hedgehog friendly through the creation of hedgehog havens and campaigns encouraging local communities to work together to look out for hedgehogs and make gardens as welcoming as possible. Further advice can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/news/five-simple-steps-to-transform-gardens-in-to-hedgehog-havens

Agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship focus on priority species and habitats and fund the management of farmland, which provides enhancement and maintenance of habitats used by a range of species including hedgehogs. In particular, the Countryside Stewardship scheme's Wild Pollinators and Farm Wildlife Package funds specific management focussed on improving farmland biodiversity across most farming systems. The management options for grassland, the conservation and enhancement of hedgerow systems and the creation and maintenance of field margins will help to provide suitable habitat for a range of species including hedgehogs.

■ Plastics: Recycling

Jim Shannon:

[\[62766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to encourage recycling of plastic cartons.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Whilst most aspect of waste policy are devolved, the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations and Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) place a legal obligation on UK businesses that make or use packaging, including plastic cartons, to ensure that a proportion of the packaging they place on the market is recovered and recycled. This

creates an incentive for companies to use less packaging and to ensure that their packaging can be recycled at end of life as it will reduce their costs in complying with the Regulations

The total amount of plastic material collected from waste from households for recycling has increased from 279 kilotonnes (kt) in 2010, to over 420kt in 2014. This performance has been down to the hard work of local authorities and residents to recycle more. Around 99% of local authorities covering 97% of households (low rise and flats) in England offer a collection service for plastic bottles. Seventy-two per cent of local authorities covering 67% of households also offer a collection service for plastic packaging (pots, tubs and trays).

The Government recognises that there are still challenges and is working with the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) to improve the recyclability of plastics and to help residents to recycle more. WRAP recently published new recycling guidelines agreed with local authorities, waste management companies and reprocessors. These set out in detail what can and cannot be collected for recycling and how householders can help to reduce contamination and increase recycling, including plastics recycling.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ British Overseas Territories: Taxation

Catherine West:

[63205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent progress has been made in tackling tax (a) avoidance and (b) evasion by companies registered in the Overseas Territories.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The UK placed greater tax transparency at the heart of its G8 Presidency, and since the Lough Erne summit in 2013 we have worked closely with the Overseas Territories (OTs) with financial centres on these issues.

The OTs have agreed to hold beneficial ownership information in central electronic registers or similarly effective systems under the bilateral arrangements concluded with them in April 2016. Under the arrangements, UK law enforcement authorities will have access to information within 24 hours or within one hour in urgent cases, and this information may be used in criminal or civil legal proceedings. These measures represent a significant step forward in our ability to investigate criminality, including tax evasion, and put the OTs well ahead of other similar jurisdictions.

The OTs have also committed to the initiative for the development of a global system for the systematic exchange of beneficial ownership information.

In addition, the OTs have agreed to the OECD's Common Reporting Standard, which will see them exchange with over 100 jurisdictions the financial account information of their taxpayers. First exchanges will begin in 2017. The OTs have, however, already

begun to exchange this information with the UK, a year earlier than with the rest of the world. These arrangements give Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs access to data on assets held offshore by UK taxpayers, and mark a step change in our ability to tackle tax evasion.

We are working closely with our international partners to address the issue of tax avoidance by multinational companies. The UK has been at the forefront of the OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Project to reform the international tax rules, and to close the gaps and mismatches in the rules used by multinational companies to artificially shift profits to low or no-tax locations where there is little or no economic activity, which results in little or no overall corporate tax being paid. We encourage all relevant jurisdictions to join the Inclusive Framework for BEPS Implementation and to commit to implement the outputs from the BEPS Project.

■ **Cayman Islands: Taxation**

Catherine West:

[\[63214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has discussed tax (a) avoidance and (b) evasion with his counterpart in the Cayman Islands since the last meeting of the Joint Ministerial Council.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Following the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on European Negotiations on 7 February, the Minister for the Overseas Territories, my Nobel Friend, the Baroness Anelay of St Johns, discussed with Cayman Premier Alden McLaughlin progress on the implementation of the bilateral arrangement the UK concluded with The Cayman Islands in April 2016 on the exchange of beneficial ownership information. The bilateral arrangements agreed with the Overseas Territories (OTs) with financial centres represent a significant step forward in our ability to investigate criminality, including tax evasion, and put the OTs well ahead of other similar jurisdictions.

■ **India: Foreign Relations**

Robert Courts:

[\[62693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the strength of relations between India and the UK.

Alok Sharma:

The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) made her first bilateral visit overseas, outside of Europe, to India in November 2016. This demonstrates how strongly we value the relationship with India. As the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson) said when he visited India in January, the UK and India are natural partners. We share a longstanding, broad and deep friendship with India, including in trade and investment, people-to-people ties and our partnership on defence and international security.

■ Torture

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[63304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to make representations to the US President on the UK's policy on torture.

Alok Sharma:

I refer the honourable gentleman to the statement made on the issue by the Prime Minister, my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), at Prime Minister's Questions on 25 January: our position on torture is clear. We do not sanction torture and do not get involved in it, and that will continue to be our position. The UK stands firmly against the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. We do not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone such practices for any purpose. The UK has been - and is - at the forefront of international efforts to develop a global system of torture prevention and calls on all states to follow our example by ratifying and implementing the UN's Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.

■ Turkey: Kurds

Catherine West:

[\[63199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart on the arrests of Kurdish members of the Turkish parliament.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We continue to raise the importance of the rule of law and fundamental rights with Turkish counterparts. I did so most recently with Turkey's Minister for Europe, Omer Celik, when I visited Turkey on 4 January and the Prime Minister also raised human rights during her visit to Turkey on 28 January.

HEALTH

■ Ambulance Services

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[63211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many ambulances based in (a) Coventry South constituency and (b) the UK have responded outside the Category (i) A and (ii) B response-time target in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not held in the format requested.

NHS England publishes data on performance in respect of category A calls. This data is published on a monthly basis at both an England national level and at individual ambulance trust level. Data for England and for West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (which covers Coventry South constituency) up to November

2016, Ambulance System Indicators Time Series to November 2016 is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ambulance-quality-indicators/>

Data for December 2016 will be available on 9 February 2017.

West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust has been trialling the new national system for ambulance responses (the Ambulance Response Programme) since June 2016 and therefore Red 1, Red 2 and Category A response time targets currently do not apply to the Trust, therefore response data, for these categories from June 2016 is not available.

Data on category B calls is not held centrally.

Health is a devolved matter.

■ Blepharospasm

Jim Shannon:

[\[63222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been diagnosed with blepharospasm in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

Information concerning the number of people diagnosed with blepharospasm in each of the last five years is not collected. The available prevalence estimates for the condition vary, ranging from 16 to 133 per million.

■ Cancer: Drugs

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude deliberations on (a) Crizotinib, (b) Pemetrexed, (c) Cetuximab, (d) Dasatinib, (e) Sorafenib, (f) Ibrutinib, (g) Cabazitaxel, (h) Brentuximab, (i) Radium 223 and (j) Trastuzumab Emtansine; what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of providing each of these drugs for a 12 month trial period; and what estimate he has made of the period; what estimate he has made of the number of people likely to be prescribed each of these drugs on the NHS in the 12 months following any approval by NICE.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information requested is provided in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. PQ62519 attached document [PQ62519 attached document.docx]

■ Cancer: Young People

Conor McGinn:

[\[63248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of cancer on the emotional health and wellbeing of young cancer patients and their families.

Conor McGinn:

[\[63289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what mental health support is available for children and young people who have been diagnosed with cancer.

David Mowat:

The independent Cancer Taskforce published its report, Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A strategy for England 2015-2020, in July 2015 representing the consensus views of the whole cancer community. The report noted that many young cancer patients suffer long-term physical and psychological consequences of their treatment in to adulthood.

Care should be built around what matters to the young person and their family and carers so we are working closely with cancer charities to ensure patients get the support they need during and after their treatment. In 2015 we announced everyone diagnosed with cancer in England will benefit from an individually tailored recovery package by 2020, a key recommendation in the Cancer Strategy. The recovery package, developed by Macmillan Cancer Support, will signpost people to rehabilitation and financial support services.

The Cancer Taskforce made three specific recommendations to improve the cancer care of children, teenagers and young adults through service redesign, improved data and tissue collection, and access to clinical trials.

The Children's and Young Peoples Cancer Clinical Reference Group (CYP CRG) has begun to take forward the delivery of these recommendations. The CYP CRG is aiming to improve both clinical outcomes and the experience of care through a service review and has established a work-stream looking specifically at improving the experience of care. The workstream involves both CLIC Sargent and the Teenage Cancer Trust and will explore the best ways of building understanding of both the issues and the changes required for improvement. NHS England and the CYP CRG value the role and contribution of stakeholders and a number of engagement events and workshops are being planned. In addition to this, the CRG is exploring how to replicate the Cancer Patient Experience Survey approach for children and young people, so that experiences are shared and help to drive on-going improvement.

Conor McGinn:

[\[63295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the findings of the report by CLIC Sargent, entitled Cancer costs: financial impact of childhood cancer revealed, published in September 2016, whether he plans to review the financial assistance for travel costs for families not on low incomes.

David Mowat:

The Government currently has no plans to review the hospital travel costs scheme which provides financial assistance to those patients who do not have a medical need for ambulance transport, but who require assistance with their travel costs. This is part of the well-established NHS Low Income Scheme, in which patients on low incomes or receiving specific qualifying benefits or allowances can be reimbursed in part or in full for costs incurred in travelling to receive treatment at hospitals and this would include cancer treatment.

Children and teenagers with serious or critical illnesses such as cancer are entitled to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (or a Personal Independence Payment if over 16). This is a tax free allowance, which contributes to the extra costs incurred by families in caring for children with additional needs and includes a mobility component. Children in receipt of DLA can receive up to £139.75 a week, and people who are terminally ill can have their claim fast tracked to access benefits sooner. Families and carers can also qualify for Carer's Allowance and receive £62.10 a week if they meet the eligibility criteria, and some councils run Council Tax Reductions schemes for people on low incomes or who claim benefits.

■ Capita**Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[63249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what sanctions are available to him to address the performance of Capita in the administration of the National Dental Performers List.

David Mowat:

NHS England holds the contract with Capita for the administration of primary care support services, including the National Performers Lists, which includes the Dental Performers List. The contract contains a range of remedies to incentivise and address performance. These include the application of financial service credits where agreed levels of performance are not achieved and rectification processes to affect improvement in service performance where this falls below expected levels.

Ultimately these measures, where they do not bring about the necessary improvement in performance, lead to rights around termination of the contract in whole or part.

Sir Nicholas Soames:[\[63250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect on patients of the performance of Capita in its administration of the National Dental Performers List.

David Mowat:

NHS England holds the contract with Capita for the administration of primary care support services, including the National Performers List, which includes Dental Performers. NHS England has informed us that it is aware, and has considered the potential impact that delays with applications could have on patients and are taking all appropriate steps to mitigate those risks as far as possible.

■ Cerebral Palsy

David Simpson:

[\[62663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current level of treatment for people diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

David Mowat:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published on 25 January 2017 the clinical guideline Cerebral palsy in under 25s: assessment and management NICE guideline (NG62). This is an independent and definitive view of the appropriate support for people with cerebral palsy.

Clinical commissioning groups and local authorities have a responsibility to commission services that best meet the needs of their populations, including those with cerebral palsy.

The Care Quality Commission and Ofsted have responsibility for reviewing the quality of care provided by the National Health Service, and social care and educational providers respectively. They are jointly reviewing the arrangements made in each local area for meeting the needs of children and young people with a special educational need and disability, which is likely to include children with cerebral palsy with the greatest needs.

■ Clinical Psychologists: EU Nationals

Luciana Berger:

[\[63321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as clinical psychologists; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on (a) the number of such nationals and (b) NHS productivity would be.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Digital publishes data on the nationality of staff working in the National Health Service in England. Nationality is self-reported within the NHS human resources and payroll system, the electronic staff record.

In October 2016, 622 Qualified Clinical Psychology staff working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as other European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom. This is out of a total headcount of 8,612.

The October data is the most recent data available.

The potential effect on nationals and productivity of leaving the EU will be dependent on the outcome of negotiations. My Rt. hon. Friend the Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to protect the status of EU nationals already living here. It is the Government's aim to get the best settlement for the UK in all areas including the healthcare system.

■ Community Health Services

Rosie Cooper:

[63149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether an NHS trust which the Care Quality Commission reports as requiring improvement can be awarded a community health services contract under an NHS-led transaction process in the event that it applied for such a contract prior to the rules changing to permit only NHS trusts with a good inspection rating to apply or be awarded such contracts.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Improvement's published guidance on transactions for National Health Service foundation trusts does not include any rule that an acquiring foundation trust has to be rated good or better by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) before they can proceed with a transaction.

However, NHS Improvement does factor in quality considerations and CQC ratings throughout the assessment and assurance processes.

■ Department of Health: Overseas Aid

Philip Davies:

[62581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2017 to Question 59052, what the reason was for the increase in funding on Official Development Assistance by his Department from £11 million in 2014 to £32 million in 2015; what such figures are for 2016; and what the (a) cost and (b) purpose is of each project in receipt of such funding in each such year.

Nicola Blackwood:

The increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) expenditure between 2014 and 2015 was due to the launch of new programmes and the inclusion of particular initiatives as ODA for the first time. This is reflected in the 2016/17 figures.

In 2014 the Department paid an ODA eligible contribution to the World Health Organization (WHO) of £11 million. The WHO provides leadership and co-ordination in global health for its 194 member countries.

In 2015 the Department reported ODA expenditure of £32 million as detailed in the 2016 UK Statistics on International Development publication (page. 53) available at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-2016

The Department's total 2016/17 ODA budget is £149 million. 2016 ODA expenditure will be reported in compliance with ODA rules and published as a UK government statistical publication in December 2017.

■ Department of Health: Redundancy Pay

Justin Madders:

[62928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what redundancy costs were incurred by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

David Mowat:

Information on the costs of redundancies and exits in the Department is published in annual resource accounts.

■ Department of Health: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:**[\[62886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of his Department.

David Mowat:

The Department's Executive team comprises the Permanent Secretary, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Officer and four Directors General, of which:

- six are White British or Any Other White Background, one is Undeclared;
- four are female and three are male; and
- fewer than five have declared disability.

The Department does not hold centrally information on the socio-economic status or education level of its staff members. Further information about the Executive Team is available on the Department's website.

This is based on the latest available data, which is as at 31 January 2017.

■ Department of Health: Staff**Philip Davies:**[\[62959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many former prisoners have been employed by his Department in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

The Department does not hold central records on the number of former prisoners employed within the department.

■ Drugs: Misuse**Andrew Stephenson:**[\[63184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of deaths from illegal drug use.

Andrew Stephenson:[\[63186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has received on trends in the number of deaths from illegal drug use; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

A small number of written representations have been received on trends in the number of deaths from illegal drug use.

The Government is concerned at the rises in drug-related deaths and is taking action to prevent avoidable deaths. Public Health England (PHE) supports effective drug treatment in the community and in custody, which is known to reduce drug deaths. The Government has changed legislation to enable the easier distribution of naloxone, which is a safe, efficacious drug for reversing the effects of opioid overdoses. The Department has introduced a new Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator on drug-related deaths to enable local areas to benchmark their performance against others.

Following the report of the PHE supported inquiry into drug-related deaths in 2016, PHE and the Department are helping local authorities improve their drug-related death review processes, supporting an update to the United Kingdom-wide clinical guidelines for drug treatment, improving the sharing of intelligence on the adverse health effects of drugs, especially novel psychoactive substances, and working with treatment providers to develop guidance on how they manage risk factors associated with drug-related deaths.

■ Eating Disorders

Luciana Berger: [\[63322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2017 to Question 62392, how many beds for in-patients with eating disorders there were in each month since April 2016.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information requested is not available in monthly breakdowns.

■ Epilepsy

Jim Shannon: [\[62762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been living with a diagnosis of epilepsy in each of the last five years.

Jim Shannon: [\[62764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to the NHS has been of treating people with a diagnosis of epilepsy in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

Information concerning the number of people living with a diagnosis of epilepsy in each of the last five years is not collected. However, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence estimates that epilepsy affects between 362,000 and 415,000 people in England. Total spend on treating individual neurological conditions, such as epilepsy, is not available.

■ General Practitioners

Oliver Colvile:

[\[62832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the sustainability of the GP network.

David Mowat:

The General Practice Forward View, published in April 2016, announced that investment in General Practice will increase from £9.6 billion in 2015/16 to over £12 billion by 2020/21, a major financial investment to transform primary care.

Work is underway to increase the primary care workforce and reduce workload, to improve primary care estates and infrastructure, and to redesign care and spread innovation throughout the country.

It is also becoming increasingly normal for general practices to work together at scale in networks or federation of practices, bringing greater opportunities for practices to work collaboratively to strengthen services and their sustainability.

■ General Practitioners: Finance

Oliver Colvile:

[\[62678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the funding that has been allocated to the GP Development Programme remains unspent.

David Mowat:

The General Practice Development programme covers a number of initiatives set out in the General Practice Forward View, including: £6 million for practice manager development, which runs over three years; £45 million for reception and clerical training, which runs over five years; £30 million for a national development programme, which runs over three years; and £45 million for online consultations, which will run over three years from 2017/18.

NHS England is working to spend up to allocation and final outturn figures will be published later in year in the NHS England accounts for 2016/17 with more detail provided in the Investment in General Practice Report for 2016/17 published by NHS Digital.

■ Health Services

Crispin Blunt:

[\[62930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2017 to Question 60527, what priority recommendation level was assigned by the NHS England Clinical Priority Advisory Group to each of the policy proposals (a) recommended for routine commissioning and (b) not recommended for routine commissioning.

David Mowat:

In considering policies placed before it, NHS England's Clinical Priorities Advisory Group followed the published procedure, which was subject to recent public

consultation. Policies with the greatest clinical benefit and lowest cost attracted the highest priority recommendation (level 1), while those with lowest clinical benefit and high cost attracted the lowest (level 5). Treatments in level 5 were considered not currently affordable and were not recommended for routine commissioning.

Information on the annual prioritisation process for specialised treatments was announced by NHS England on 4 December 2016. Further information on this announcement can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/12/hiv-prevention-programme/>

NHS England has published whether policies were above or below the threshold for commissioning; there are no plans to publish the individual prioritisation rankings.

Justin Madders: [62989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions NHS England has with clinical commissioning groups on commissioning policies and the requirements of the NHS constitution, NICE guidance and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

David Mowat:

NHS England has regular management discussions with clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), which may encompass the NHS Constitution, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and statutory requirements.

NHS England has a duty to have regard to the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the NHS Constitution and quality standards prepared by NICE. As part of their general duty to secure a continuous improvement in quality, CCGs also have a duty to have regard to NICE guidance when planning and delivering services.

■ Health Services: North Tyneside

Mr Alan Campbell: [63116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what costs have been (a) incurred to date and (b) committed for future periods for the development and management of the sustainability and transformations plan process for North Tyneside.

David Mowat:

North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group's financial contribution to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) was £41,175 for work completed between April to September 2016. This included assistance with the financial modelling and identifying key priorities across Northumberland and North Tyneside.

At present, no additional costs have been identified or committed. However, normal management costs of the STP will still apply.

■ Health Visitors

Helen Hayes: [62939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether it is his Department's policy that the mandation of health visiting services will continue after March 2017.

Helen Hayes:

[62941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish Public Health England's review of the mandated health visiting service.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Government is committed to achieving good health outcomes for children and young people. Local authorities are responsible for commissioning appropriate public health services for 0-5 year olds in their areas, including health visiting.

Provision by local authorities of five universal health visitor reviews for children aged 0-5 was required by Regulations which came into force on 1 October 2015. The Department commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to undertake a review of the Regulations at 12 months.

PHE has completed the review of the mandating of universal health visiting services. The review was informed by looking at existing national and local statistics on health visiting service delivery and health and wellbeing outcomes for young children. In addition, feedback from a number of different stakeholder perspectives, including health visitors, was sought.

PHE's report is informing next steps decisions about the service and the Department expects to announce these shortly and to publish the report.

■ Heart Diseases

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[63037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce unplanned admission rates for heart failure.

David Mowat:

NHS England is working with key partners to ensure better co-ordination and integration of all services with the aim of delivering person centred and coordinated care for both men and women, which is tailored to their individual needs and preferences and those of their carer and family.

To support clinicians in the diagnosis and management of heart failure, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published Chronic Heart failure in Adults: Management, and Acute Heart Failure: Diagnosis and Management.

Both sets of guidance highlight the importance of specialist multidisciplinary heart failure teams in the management of patients in order to provide an integrated approach to patient care that is available both in hospital and in the community. The NICE guidance can be found at the following links:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg108/resources/chronic-heart-failure-in-adults-management-35109335688901

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg187/resources/acute-heart-failure-diagnosis-and-management-35109817738693>

To encourage better practice in the caring for heart failure patients, NHS England has established a best practice tariff for non-elective admissions for heart failure to support improved adherence to NICE guidance.

■ Heart Diseases: Cotswolds

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[\[63038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the prevalence of heart failure (a) nationally and (b) in The Cotswolds constituency.

David Mowat:

The heart failure prevalence figures are not collected or published for parliamentary constituencies.

The clinical commissioning group (CCG) of NHS Gloucestershire, which includes the Cotswold constituency area, the prevalence of heart failure recorded by the heart failure primary care register in the general practitioner Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) in 2015/16 was 0.77%.

In England the heart failure prevalence was recorded in the QOF registers as 0.76%, but published evidence ¹ suggests that this number of people known to general practices is higher in the United Kingdom, approximately 1.22% in men and 0.76% in women, over 558,000 people.

Note:

¹ Bhatnagar P, Wickramasinghe K, Williams J, Rayner M, Townsend N. The epidemiology of cardiovascular disease in the UK 2014. Heart 2015;101:1182-1189

■ Heart Diseases: Health Services

Maria Caulfield:

[\[62794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he was first told that NHS England proposed to close the congenital heart disease units operating in (a) Manchester, (b) Leicester and (c) at the Royal Brompton Hospital.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No decision has been made to close the congenital heart disease units at Central Manchester, Leicester and at the Royal Brompton Hospital. NHS England will make a decision on its proposals for changes to adult and children's congenital heart services in England following a consultation announced today. It has worked, and will continue to work, with providers and other stakeholders to assess the impact of these proposals. NHS England intends to publish an impact assessment and other relevant information in due course. Ministers have been briefed regularly on the decision-making process and associated timings throughout the process.

■ NHS Property Services

Dr Poulter:

[\[63165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what financial management structures have been put in place to ensure that NHS Property Services offers value for money.

Mr Philip Dunne:

As a public sector organisation (wholly owned by the Secretary of State for Health), NHS Property Services (NHSPS) has Standing Financial Instructions which require compliance with HM Treasury's Managing Public Money (2015) and the duty that all public sector organisations be able to demonstrate value for money for their expenditure.

The Board of NHSPS, supported by the work of five Board Committees, oversees operating and financial performance, risk management, internal controls and compliance. The Company's Board includes a Department of Health civil servant Non-Executive Director and the Company's financial performance is reviewed by the Department of Health, at its quarterly formal review meetings.

■ NHS: Buildings

Dr Poulter:

[\[63164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and what proportion of properties owned by NHS Property Services are (a) freehold and (b) leasehold.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information on freehold and leasehold properties owned by NHS Property Services (NHSPS) is set out in the following table.

| TENURE | NUMBER OF PROPERTIES | % OF TOTAL | NOTES |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|---|
| Freehold | 1,810 | 57.57% | This figure includes long leasehold properties |
| Leasehold | 1,256 | 39.95% | This figure includes periodic tenancies |
| Other formal tenure arrangements | 51 | 1.62% | Licences, tenancies at will, memorandum of occupation, mixed tenure |

| TENURE | NUMBER OF PROPERTIES | % OF TOTAL | NOTES |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|---|
| Other | 27 | 0.86% | Tenure types unconfirmed or no formal arrangement |
| Total properties in NHSPS estate | 3,144 | 100.00% | |

It has been assumed that 'property' refers to a physical building or structure, or single parcel of land rather than a wider site or single legal holding.

Dr Poulter: [\[63166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many properties held by NHS Property Services are not used for clinical purposes.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Property Services (NHSPS) holds 3,144 properties. The number of properties held by NHSPS which are not used for clinical purposes is 894, or 28.44% of the total.

Dr Poulter: [\[63167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many properties held by NHS Property Services are vacant.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The number and proportion of NHS Property Services' properties that are classified as vacant is shown in the following table. The Company classifies buildings as vacant when 90% or more of the building's area is unused.

| CATEGORY | NUMBER OF PROPERTIES | % OF TOTAL |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Vacant (90% or Greater) | 217 | 6.90% |
| Non-vacant (Less than 90%) | 2,927 | 93.10% |
| Total | 3,144 | 100.00% |

For this response the following assumptions have been made:

- 'Property' refers to a physical building or structure rather than a site or legal holding;
- Only those buildings which have been verified as live interests through recent validation exercise have been included; and
- Properties such as car parks or land parcels which have no internal area and are not expected to have tenants will be classed as non-vacant.

■ NHS: Drugs

Jim Shannon:

[\[62765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that new medicines introduced on the NHS are (a) medically and (b) cost effective.

Nicola Blackwood:

Most new medicines and significant licence extensions for existing medicines are referred to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for consideration through its technology appraisal programme. NICE makes recommendations to the National Health Service on whether treatments represent a clinically and cost effective use of NHS resources. NHS commissioners are legally required to fund drugs and other treatments recommended in NICE technology appraisal guidance, normally within three months of publication of final guidance.

■ Nurses: Recruitment

Oliver Colvile:

[\[62676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve recruitment of nurses to the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Health Education England (HEE) is responsible for the forecasting and planning of the future nursing workforce supply needs for the National Health Service.

HEE has increased nurse training commissions by nearly 15% over the last three years and is forecasting that up to 40,000 additional nurses could be available to the NHS by 2020.

In addition to the increase in training commissions HEE has also implemented a number of steps to increase nurse numbers within the NHS these include:

- proactively promoting the Return to Practice programme, aimed at encouraging previously qualified nurses that have left the NHS, to update their skills and qualifications and return to practice within the NHS;
- the provision of flexible routes into nursing for pre-existing support staff; and
- working closely with universities to improve attrition rates from courses which will further increase the number of nursing students who graduate.

■ Nurses: Training

Gill Furniss:

[\[63155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to promote nursing degrees to take account of trends in the number of people applying for such degrees.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government is taking a range of steps to promote nursing degrees and secure the healthcare workforce; by:

- enabling universities to offer up to 10,000 extra training places on pre-registration healthcare programmes;
- offering students around 25% more upfront financial support while studying - for example, a single student on a three-year programme would receive approximately £2,000 more each year on a student loan compared to an National Health Service bursary;
- improving access to pre-registration undergraduate study for those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and
- giving students with an existing qualification the chance to get funding for a second degree.

In November 2016, the government announced the New Nursing Degree apprenticeship, once established this will create up to 1,000 apprentice degree nurses in the NHS each year.

It is expected to open up more opportunities to train as a nurse for those already working in the NHS or those for whom full-time university study is not a realistic option.

■ Nutrition

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2017 to Question 58887, on nutrition, if he will publish on the gov.uk website the proposed timescale for the review of the nutrient profiling model.

Nicola Blackwood:

The proposed timescale for the review of the nutrient profiling model is still currently under review and is now due to be published on gov.uk by the end of February 2017.

■ Pharmacy

Oliver Colvile:

[\[62677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect of better use of pharmacies on the healthcare provision to local communities.

David Mowat:

Pharmacies are an important source of care, providing services such as flu jabs, health checks and of course dispensing vital medicines. We are transforming how pharmacists and their teams operate in the community - making the most of their skills to meet urgent medicine needs, treat minor ailments and ensure patients receive the best care. Healthy Living Pharmacies across the country with qualified health champions are demonstrating innovative models of delivery, reaching out to their local communities and making a real difference to people's health.

To make even greater use of this important asset, the Murray Review of community pharmacy clinical services recommended that NHS England and its national partners

should consider how best to support Sustainability and Transformation Plans in integrating community pharmacy into those plans. Public Health England published a menu of preventative interventions for the Sustainability and Transformation Plans in November 2016, which outlined evidence-based public health and preventative interventions that can help to improve the health of the population and reduce health and care services demand in the short to medium term. That menu specifically identified that pharmacy can make a contribution to:

- Cardiovascular disease secondary prevention;
- Improving the management of patients with blood pressure;
- Delivering effective brief advice on physical activity as part of everyday clinical care;
- Raising public awareness about reducing the risk of dementia;
- Providing support to stop smoking; and
- Reducing alcohol consumption and harm through brief advice.

■ Polymyalgia Rheumatica

Jim Shannon:

[\[63223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the timetable is for availability on the NHS of new treatments to tackle polymyalgia rheumatica.

David Mowat:

Polymyalgia rheumatica is usually treated with oral or intramuscular steroid treatment and pain relieving medication. Patients who do not respond to steroid treatments may be prescribed an immunosuppressant drug, such as methotrexate.

The availability of new treatments for the condition will be subject to such treatments having demonstrated their safety, efficacy and cost effectiveness.

■ Squalamine

Jim Shannon:

[\[62761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when Squalamine will be available for the treatment of Parkinson's disease on the NHS.

David Mowat:

The Department is aware of recent research to suggest a compound found in dogfish, called squalamine, could be used to treat Parkinson's disease, and that a trial of the treatment is now being considered. The future availability of a squalamine based treatment on the National Health Service would be subject to large scale clinical trials demonstrating the safety and efficacy of this treatment approach and subsequent assessments of its cost effectiveness for routine use.

■ Surgery

Justin Madders:

[\[63000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether clinical commissioning group restrictions on access to joint surgery for obese patients and smokers are compatible with NICE guidance on osteoarthritis: care and management, that patient-specific factors, including age, sex, smoking, obesity and co-morbidities, should not be barriers to referral for joint surgery.

David Mowat:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are primarily responsible for commissioning services to meet the requirements of their population, including the obese and smokers. In doing so, CCGs need to ensure that the services they provide are fit for purpose, reflect the needs of the local population, are based on the available evidence and take into account national guidelines.

The evidence suggests that major surgery poses higher risks for severely overweight patients who smoke. CCGs are therefore right to ensure these patients first get support to lose weight and try and stop smoking before their operation. Reducing obesity and cutting smoking not only benefits patients but also saves money for the National Health Service and taxpayers.

This does not and cannot mean blanket bans on particular patients such as smokers or overweight people getting operations, which would be inconsistent with the NHS Constitution.

■ Vandetanib

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Vandetanib; what the cost is of providing Vandetanib for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Vandetanib being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Sunitinib; what the cost is of providing Sunitinib for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Sunitinib being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Eribulin; what the cost is of providing Eribulin for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Eribulin being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Pertuzumab; what the cost is of providing Pertuzumab for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Pertuzumab being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Clofarabine; what the cost is of providing Clofarabine for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Clofarabine being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Nelarabine; what the cost is of providing Nelarabine for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Nelarabine being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Regorafenib; what the cost is of providing Regorafenib for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Regorafenib being approved by NICE.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[62758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects NICE to conclude its deliberations on the use of Vismodegib; what the cost is of providing Vismodegib for a 12 month period; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who could benefit from Vismodegib being approved by NICE.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information requested is provided in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. PQ62751 attached document [PQ62751 attached document.xlsx]

■ **Woodhill Prison: Suicide**

Luciana Berger:

[\[63318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many times an ambulance has been called to HM Prison Woodhill for an inmate who has attempted suicide in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Information about the frequency of emergency ambulance call-outs to HM Prison Woodhill is not collected centrally by the Department or NHS England.

HOME OFFICE■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse**

Fiona Bruce: [\[63251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to produce a new alcohol strategy.

Fiona Bruce: [\[63252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to revise its March 2012 alcohol strategy.

Sarah Newton:

The Government is committed to reducing the harms caused by alcohol. It set out its approach to reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder in the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy, published in 2016. It is committed to taking action to inform and empower citizens and provide the most up-to-date, clear information to enable people to make informed choices about their drinking. There are no current plans to publish a new alcohol strategy.

■ **Building Regulations: Fire Prevention**

Carolyn Harris: [\[63194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Communities and Local Government to ensure that building regulations fire safety guidance is revised to reflect changes such as new construction techniques, building use and changing response patterns.

Brandon Lewis:

Home Office officials have discussed with the Department for Communities and Local Government plans for the future development of the fire safety aspects of building regulations. The Department for Communities and Local Government will make a statement in due course.

■ **European Investigation Orders**

Mr Douglas Carswell: [\[63144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to delay the UK's participation in the European Investigation Order until after the UK's departure from the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Government is taking the necessary measures to comply with this Directive by 22 May 2017.

■ Female Genital Mutilation: Prosecutions

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[63143]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many prosecutions have been brought under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 since the introduction of that legislation.

Sarah Newton:

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a crime and it is child abuse. The Government will not tolerate a practice that can cause extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls. There has been one prosecution brought under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, which was unsuccessful. The police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have highlighted that one reason for the lack of investigations and prosecutions is a lack of referrals. In addition, cultural taboo and the age and vulnerability of the victims may prevent them coming forward. In 2015 we significantly changed the law to breakdown these barriers. We introduced: extended extra-territorial jurisdiction, lifelong anonymity for victims, a new offence of failure to protect a girl from FGM and a mandatory reporting duty. We have also introduced FGM Protection Orders and latest figures show that 79 have been made to protect girls.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Emergency Calls

Carolyn Harris:

[63195]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that relevant data from the incident reporting system on fires is made publicly available during relevant departmental consultations.

Brandon Lewis:

Aggregate statistics from the Incident Recording System (IRS) are routinely published by the Home Office and can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics>

The Home Office works to ensure that relevant fire data is used to inform the development of policy. This includes responding to requests from other government departments and where appropriate, making additional data available to them, whilst protecting sensitive personal information.

■ Home Office: Pay

Jon Trickett:

[63081]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total pay bill was for (a) male and (b) female employees in her Department in 2015-16; and what the per capita spend from that pay bill for each man and woman was in that year.

Sarah Newton:

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

■ Immigration Controls

James Cartlidge: [\[63193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to reopen Tier 3 of the non-EU immigration system.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Tier 3 of the points based system for non-EU migrants has never been opened and there are currently no plans to open it.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rob Marris: [\[63169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Wolverhampton South West of 14 October 2016, on deportation of people whose immigration status application has not been finally determined, reference ZA4101.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Minister of State for Immigration replied to this letter on 9 February 2017.

■ Metropolitan Police: Public Appointments

Keith Vaz: [\[63103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she expects to announce the name of the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

Brandon Lewis:

The process to recruit the next Metropolitan Police Commissioner is underway. The appointment will be made by Her Majesty the Queen following a recommendation by the Home Secretary under section 42 of Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

A formal announcement on the appointment will be made in due course.

■ Passports: Republic of Ireland

Jim Shannon: [\[63218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of forged or illegally-obtained UK passports in the Republic of Ireland.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The UK passport is a secure document issued in accordance with standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. Her Majesty's Passport Office actively engages with the Irish Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade both directly and via international working groups to investigate the misuse of UK passports.

■ Refugees: Syria

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[63148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy for those admitted to the UK through the Syrian vulnerable persons programme to be able to apply for refugee status in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Those who benefit from resettlement under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme are granted five years' Humanitarian Protection (HP). At the end of this period they can apply for settlement. It is open to those individuals to claim asylum which may result in them being granted refugee status. Each asylum claim is considered on its individual merits in accordance with our international obligations.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Poole

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[63313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many illegal migrants have been (a) identified, (b) arrested and (c) deported after being detected at Poole Port in each of the last six months for which information is available.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The requested information has not been released as it is Border Force policy not to release port-specific data on grounds of border security.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ House of Commons: Pay

Jon Trickett:

[\[63073\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the total pay bill was for (a) male and (b) female employees in the House of Commons Commission in 2015-16; and what the per capita spend from that pay bill for each man and woman was in that year.

Tom Brake:

The total gross pay bill for the period 2015/16 excluding social security costs, other pension costs and contributions to stakeholder pensions for (a) male employees and (b) female employees was as follows:

(a) Male employees: £42.5M (b) Female employees: £29.9M.

The per capita spend for male and female employees, excluding social security costs, other pension costs and contributions to stakeholder pensions, for the same period based on full time equivalent employees (FTE) was as follows:

(a) Male employees: £36,892 (b) Female employees: £32,810.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Department for International Development: Senior Civil Servants****Jon Trickett:**[\[62889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of her Department.

Rory Stewart:

Releasing this data would breach our obligations for holding and processing information under the Data Protection Act 1998.

■ Department for International Development: Staff**Philip Davies:**[\[62961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many former prisoners have been employed by her Department in each of the last five years.

Rory Stewart:

DFID staff are appointed subject to a security check, which includes a review of any criminal record. DFID cannot confirm if any former prisoners have been employed in the last five years.

■ Developing Countries: Females**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[63086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support the key principles outlined in its guidance note, Shifting social norms to tackle violence against women and girls, published on 20 January 2016; and if she will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

Violence against women and girls is unacceptable. In order to deliver long term change we need to address the negative attitudes expectations and behaviours relating to women and girls; both integrating across programmes and standalone projects. DFID is the only international development donor with a dedicated Violence Against Women and Girls Team working to embed best practice, including on shifting social norms to tackle violence against women and girls, across UK Aid programmes. This approach is achieving results.

■ Overseas Aid**Mr Ivan Lewis:**[\[63245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2016 to Question 58565, on overseas aid, what discussions her Department has had with multilateral agencies on the co-ordination of the withdrawal of aid from middle-income countries.

James Wharton:

DFID has argued that countries must graduate out of access to the most concessional funds as they become more able to finance their own development. This will enable aid to be more focused on the poorest countries. However, we are conscious of the need to avoid suddenly and simultaneously changing the access that countries have to key sources of funding. DFID has used our engagement in the replenishments in 2017 of the African and Asian Development Funds and the International Development Association (IDA, of the World Bank) to ensure closer coordination on this issue.

■ **Paraguay: Culture****Tim Loughton:**[\[62908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much and what proportion of the aid that her Department gives to Paraguay is for cultural projects in that country; and what those projects so funded are.

James Wharton:

DFID provides no direct support for cultural projects in Paraguay.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Arms Trade: EU Law****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[63161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the implications for those elements of the UK's legal and regulatory framework for arms exports derived from EU directives when the UK leaves the EU.

Mark Garnier:

All the relevant directives have been transposed into UK Law. The Government is conducting a broad range of analysis to understand the impact of leaving the EU on all aspects of the UK.

■ **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement****Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[63142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2017 to Question 59272, if he will make a request to the Government's business managers to hold a debate on the floor of the House on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Greg Hands:

My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has always been clear that he wanted to see a full Parliamentary debate on the floor of the House of Commons on the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) ahead of the vote on the European Parliament, now scheduled for 15

February. Decisions with respect to the timing and form of a debate are for the business managers in the House of Commons. Due to the pressures of the legislative timetable it was not possible to hold the debate in the main chamber, but the Government was pleased to have the opportunity to debate this important matter on 6 February 2017.

■ **Small Businesses: Digital Technology**

Robert Courts: [\[62768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the level of interest among small and medium-sized enterprises in the Great.gov.uk digital platform.

Greg Hands:

Great.gov.uk is designed to engage as many businesses as possible, especially small and medium-sized enterprises and to date we have had a highly positive response to our digital services with over 5000 business registered for accounts, including 1500 registrations for our “Find a Buyer” Service and over 360,000 visits to the site.

■ **Small Businesses: Trade Promotion**

Karl McCartney: [\[908696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of SME business interest in the great.gov.uk digital platform.

Mark Garnier:

great.gov.uk is designed to engage as many businesses as possible, especially SMEs, and to date we have had a highly positive response to our digital services with over 5000 businesses registered for accounts, including 1500 registrations for our “Find a Buyer” Service and over 360,000 visits to the site.

■ **Trade: Australia**

Mrs Theresa Villiers: [\[908687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with the Australian Government on preparations for opening trade talks.

Greg Hands:

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade established the UK-Australia Trade Policy Working Group with the Australian Trade Minister last September, and my noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Lord Price) chaired the first meeting of this group in November. This is an important step on the road to securing an independent UK trade policy once we leave the EU.

The Australia working group will continue to scope the potential for an ambitious and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement once the UK has left the European Union.

■ UK Export Finance

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[63290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which export contracts in which the applicant declared that an agent had provided facilitation services were supported by UK Export Finance classified by (a) type of export support, (b) amount of expert support, (c) country, (d) project, (e) amount or rate of commission, (f) fees payable to the agent and (g) the countries where such fees are payable in each month and year since 2010; and what the name and address of each such agent was.

Greg Hands:

Information provided to UK Export Finance in relation to agents is commercially sensitive.

■ World Trade Organisation

Alan Brown:

[\[908693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when he plans to submit schedules to the WTO for approval after the UK leaves the EU.

Dr Liam Fox:

In order to minimise any disruption to global trade and maximise certainty and continuity for businesses, we intend to present our UK World Trade Organisation schedules for certification by the time we leave the EU. These will replicate the current EU schedules as far as possible.

Neil Carmichael:

[\[908698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions he has had with the WTO.

Dr Liam Fox:

I have had a number of constructive discussions with the Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Roberto Azevedo, including a recent face-to-face meeting and I will have many more such meetings. He has been very supportive of the UK's position.

I have also met Ministers and Permanent Representatives from a broad cross-section of WTO Members.

JUSTICE

■ Aurelius

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[62821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what competitive tendering process was followed prior to Aurelius taking control of the Community Rehabilitation Company from Working Links in Wales and the West Country.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[62822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what experience Aurelius, which manages the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales and the West Country, has in the direct supervision of offenders.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[62823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what criteria bidders had to satisfy earlier in 2017 prior to being awarded the contract to manage the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

In the competition to award contracts to manage the 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), all bidders were rigorously assessed against robust quality, legal, commercial and financial criteria. The bid accepted by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) from Working Links for the contracts to run the Wales, Devon Dorset and Cornwall and Bristol, Gloucester, Somerset and Wiltshire CRCs included the restructuring of the way services were delivered and the implementation of a new operating model. A thorough evaluation process was undertaken to assess the operational viability of this bid in the wider context of rehabilitation, public protection and reducing reoffending, and plans to realise efficiencies across the business.

Nothing in the department's contracts with the CRCs owned by Working Links has changed as a result of the sale and due diligence investigations were carried out prior to the sale to make sure services will continue to be satisfactorily provided. The Working Links CRCs are continuing to provide services in accordance with their contracts and are being robustly managed by our contract management teams to make sure they fulfil their contractual obligations in relation to service delivery, reducing reoffending, protecting the public and providing value for money to the taxpayer.

■ Crime: Victims

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[62934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Government plans to commence its review of the victims code; and what the terms of reference of that review will be.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[62944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether victims of crime will be invited to submit details of their experiences as part of the review of the victims code.

Dr Phillip Lee:

As we announced in the House of Lords last month, we will set out our strategy for victims within 12 months, and will take the appropriate action to give effect to the strategy, including bringing forward any appropriate primary legislation.

We have made some positive steps to improve the experience of victims of crime, to reduce unnecessary stress and lessen the emotional turmoil of attending court. For example, this year we began rolling out pre-trial cross-examination for vulnerable

victims and witnesses in the Crown Court. However more can be done to further strengthen the rights of victims.

We are considering how compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code) might be improved and monitored. We are also exploring how those responsible for delivery of rights and entitlements might be better held accountable for any failings.

On 6 February I met with the Victims' Panel which has been re-established so that we can learn from the experiences of victims of crime. I also have regular meetings with the Victims' Commissioner, Baroness Newlove, about her work in keeping under review the operation of the Victims' Code. Plans to engage with and obtain views of victims and victims' groups are being developed.

■ Domestic Violence

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[63210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the effect of charges levied for a doctor's letter as evidence of domestic violence on the number of domestic violence claims; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government is absolutely clear that victims of domestic violence must have access to the help that they need, including access to legal aid.

Legal aid is available for the purpose of obtaining urgent protection via the courts and this funding is not subject to evidence requirements. Legal aid is also available, to those affected by domestic violence, for private family matters such as child contact and financial arrangements following separation. In these cases objective evidence is required and a letter from a health professional, which does not have to be a GP, is one of the types of evidence that can be accepted. We are aware that a small number of GPs have been charging for this but we do not believe that there is a need to do so.

In July to September of 2016 the number of applications for legal aid for private family matters in which evidence of domestic violence is required was 26% higher than the same quarter of the previous year and the proportion of applications granted has increased to over 75% in the last three quarters.

■ Legal Systems: Islam

Philip Davies:

[\[62936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Sharia Councils are based in the UK.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested can be found on the Parliament website in a letter from Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen dated 12 December 2016 and deposited in the House of Lords Library, regarding the Policing and Crime Bill committee stage debate and Sharia councils (reference DEP2016-0912).

■ Prison Officers: Offenders**Philip Davies:** [\[62937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many former prisoners have been employed as prison officers in each of the last five years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We have not directly employed any prison officers with a custodial sentence in the last three years. We do not hold data prior to this.

■ Prisoners' Release**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[62943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of trends in the number of prisoners temporarily released on resettlement overnight release licences in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Data on the number of prisoners released on temporary license (ROTL), of which resettlement overnight release is one type, is published quarterly, and data for each year going back to 2002 is published on gov.uk.

We reviewed the approach to ROTL in 2013 to ensure risks are being managed effectively and there is now a greater focus on: linking the ROTL activity to the individual's sentence plan; countering any presumption to temporary release; and, an improved risk assessment and management approach, particularly with the most serious offenders. This has, however, had an unintended consequence – restrictions to improve risk management of the most serious offenders, have resulted in lower risk offenders not being able to benefit from ROTL.

We will maintain the improvements made while allowing governors greater discretion in how they tailor their ROTL regime to the circumstances of each offender. We know that three of the most powerful factors helping to keep ex-offenders from re-offending are a good job, strong family ties and a stable place to live - ROTL makes all of them easier to achieve. Public protection is our top priority and we have no intention of changing the full risk-assessment offenders on ROTL must undergo and any non-compliance will be dealt with robustly.

■ Prisoners: Suicide**Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods:** [\[62785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners took their own lives by using an upended unsecured bedframe as a ligature point in each of the last five years in (a) HMP Northumberland, (b) private prisons, (c) public sector prisons; if she will take steps to ensure that all bedframes in prisons are securely fixed; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) records the methods used in self-inflicted deaths, including ligature points. However, the data do not show the precise way in which the ligature point was created.

Since 2005 all new and refurbished cells have been built to the safer cell standard, which minimises the availability of ligature points. This includes beds that are fixed in place and do not offer ligature points. In response to the recommendations of the review into self-inflicted deaths of young adult offenders conducted by Lord Harris, the Government committed to continuous improvement in this design, and to maintaining designated safer cells to the appropriate standard. We are clear, however, that designated safer cells must be seen as part of a wider care plan and can only complement, and not replace, a regime providing individualised and multi-disciplinary care for at-risk prisoners.

■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence**Philip Davies:**[\[62942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners were given extra days in prison for assaulting a prison officer in each of the last three years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

I refer my Hon Friend to the answer given on 12 December 2016 to the Hon Member for Leeds [Written question – 56955]. Figures for 2016 are not yet available.

■ Probation: Wales**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[62849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many probation staff employed by the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales have (a) been offered and (b) accepted the enhanced voluntary redundancy scheme since the start of financial year 2015-16.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) are not contractually required to report on staffing numbers. All CRCs are contractually required to maintain a professional and appropriately skilled workforce to deliver the services set out in their contracts. We robustly contract manage each CRC to make sure they fulfil their contractual commitment to maintain service delivery, reduce reoffending, protect the public and deliver value for money for taxpayers.

■ Woodhill Prison: Ambulance Services**Luciana Berger:**[\[63320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many blue code emergencies there were in HM Prison Woodhill in each year since 2010.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Woodhill Prison: Suicide

Luciana Berger: [63319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many self-inflicted deaths there were of prisoners from HM Prison Woodhill within 14 days of their release in each year since 2010.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is not held.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Northern Ireland Office: Senior Civil Servants**

Jon Trickett: [62893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of his Department.

Kris Hopkins:

To comply with the Data Protection Act and safeguard employee personal data, I am not able to provide the information to questions (a), (c), (d) and (e).

The gender of the three most senior officials can be determined from information in the Northern Ireland Office's Annual Report and accounts for 2015-16:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nio-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-16>

PRIME MINISTER**■ Prime Minister: Security**

Jon Trickett: [63274]

To ask the Prime Minister, how many security passes into 10 Downing Street are issued to people (a) not directly employed by and (b) who are not civil servants who work in 10 Downing Street.

Mrs Theresa May:

I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member on the 7 February 2017, UIN 62542.

SCOTLAND**■ Scotland Office: Staff**

Philip Davies: [62967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many former prisoners have been employed by his Department in each of the last five years.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff directly. Such matters are for the parent Department.

TRANSPORT■ **A30: A303****Kevin Foster:**[\[62088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timetable is for the completion of the dualling programme for the A30/A303 link road.

Mr John Hayes:

The Road Investment Strategy announced Government's intention to upgrade the remaining sections of the A303 between the M3 and the A358 near Ilminster to dual carriageway standard, together with creating a dual carriageway link from the M5 at Taunton to the A303. It also set aside funding for smaller-scale improvements to the A303/A30 section between Ilminster and Honiton, for which Highways England has commissioned a study.

Three major schemes have commenced, including improvement of the section past Stonehenge between Amesbury and Berwick Down. Highways England launched a consultation on the Stonehenge tunnel proposal on 12 January 2017.

Implementation of the programme to transform the A303 route will run beyond the first Road Period (2015-2020) and subsequent Road Investment Strategies will fund the remaining improvements.

■ **CH2M Hill****Mrs Cheryl Gillan:**[\[63303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been paid to CH2M by (a) his Department and (b) HS2 Ltd in each financial year since 2009.

Andrew Jones:

CH2M Hill has played a crucial role on all aspects of the development of the HS2 project. The company has provided project and programme management, engineering and environmental expertise and resource and was the driving force behind the preparation and passage of the Phase 1 hybrid bill. This phase of their work came to an end in December 2016. In 2016, in a 50/50 partnership with Atkins, CH2M Hill was appointed as the phase 1 Engineering Delivery Partner for the delivery phase of the HS2 project, providing expert engineering support for all aspects of HS2 Ltd's work.

Since 2011 HS2 Ltd has made the following payments to CH2M Hill.

Development Partner contract:

| CALENDAR YEAR | PAYMENTS IN FINANCIAL YEAR (EXCL VAT) |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2011/12 | £1,438,120 |
| 2012/13 | £14,371,903 |
| 2013/14 | £17,058,089 |
| 2014/15 | £25,334,600 |
| 2015/16 | £32,454,382 |
| 2016/17 | £9,493,030 |

Engineering Delivery Partner contract:

| CALENDAR YEAR | PAYMENTS IN FINANCIAL YEAR (EXCL VAT) |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2016/17 | £4,062,843 |

■ Department for Transport: Pay

Jon Trickett:[\[63150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the total pay bill was for (a) male and (b) female employees in his Department in 2015-16; and what the average per capita spend from that pay bill was for men and women in that year.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport consists of the central Department and the following Executive Agencies:

- DVLA
- DVSA
- MCA
- VCA

Data for the Executive Agencies is not readily available. However, we have provided data on base salary for the central Department.

In October 2015, the then Prime Minister announced that new gender pay gap reporting measures being introduced across the private and voluntary sector from April 2017 would be extended to also apply across the public sector. We are actively working to ensure the gender pay gap data we report in future fully mirrors these new requirements.

The table below shows the total full-time equivalent figures for male and female employees in the central Department and the average per capita spend from that for 2015/16.

| GENDER | TOTAL PAY BILL | AVERAGE PER CAPITA SPEND |
|--------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Female | £35.2M | £44.4k |
| Male | £61.2M | £49.3k |

■ Motor Vehicles

Richard Burden:

[\[63246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of how many (a) ultra low emission, (b) hydrogen and (c) fully electric vehicles there will be on roads in each of the next five years; and whether his Department is on course to meet targets related to such vehicle numbers.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government wants almost every car and van in the UK to be a zero emission vehicle by 2050. In 2013 the Government's strategy for ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) set out an expectation that ULEVs – which include hydrogen fuel cell, plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles – could make up 3-7% of new car sales in 2020. Currently, there are over 85,000 electric vehicles that have benefited from the plug-in grant funding schemes. Uptake in this new market is difficult to predict, and depends largely on the speed with which car manufacturers make new models available. Latest data indicates that ULEV car uptake remains on track for the growth projections set out in 2013.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Castes: Discrimination

Kate Green:

[\[62869\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when the Government plans to launch a public consultation on caste and the Equality Act 2010.

Caroline Dinanage:

This is the first ever public consultation on the matter and it is vital that we get the details and content of the consultation right. We intend to issue the consultation in due course.

■ Government Equalities Office: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett: [\[62885\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of the Government Equalities Office.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government Equalities Office cannot release information on ethnicity, gender or disability status in relation to specific individuals.

The Government Equalities Office does not hold information about the educational background or socio-economic status of its three most senior officials.

■ Government Equalities Office: Staff

Philip Davies: [\[62958\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many former prisoners have been employed by the Government Equalities Office in each of the last five years.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Department does not hold this information.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Credit Unions: Finance**

Mr Mark Hendrick: [\[62924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which credit unions have received funding under the Credit Union Expansion Project; and how much each such union has received.

Richard Harrington:

I can confirm that DWP has contracted directly with the Association of British Credit Unions Limited (ABCUL) for the delivery of the Credit Union Expansion Project (CUEP). ABCUL's subsidiary Cornerstone Mutual Services (CMS) contracts individually with each Credit Union agreeing specific financial terms and incentives. DWP does not hold statistics on funds that have been allocated to each Credit Union as this forms part of the commercial agreement between CMS and the Credit Unions. It should be noted that the bulk of the CUEP funding has been invested in the development of a shared infrastructure for Credit Unions to modernise their business models and become more sustainable.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Pay

Jon Trickett:

[63151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total pay bill was for (a) male and (b) female employees in his Department in 2015-16; and what the average per capita spend from that pay bill was for men and women in that year.

Caroline Nokes:

As part of its Public Sector Equality Duty responsibilities, DWP publishes annual employee information on Gov.Uk. This includes information on mean salary categorised by gender. I have provided below a link to our 2016 report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-equality-information-2016-employee-data>

DWP publishes its Annual Report and Accounts which includes information on total spending on pay. A link to the latest report is provided below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Philip Davies:

[62971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many former prisoners have been employed by his Department in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

The information you have request is not available.

Tracy Brabin:

[63215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coaches his Department has employed in each (a) region and (b) constituent part of the UK in each of the last three years; and how many work coaches his Department plans to employ in each such region and part of the UK in each of the next three years.

Damian Hinds:

The number of work coaches employed by the department in each of the last three years, shown by each nation within Great Britain and also by Jobcentre Plus district can be seen in the tables below.

By the end of March 2018 we plan to have around 2,500 more Work Coaches in Jobcentres across the nations and regions of Great Britain. However, the final allocation of work coaches will be based on funding, claimant activity and determined by need.

| | MARCH 2014 | MARCH 2015 | MARCH 2016 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| National | 12,613 | 11,341 | 11,596 |
| England | 10,855 | 9,723 | 9,659 |
| Scotland | 1,136 | 997 | 1,186 |
| Wales | 622 | 620 | 750 |
| Jobcentre Plus District | March 2014 | March 2015 | March 2016 |
| Birmingham & Solihull | 476 | 412 | 449 |
| Black Country | 369 | 381 | 355 |
| Derbyshire | 192 | 349 | 326 |
| East Anglia | 375 | 272 | 296 |
| Leicestershire & Northamptonshire | 270 | 321 | 327 |
| Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire & Rutland | 348 | 216 | 242 |
| Mercia | 240 | 406 | 409 |
| Staffordshire & Shropshire | 257 | 238 | 228 |
| Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire | 267 | 445 | 374 |
| East London | 555 | 288 | 238 |
| Essex | 314 | 249 | 246 |
| Kent | 293 | 390 | 336 |
| North London | 479 | 555 | 464 |
| South London | 624 | 369 | 361 |
| West London | 413 | 332 | 362 |
| Durham & Tees Valley | 374 | 353 | 336 |
| North East Yorkshire & Humber | 388 | 352 | 377 |

| | MARCH 2014 | MARCH 2015 | MARCH 2016 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Northumberland Tyne & Wear | 372 | 344 | 377 |
| South Yorkshire | 366 | 573 | 523 |
| West Yorkshire | 548 | 1,392 | 343 |
| Cumbria & Lancashire | 347 | 293 | 370 |
| Greater Manchester Central & Cheshire | 404 | 344 | 371 |
| Greater Manchester East & West | 390 | 372 | 427 |
| Merseyside | 410 | 383 | 315 |
| East & South East Scotland | 314 | 289 | 395 |
| Glasgow Lanarkshire & East Dunbartonshire | 387 | 319 | 205 |
| North of Scotland | 188 | 180 | 271 |
| West of Scotland | 247 | 210 | 392 |
| Devon Cornwall & Somerset | 314 | 273 | 363 |
| Gloucestershire & West of England | 325 | 262 | 330 |
| Greater Wessex | 445 | 401 | 435 |
| Surrey & Sussex | 348 | 282 | 750 |
| Thames Valley | 338 | 267 | 172 |
| North & Mid Wales | 129 | 141 | 303 |
| South East Wales | 271 | 271 | 275 |
| South West Wales | 222 | 207 | 449 |

Notes

1. The number of Work Coaches is expressed as a Full Time Equivalent.
2. Numbers rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. Numbers may not sum due to rounding

■ Inflation

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[62698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent trends in inflation on low income families with children; and if he will make a statement.

Damian Hinds:

We have not assessed the very latest trends in inflation on low income families with children but have supplied latest published estimates for 2014/15 in the form of absolute low income rates and numbers for children and their families.

Rates and numbers of children in both relative and absolute low income households are published annually in Households Below Average Income. Chapter 4 in 'supporting tables' show various income breakdowns for children and their families

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201415>

The absolute low income threshold is based on 60% of median income in 2010/11 and is then uprated by inflation for each year thereafter. As such the absolute measure captures how low income has changed with reference to inflation.

Latest data show:

- Since 2010 there are 200,000 fewer children in absolute low income (and 100,000 fewer children in relative low income) on a Before Housing Costs basis.
- In 2015 there were 2.3 million children in absolute low income Before Housing Costs – a joint record low.
- Between 2014 and 2015, average incomes grew at their fastest rate since 2002.

This Government is committed to building a country that works for everyone – not just the privileged few. That is why our forthcoming Green Paper will identify and address the root causes of child poverty and disadvantage, building on the new statutory indicators of parental worklessness and children's educational attainment set out in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

■ Jobcentres: Closures

Louise Haigh:

[63201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long the consultation on the closure of Jobcentre Plus offices will last.

Damian Hinds:

We have committed to a public consultation for offices over three miles and 20 minutes away by public transport.

The public consultation for some Jobcentres in Glasgow started on 7 December 2016 and closed on 31 January 2017.

Following announcements for other Jobcentre Plus offices on 26 January 2017, There are now a further 25 consultations underway, covering 27 sites. All 25 consultations started on 30 January 2017 and will end at 5pm on 28 February 2017.

■ Jobcentres: Refugees

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[63202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 10 of the Government response to the Work and Pensions Committee report on Benefit Delivery, published on 12 July 2016, HC 522, what evaluation his Department has carried out on changes to guidance for jobcentre staff handling claims from refugees; and when he plans to publish the findings of that evaluation.

Damian Hinds:

The Department carried out an internal review in 2016. This confirmed the findings of an earlier DWP/Home Office review into why a significant number of asylum seeking refugees who are granted leave to remain, do not have benefits in payment at the end of their 28 day period of asylum support. The key finding was that they do not contact DWP early enough to enable their benefit claim to be processed before Home Office support ends.

These internal reviews are informing a DWP/Home Office pilot of an assisted transition from asylum support to benefits. The Department will write to the Work and Pensions Select Committee with an update later this year.

■ State Retirement Pensions

Martyn Day:

[\[62870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the findings of Age UK's report entitled Working Later, Waiting Longer, published in November 2016, what assessment he has made of the merits of reviewing the effect on groups that are most reliant on their state pension of the existing state pension age timetable to April 2028.

Damian Hinds:

The Age UK report concludes that there should be more support to enable older people to continue in employment. Supporting older people to remain in the labour market, and tackling the barriers to them doing so, remains a key priority for Government. In addition to legislative reforms to abolish the default retirement age and extend the right to request flexible working to all employees, we also published a new strategy 'Fuller Working Lives: A Partnership Approach' on 2nd February. The Strategy is crucially led by employers, but also sets out the case for action by individuals, and the role of Government in supporting them in planning their careers and their approach to retirement. The Strategy and supporting evidence base are

available at the attached web address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuller-working-lives-a-partnership-approach>

■ Universal Credit

John Healey: [62985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2017 to Question 60655, on universal credit and housing benefit, if he will place in the Library the assumptions by which those estimates were calculated.

Caroline Nokes:

The Government's costings of individual tax and welfare spending measures at each Budget and Autumn Statement are subject to detailed scrutiny and challenge by the Office for Budget Responsibility. Details of the costing for the policy can be found in the Summer Budget 2015 publication here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443195/Policy_costings_summer_budget_2015.pdf

■ Universal Credit: Young People

John Healey: [62996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his policy is on removing the automatic entitlement to the housing element of universal credit only for 18 to 21 year olds who are out of work.

Caroline Nokes:

The Government has committed to reforming housing support for 18 to 21 year olds as stated in the Manifesto and Budget announcements. This policy is about stopping young people slipping straight into a life on benefits and brings parity to a society where an employed young person may not be able to leave the family home whilst an unemployed young person can.

We are on track to deliver these changes in April 2017.

■ Veterans: Personal Independence Payment

Sir Nicholas Soames: [63200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of process by which veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder access their personal independence payments.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department has been working closely with the Royal British Legion, the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessment Providers and other stakeholders to enhance the service provided to service veterans, particularly those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Specific condition insight reports on PTSD, and the needs of service veterans, are now available to all health professionals working

for our Assessment Providers and we are in the process of co-producing additional, tailored advice for veterans who may want to claim or are claiming PIP or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Our Green Paper Consultation includes specific questions and consultation event for the Armed Forces.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ The Government Transformation Strategy 2017-2020

Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (Ben Gummer):

[[HCWS469](#)]

Today the Government is publishing the Government Transformation Strategy 2017-2020. This strategy sets out the Government's objectives to harness digital (the technologies, culture, skills and tools of the internet-era) to transform the relationship between the citizen and state.

The 'Digital by Default' services developed under the previous strategy have helped to establish the UK as a global leader in digital government. However, the opportunity to transform government further, as well as the need to be able to respond quickly to new or changed priorities, mean that our current approach to digitally-enabled transformation of government needs to be accelerated and expanded.

The Government Transformation Strategy defines our vision and ambition for a government that is 'of the internet' rather than simply 'on the internet'. It sets out how government services, and other interactions with the public and businesses, will be improved and enhanced - both in terms of providing service to citizens and in gaining (and keeping) their trust. Digital is the the best way of achieving this.

The strategy sets out five pillars for the future direction of government:

1. Create shared platforms, components and reusable business capabilities: continuing with government as a platform, reducing duplication, cost and increasing efficiency across government.
2. Make better use of data: ensuring that government data is properly managed, protected and (where non-sensitive) made available and shared effectively. To accelerate the transformation of government, and ensure we retain public trust and confidence in our use of data, we will appoint a new Chief Data Officer for government.
3. Business Transformation: developing end-to-end services that meet the needs of their users across all channels, in coordination with a fundamental rethink of back-office operations.
4. Grow the Right People, Culture and Skills: continuing to ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills and training, employed in the right place working in the right way.
5. Build better tools, processes and governance for civil servants: transforming the inside of the Civil Service to become an organisation that is digital by default.

One of the most important and challenging aspects of delivering transformed online services is identity assurance - establishing that the user is who they say they are and not someone pretending to be them. GOV.UK Verify, the government's online identity

verification service, went live in May 2016. We will continue to enable individuals to prove their identity online and to access government services securely and safely. To achieve this, we will work towards 25 million people having a GOV.UK Verify account by the end of 2020.

This strategy also sets out the evolving role of the Government Digital Service to support, enable and assure transformation delivered by government departments. It provides the direction of travel and does not in and of itself constitute any additional spending commitments.

I will place a copy of this strategy document in the House Libraries.

TREASURY

■ Annual European Union Finances Statement

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke):

[\[HCWS476\]](#)

I am today laying before Parliament, the *European Union Finances 2016: statement on the 2016 EU Budget and measures to counter fraud and financial mismanagement* (Cm 9400). This is a routine annual publication. It is the thirty sixth in the series. The statement gives details of revenue and expenditure in the 2016 European Union (EU) Budget, recent developments in EU financial management and measures to counter fraud against the EU Budget. It also includes a chapter and annex on the use of EU funds in the UK while we remain a member state.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local government funding

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

[\[HCWS470\]](#)

Further to the points raised in the House yesterday on Surrey County Council and local government finance, I would like to take the opportunity to put some facts on the record.

Surrey County Council's budget and council tax is a matter for the council. Surrey's elected councillors voted through their 2017/18 budget on Tuesday 7 February, based on the draft Local Government Finance Settlement. Surrey County Council have been clear that their Budget decision (setting a level of council tax which is not above the referendum threshold) was theirs alone.

As part of the statutory draft Local Government Finance Settlement consultation, the Department for Communities and Local Government discusses local government funding with councils across the country, of all types and all political colours. This happens every year, and necessarily involves councils making direct representations to the Government.

DCLG will publish the final settlement later this month, and the House of Commons will then vote on it. This is entirely transparent, and detailed funding figures for every council are published as part of that process.

Whilst the final settlement has yet to be approved, the Government is not proposing extra funding to Surrey County Council that is not otherwise provided or offered to other councils generally. There is no 'Memorandum of Understanding' between Government and Surrey County Council. In the draft Settlement published in December, Surrey's core spending power is forecast to rise by 1.4 per cent from 2015/16 to 2019/20. We believe this provides a sustainable base on which the council can plan ahead and allocate their £1.7 billion a year budget.

We are, however, conscious of the medium and long-term pressures that all councils face from a growing and aging population. The Government is therefore delivering broader reforms to local government finance – through bespoke Devolution Deals, the integration of health and social care, a Fairer Funding Review, medium and longer-term reforms to support adult social care, and the move, from 2019/20, to 100 per cent business rates retention across the country. All these reforms have been discussed in recent weeks with Surrey and other councils from across the country as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement process.

The Local Government Finance Bill, that Parliament is at present considering, will legislate to deliver the reforms to business rates. A number of pilots are already taking place from April 2017 in combined authorities and unitary councils across the country. These will take place in Liverpool, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, West of England, Cornwall and Greater London. The Government plans to undertake further pilots in 2018/19, in areas without a devolution deal, including two-tier council areas. The nationwide rollout will then take place across England in 2019/20.

Surrey County Council informed the Government that they wished to become a pilot area. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government told them that this was not possible for 2017/18, but said that, subject to due process and meeting the necessary criteria, they could participate in the 2018/19 pilot. All other councils will be free to apply to participate in these pilots, and the Government invites them to do so. The Department for Communities and Local Government has already held discussions about the 2018/19 pilots with several councils and it will be publishing more information shortly.

The Government's wider reforms to local government funding will make councils less dependent on money from Whitehall, ensuring all councils have strong incentives to support local jobs and local firms, and directly benefit from the proceeds of a growing economy.

■ ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):
[\[HCWS475\]](#)

On 26 February 2015, the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the then Secretary of State for Education, having considered the report of the inspection by Dame Louise Casey CB and advice note from Sir Michael Wilshaw (HM Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills), concluded that it was both necessary and expedient for them to exercise their intervention powers as

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was failing to comply with its best value duty. Due to the extent and the gravity of the failings in the Council, the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government decided that the intervention should be broad and wide ranging. He directed that Commissioners should exercise all executive functions of the authority, as well as some non-executive ones, including licensing, until the Council could exercise them in compliance with its best value duty. A team of Commissioners was appointed to exercise these functions.

On 11 February 2016, my predecessor returned certain functions to the Council, including education, housing and planning. He was satisfied with the progress made and that the Council was able to exercise the identified functions in compliance with the best value duty. Returning these functions was the start of building effective and accountable political leadership and represented a clear milestone on the road to recovery. On 13 December 2016, I announced the return of licensing functions to the Council. I am pleased now to be able to report on further progress made.

In his 10 November 2016 progress report, Lead Commissioner Sir Derek Myers provided robust evidence to support his recommendation for economic growth, town centres, external partnerships and grounds maintenance to be returned to the Council. Additional information provided in December 2016 gave me sufficient assurance on the return of audit, and adult social care and NHS partnership.

The Commissioners will continue to have oversight of these six service areas to ensure continued compliance with the best value duty. With the exception of adult social care and NHS partnership, where Commissioners will have the power of direction, the other five service areas will be returned to the Council with the Commissioners having the power of advice.

Today, I have written to the Council to say that I am now 'minded to' return these service areas to the Council but will seek representations before making a final decision. I am placing a copy of the documents associated with these announcements in the Library of the House and on my Department's website.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Annual report on Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage (Tracey Crouch):

[\[HCWS472\]](#)

I am today publishing the first annual report on the Government's sport strategy *Sporting Future: a New Strategy for an Active Nation*.

Sporting Future set out a new government vision to redefine what success looks like in sport by concentrating on five key outcomes - physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. It was a bold new strategy for an active nation. It marked the biggest shift in Government policy on sport for more than a decade. Much has been achieved so far, and this first

annual report sets out the steps we have taken towards making sure absolutely everyone can benefit from the power of sport.

Investment in sport and physical activity is now focused on the five key outcomes. Funding is being opened up to organisations who can demonstrate how they will consistently deliver some or all of those shared goals.

Progress has been made against the three major outputs described in *Sporting Future* - engagement in sport as a participant, volunteer and spectator; maximising international and domestic sporting success and the impact of major events; and supporting a more productive, sustainable and responsible sport sector across the board.

I am grateful to all those who are working to make *Sporting Future* such a success. The annual report is being deposited in the House Libraries and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sporting-future-first-annual-report>

DEFENCE

■ Review of the Service Museums

Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mike Penning): [\[HCWS473\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State in the House of Lords (Earl Howe) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Further to my Written Ministerial Statement of 15 October 2015 (HLWS241), I am today announcing the publication of the findings of the review of the three Service Museums: The National Museum of the Royal Navy, the National Army Museum and the RAF Museum. Periodic reviews of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) are part of the Government's commitment to ensuring, and improving, the accountability and effectiveness of public bodies.

The review concluded that the Service museums support the heritage objectives of the Ministry of Defence and the functions performed are still required. The review recommended that the Service museums should be retained as NDPBs of the Ministry of Defence.

The review was carried out with the participation of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and I am grateful to all those who contributed to this review.

The Review of the Service Museums report has been placed in the Library of the House. It will also be available on the Government website at: www.gov.uk.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ General Affairs Council February 2017

The Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr David Jones): **[[HCWS477](#)]**

The General Affairs Council (GAC) was held on 7 February in Brussels under the Maltese Presidency.

The agenda covered 1) follow up to the December European Council; 2) preparation for the March European Council; and 3) Commission Communication on Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future. The UK Permanent Representative to the EU represented the UK.

A provisional report of the meeting and the Conclusions adopted can be found at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2017/02/07/>

Follow up to the December European Council

The Maltese Presidency presented the EU's key priorities and progress, stating that further work was needed in all areas. The Commission added that Member States should not lose sight of making progress on relocation and the Common European Asylum System.

Preparation for the March European Council

The Presidency presented the draft agenda which includes: jobs, growth and competitiveness, which would take stock of single market strategies; security, where leaders would examine decisions taken at December's European Council; and a placeholder for external relations. The Presidency announced that external migration would be added. The UK supported the addition of migration following the discussions at the Valletta Summit, welcomed the opportunity to return to security and noted the importance of jobs, growth and competitiveness and external relations.

Commission Communication on Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future

The Commission introduced its Communication, in which it set out a vision for a more sustainable future in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. It includes empowerment of women; energy transformation; a digital single market; and lifelong learning. There will be Council Conclusions in June to progress work in this area.

AOB

Portugal presented conclusions of a conference on the future of the European Monetary Union held in Lisbon in January. The conference, attended primarily by representatives from southern European countries, called for the EU to work together to promote growth and convergence across Eurozone countries, backed by a socially sustainable increase in public and private investment.

TRANSPORT■ **Commercial Spaceflight**

Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling): [\[HCWS471\]](#)

We intend to publish a draft Spaceflight bill later this month, dedicated to commercial spaceflight in the UK. This legislation will be fundamental to enabling small-satellite launches and sub-orbital flights from the UK, ensuring the UK is well placed to take advantage of a growing global market. The government's intention is to introduce this Bill formally early in the next session, following a period of scrutiny and engagement with industry and other interest groups.

The space sector is vital to the future of the UK economy, with a strong record of creating high-value jobs and generating wealth across the country. To help the creation of the space launch market in the UK, the UK Space Agency is inviting commercial space consortia to apply for grant funding to take the action that will make our ambitions a reality.

Together, the proposed legislation and grant funding announced today will have the potential to enable commercial spaceflight from a UK Spaceport by 2020.

■ **Ministerial cars**

Minister of State for Transport (Mr John Hayes): [\[HCWS478\]](#)

My Noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) has made the following Ministerial Statement

I am publishing today details of the charges incurred by Departments for the use of official government cars provided to Ministers by the Government Car Service during the financial year 2015-16, which are in the attached table.

Official transport is provided so that Ministers can carry out their work effectively and securely, including working on sensitive and confidential government documents whilst travelling.

We are committed to continuing our focus on reducing the cost to the taxpayer of the provision of secure Ministerial cars. The Government Car Service has reduced its running costs by three quarters since 2010. We continue to be committed to reducing the cost to the taxpayer of the provision of secure transport.

To assist public scrutiny, equivalent figures for the £6.7 million charges to each department under the last Labour Government can be found at 28 October 2010, *Official Report*, Column 23WS.

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101028/wmstext/101028m0001.htm#10102827000372>

| DEPARTMENT | No. OF GCS DEPARTMENTAL POOL CAR SERVICES @ 31/03/2016 | DEPARTMENTAL POOL CAR SERVICE | PRE-BOOKED SERVICE | TOTAL CHARGES (ALL SERVICES) |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Attorney General's Office (formerly Law Officers' Department) | 1 | £82,221.67 | £0.00 | £82,221.67 |
| Cabinet Office | 3 | £181,486.50 | £6,172.25 | £187,658.75 |
| Government Chief Whip | 0 | £25,435.49 | £3,076.25 | £28,511.74 |
| Leader of the House of Commons | 1 | £73,233.74 | £0.00 | £73,233.74 |
| Department for Business, Innovation and Skills | 1 | £84,797.79 | £4,512.45 | £89,310.24 |
| Department for Education | 1 | £87,837.30 | £24,899.33 | £112,736.63 |
| Department for Communities and Local Government | 2 | £172,334.20 | £2,260.35 | £174,594.55 |
| Department for Culture, Media and Sport | 1 | £82,449.30 | £292.50 | £82,741.80 |
| Department for Energy and Climate Change | 1 | £83,199.54 | £1,907.25 | £85,106.79 |
| Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | 1 | £94,646.45 | £9,689.11 | £104,335.56 |
| Department for International Development | 1 | £22,172.98 | £6,052.50 | £28,225.48 |
| Department for | 2 | £171,639.84 | £4,472.05 | £176,111.89 |

| DEPARTMENT | NO. OF GCS DEPARTMENTAL POOL CAR SERVICES @ 31/03/2016 | DEPARTMENTAL POOL CAR SERVICE | PRE-BOOKED SERVICE | TOTAL CHARGES (ALL SERVICES) |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Transport | | | | |
| Department for Work and Pensions | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Department of Health | 1 | £84,353.29 | £75.00 | £84,428.29 |
| Foreign & Commonwealth Office | 0 | £0.00 | £705.00 | £705.00 |
| HM Treasury | 2 | £202,226.95 | £37,397.27 | £239,624.22 |
| Home Office | 2 | £171,392.96 | £27,703.94 | £199,096.90 |
| Ministry of Defence | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Ministry of Justice | 0 | £0.00 | £1,555.00 | £1,555.00 |
| Northern Ireland Office | 0 | £0.00 | £11,736.03 | £11,736.03 |
| Scotland Office | 0 | £0.00 | £593.70 | £593.70 |
| Wales Office | 0 | £0.00 | £3,342.76 | £3,342.76 |
| 20 | £1,619,427.99 | £146,442.74 | £1,765,870.73 | |

Methodological note:

The charges recorded in this Statement reflect the service model which came into effect in April 2012 as part of the reform programme. This provides Departmental Pool Cars which are a shared resource for a Department to use as efficiently as possible. In addition, the Car Service offers a small pre-bookable service utilising any spare capacity.

These charges do not necessarily reflect the total spend on car services as some departments have arrangements with other providers. The Treasury has two Cabinet Ministers. The former Chancellor used the Government Car Service to supply a driver and vehicle for his protection package whereas the PM, Home, Foreign, Defence and Northern Ireland Secretaries of State used the Metropolitan Police. Such charges are not included in the table.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Fraud, Error and Debt Measures

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Damian Green): [\[HCWS474\]](#)

We are committed to ensuring an effective and accurate benefit system, as part of creating a welfare system which is fair to those who use it, and fair to the taxpayers who fund it. An important part of this is recovering money owed to the Government through overpayment of benefits.

Fraud and error in the DWP benefits system is historically low, and at 1.9% is lower than in 2010. Claimant error and official error are at their lowest level ever, and we are protecting taxpayers' money by recovering a record amount in overpaid benefits. For 2015/2016 around £1 billion was recovered jointly by the Department and local authorities, an increase of £70 million since 2014/2015.

Using DWP powers to recover tax credits debt

In order to build on this success, today, I can announce that from April 2018 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will recover a segment of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) tax credits debt associated with people whose tax credits claim has ended. This is debt that has been subject to recovery by HMRC but where repayment has not been secured.

The claimants who have these historic debts will have previously been contacted numerous times by HMRC and invited to start a voluntary repayment plan. They will also have had the opportunity to appeal and challenge the debt.

From April 2018 DWP will begin to try to recover this debt using a wider range of methods. Where people haven't voluntarily made arrangements to repay, this may, as a last resort include recovery directly from earnings. DWP has greater powers than HMRC in this regard.

This initiative helps deliver the Government's commitment to reform the benefits system and switch to Universal Credit. During transition HMRC will continue to administer financial support for those with on-going entitlement to tax credits.

Using Data and Analytics to identify potential fraud and error

Many people rely on the benefit system for support – it provides a vital safety net for people who are out of work, people with disabilities, those who are carers, bringing up children, retired, or on low incomes. So it is vital that we protect it from the very small minority who try to claim taxpayers' money they are not entitled to.

According to the most recent fraud and error national statistics around £110million is lost annually to DWP as a result of fraud and error relating to undeclared partners. The most up to date information (financial year 13/14) suggests around 1.5% of Income Support (IS) expenditure is overpaid annually as a result of a partner not being declared appropriately.

We will engage with an external data provider to identify benefit claimants thought to be most likely to have an undeclared partner more effectively. We expect that this will provide more and better evidence to enable us to identify high risk cases. The data provider will not have any contact with claimants directly or any decision making authority. All cases will be progressed through the existing DWP fraud and compliance processes.

We expect to award a contract for around 18 months and will evaluate its effectiveness in order to inform decisions about whether this type of data matching provides a useful indication of undeclared partners for future use in the Universal Credit system.